

Thurston Voter Research Project Canvassing Report: Fall 2021

January 10, 2022

Background

According to a December 10, 2021 Rasmussen Reports poll of US National Likely Voters¹:

- 56% say cheating was likely in the 2020 elections
- 60% say preventing cheating is more important than making it easier to vote
- 75% say requiring Photo ID to vote is a reasonable measure to protect the integrity of elections, including 73% of Black voters
- 90% think it is Important to prevent cheating in elections, including 83% who say it is Very Important

The Washington Voter Research Project was formed in the summer of 2021 by a group of volunteers in Washington State who share a common interest in election integrity and ensuring that our votes count. Our goal is to ensure that our votes are not just “counted,” but also to ensure that they are not “cancelled” by fraud, incompetence, or other problems which can often occur in any complex, government run, bureaucratic system. Voting integrity is a worthy goal for all people who care about our fundamental right to vote.

Executive Summary

In the fall of 2021, a small team of volunteers conducted door to door canvassing of approximately 1,491 addresses in Thurston County, WA. We spoke to the occupants of 1,231 of these addresses.

We obtained information on 3,746 voters and identified a total of 2,164 voters (57.77%) who have moved but were still registered to vote at their previous address.

We identified 601 voters who moved out more than 30 days before the November 2020 election, and yet still cast a vote in that election from their previous address. We identified an additional 35 voters who moved out more than 30 days before the August 2021 primary, and still voted in that election from their previous address. We also identified 7 voters who had deceased but were still registered to vote.

Scope

The purpose of this canvassing project is to assess the accuracy of the voter rolls in Thurston County, and to identify voter anomalies.

Oxford English Dictionary defines an anomaly as “*something that deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected.*” A voter anomaly is a voter registration that appears to deviate from the legal and statutory requirements to be a qualified elector under Washington law and to vote in Washington elections.

¹ https://twitter.com/Rasmussen_Poll/status/1469354742828740617

In this report, we will use the term “voter anomaly” to refer to

- A voter who cast a vote from an address where they do not reside
- A voter who received multiple ballots for the same person
- A voter who is registered to vote at a non-residential, vacant, or nonexistent address

It is important to note that a voter anomaly represents *potential* fraud, waste, abuse, or error. We cannot assume that every anomaly is fraudulent. Each anomaly warrants further investigation and inquiry. We do not intend to be accusatory. We are bringing these anomalies to light so that they can be further investigated, and corrective action can be initiated as needed to ensure that our elections are being conducted lawfully.

Approach

We identified addresses with a high likelihood of voter anomalies using publicly available information. Our volunteers then knocked on the doors of those addresses and interviewed the occupants.

First, we generated a list of possible voter anomalies. We obtained the June 2021 and August 2021 voter registration databases from the Washington Secretary of State. We cross checked the databases against other data sources to identify addresses where, for example, voters may have moved but are still registered at their previous address.

We then assembled a small team of volunteers who went door to door. Our volunteers would knock on the door, introduce themselves to the occupant, and explain the reason for the visit. We asked if they had any problems with their November 2020 ballot. We would show the occupant the list of voters registered at that address and ask if those registered voters still lived there. We did not ask anyone which candidate they voted for, and we did not ask any questions about citizenship.

When the occupant identified a registered voter who no longer resided at that address, we asked additional questions to try to determine how long ago the nonresident voter moved out. Our volunteers recorded that information in a signed affidavit. We collected a total of 1,719 affidavits in this project.

