



Washington Secretary of State

CLEARINGHOUSE

ELECTIONS NOTICE

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Anonymizing Unintended Registrations

Our partnership with the Dept. of Licensing (DOL) provides the public with convenient access to voter registration services.

Unfortunately, when outside agencies provide voter registration services, an unintended registration can be inadvertently uploaded to the Voter Registration Database (VRDB). This occurs when DOL mistakenly flags a driver for voter registration who does not *intend* to register. When a driver is a non-citizen, this becomes a problem for the individual. There are other cases of individuals that have found themselves registered to vote through DOL when they did not intend to register.

When this occurs, the county may have the capability to delete the unintended registration from its election management system (EMS). However, the state does not have a process to delete such a record from the VRDB. A registration can be placed on cancelled status, but even cancelled records are public record and must be retained. Understandably, the registrant may not want this unintended registration record to appear on a public list, even in its cancelled condition.

What is the OSOS solution for unintended registrations? While we can't simply delete a record from the VRDB, our remedy is to "anonymize" these unintended registrations. Four fields in the VRDB for the voter's record will be changed to disconnect the record from the voter:

- First Name will be changed to "Admin,"
- Last Name to "Error,"
- Street Name to "Error," and
- DOB will be anonymized.

This process will remove any identifying information from public record, while retaining a cancelled record for the state voter ID.

OSOS will document each of these anonymized records in order to track the number of non-citizens inadvertently registered by DOL who did not intend to register.

What actions will the County Auditor take? When a county receives a request to anonymize a voter record, staff should confirm the registration was unintended, notify the Secretary of State's Office, and implement these steps:

1. Cancel the unintended registration in the county EMS, which in turn, cancels the voter in the VRDB.
2. To anonymize the record in the VRDB, send a request to VRsupport@sos.wa.gov with the voter's state voter ID number, name, and birth date as they appear on the cancelled registration.
3. Delete the record from the county EMS.

There is no need to obtain the individual's signature in order to cancel the record because the individual never intended to register.

Additionally, registrations due to administrative error should not be included in any statistics for non-citizens that register intentionally.

Does this process apply to voters who register and later decide that they don't want to appear on public lists? No. This process doesn't apply to such voters because they *intended* to register.

If you have questions regarding unintended registrations, please contact Voter Registration Services at (360) 902-4165 or VRsupport@sos.wa.gov .