The move date for these voters is the most recent of either

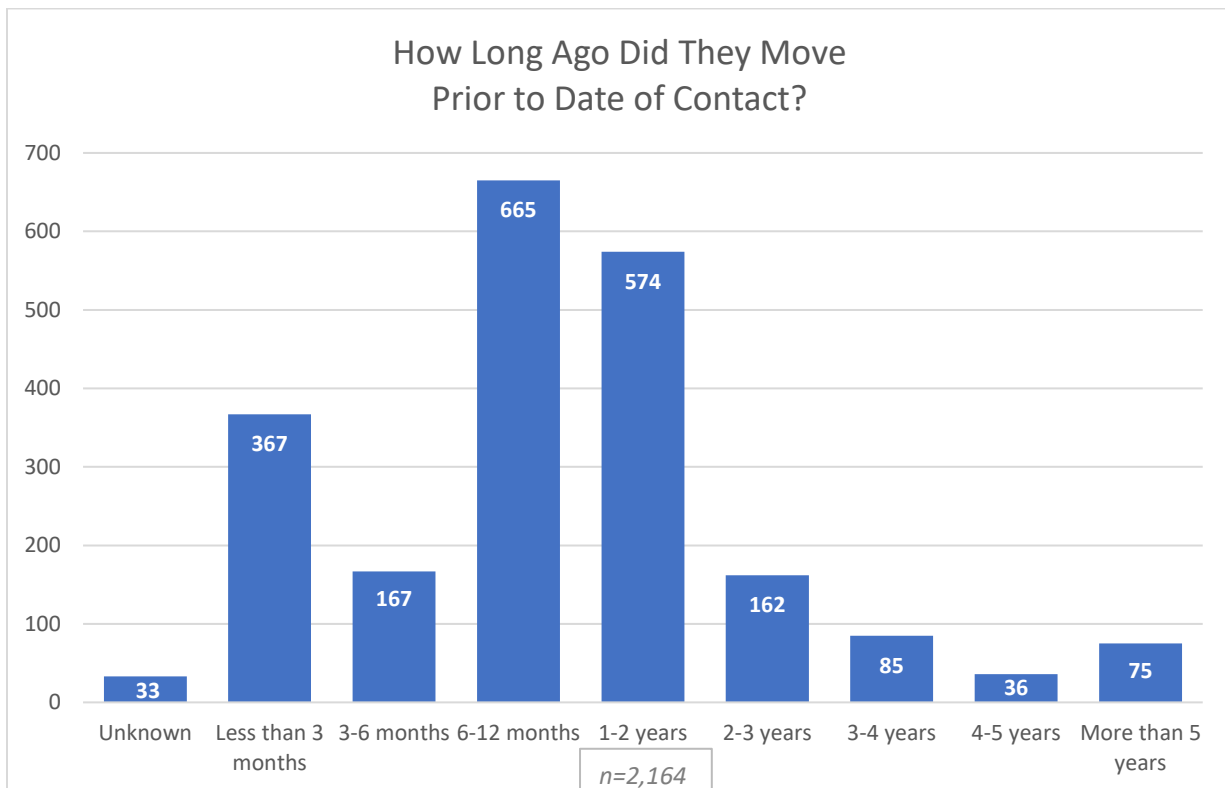
- The date that the occupant with personal knowledge of the voter indicated that the voter moved out. For example, if the occupant said, “He moved out in June 2019”, we recorded a move date of 6/30/2019. Or,
- The date that the current occupant moved in. For example, if the occupant said, “I moved in August 2017 and they haven’t been here since I moved in”, we recorded the move date as 8/31/2017.

The move date used in this analysis is likely understated, especially if the occupant we spoke to had no personal knowledge of the missing voter.

Findings

2,164 voters (57.77%) had moved but were still registered at their previous address

We identified 2,164 registered voters who had changed address but were still registered at their previous address. This is 57.77% of the 3,746 voters that we obtained information about.



Of the 2,164 voters that had moved, 367 had moved in the past 90 days. 932 of them had moved one year ago or more, and 358 had moved two or more years ago, but were still registered to that address. 75 voters had moved more than five years ago. We were unable to estimate a move date for 33 voters.

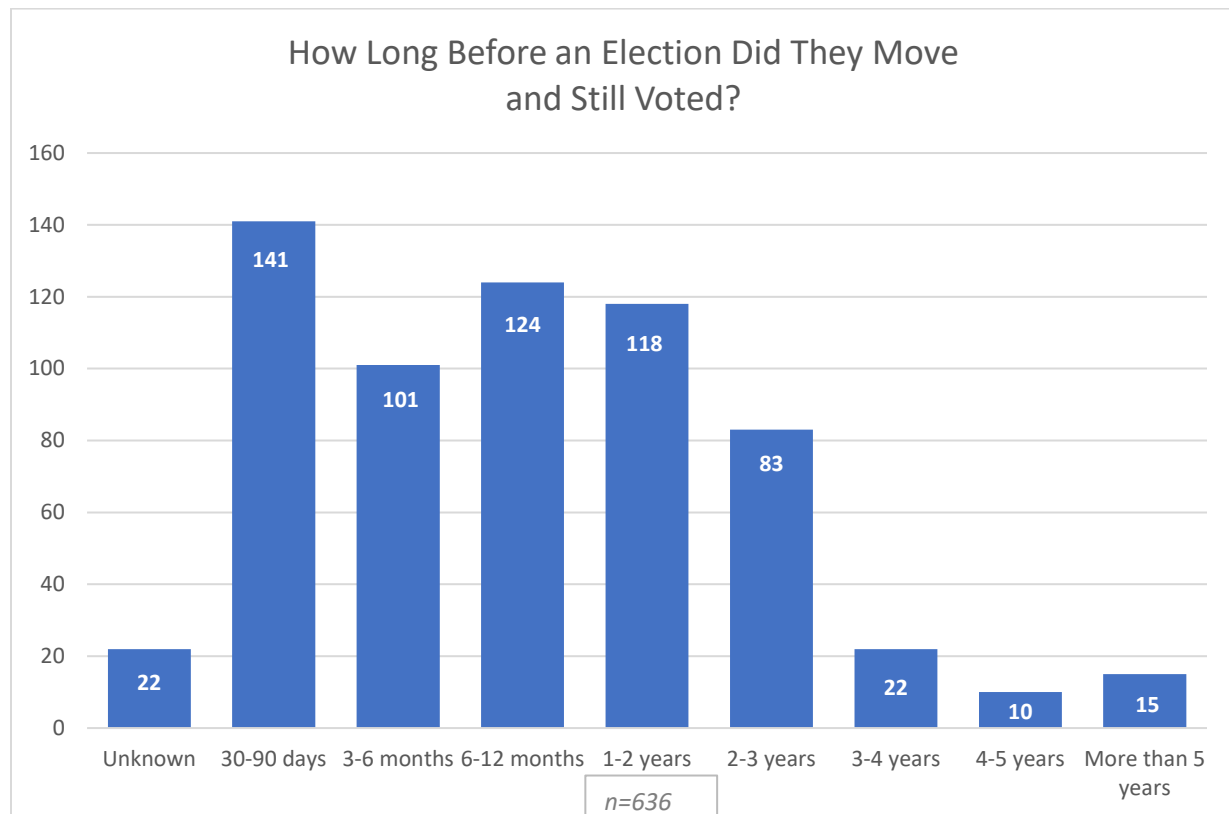
We found an additional nine voters that did not move, but the county had designated a new street address for the same residence and the voter registration database had not been updated to reflect the new address. These are not included in the 2,164 total voters that had moved.

636 voters (16.98%) had not lived at that address for more than 30 days prior to an election, and still voted in that election

Article VI, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State Washington requires a qualified voter to establish residency at least 30 days prior to an election. RCW 29A.04.151 further defines a residence as “a person's permanent address where he or she physically resides and maintains his or her abode.”

Voters who move more than 30 days prior to an election, but still vote in that election without updating their residence address, are voter anomalies.

We found 636 voter anomalies who had moved or otherwise had not resided at that address more than 30 days prior to voting in an election. We identified 601 voters who changed residence more than 30 days before the November 3, 2020 election and still voted in that election from that address. We found an additional 35 voters who moved more than 30 days before the August 2, 2021 primary and still voted in that primary from that address.



Of these voter anomalies, 473 had moved more than 90 days prior to the election and still voted from that address. 248 had moved at least one year before the election, and

130 had not resided there for two or more years. We were unable to estimate a move date for 22 of these voters.

For the sake of simplicity, we are assuming that the voter anomalies actually lived at that address in the past. For some of these, it could be the case that the voter never lived there at all. Several occupants that we spoke to recognized the name of the voter anomaly as someone that they knew and said, “he (she) has never lived here.”

Some of these voter anomalies may indeed be lawful voters. The federal UOCAVA act gives U.S. citizens who live overseas the right to vote by absentee ballot. RCW 29A.04.151 gives four exceptions to the residency requirement:

- (1) While employed in the civil or military service of the state or of the United States;*
- (2) While engaged in the navigation of the waters of this state or the United States or the high seas;*
- (3) While a student at any institution of learning;*
- (4) While confined in any public prison.*

For example, for 42 voter anomalies the current occupant indicated that they are military, and 11 have APO mailing addresses. These could meet the residency exception under subsection (1) above.

519 Puget St NE

This house burned down in August 2019². The property is fenced off. Five voters are registered here, and one of them voted in the November 2020 election.



² <https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article234126137.html>

2630 Martin Way NE, Olympia

This is a business address. The business was locked with no signage at the time of visit. One voter is registered at this address, who voted in November 2020.



Lacey Post Office, 5815 Lacey Blvd SE

We identified seven voters who are registered to vote using the Lacey Post Office as their residence address. Three of these voters voted in the November 2020 presidential election.



Selected Quotes

The following are actual quotes from some of the occupants that we interviewed. They are widely representative of the types of comments that we received and captured in affidavits.

"I've lived here 21 years and she's never lived here. I started getting mail for her in 2020." One voter, who voted in November 2020.

"I moved in around 2018. None of these people live here. I've tried to get them removed." Six voters.

"I own these units. Unit B has been vacant since December 2019." Two voters registered in Unit B, one of them voted in the November 2020 election.

"We moved in 2018. I get mail for these people, but they haven't lived here since I moved in." Three voters, two of whom voted in the November 2020 election.

"He's long gone, he hasn't lived here since 2014!"

"They're the previous owners and they moved out 3 years ago." Two voters, both voted in the November 2020 election.

"They did not live here in 2020 and I did not receive mail in ballots for them". Two voters, both voted in the November 2020 election.

"We moved in around August 2018. These other people have not lived here since we moved in." 2 voters, both voted in November 2020.

"She hasn't lived here since 2017." One voter who voted in the November 2020 election.

"I moved in June 2020. These people don't live here or in the upstairs unit. I don't know who they are." Five voters, two of them voted in November 2020.

"I've lived here five years and she's never lived here."

"We moved here in March 2019. I don't know who they are." Two voters, both of whom voted in November 2020.

"They own this house but they haven't lived here in three years. They live in Washington DC." Two voters, both of them voted in November 2020.

"They are past tenants. They didn't live here at all in 2020. I passed their ballots on to them." Three voters, all three of them voted in November 2020.

"We've lived here four years and none of them have lived here." Four voters, all four of them voted in November 2020.

"I've lived here 12 years. He is my ex and he has never lived here." One voter, who voted in the August 2021 primary.

“He moved out in August 2018. He moved to Florida.” One voter, who voted in the November 2020 election.

“I’ve lived here going on 6 years. I don’t know them.” Three voters, one voted in November 2020 and another one voted in the August 2021 primary.

“We moved in July 2020, I don’t know any of these people.” Four voters, all four voted in November 2020.

“I’ve been here almost five years and I don’t recognize this name.” One voter, who voted in the November 2020 election.

“They moved to Florida and haven’t been here since March 2020.” Three voters, all three voted in November 2020.

“We moved here 20 years ago. I’ve never heard of him.” One voter, who voted in November 2020.

“We moved in 2017, I don’t know these people.” Four voters, two of them voted in November 2020.

As these quotes illustrate, these anomalies warrant further investigation.

38 voter anomalies were removed from the voter registration database by the November 2021 update

In early November 2021 we requested the current voter registration database (VRDB) from the Secretary of State (SOS). We compared the November 2021 voter registration database and to our canvassing list. We found that the Thurston County Auditor had removed 38 of the 636 voter anomalies (5.97%) that had moved more than 30 days prior to an election and still voted in that election (either November 2020 or August 2021) from their previous address.

For 18 of these voter anomalies that the Thurston County Auditor removed from the database, there are other voter anomalies from the same household that are still registered to the previous address. Many of them appear to be spousal couples where one spouse was removed, and one was not, even though neither of them live there. There are a total of 23 additional voter anomalies that were part of the household and should have been removed along with these 18 anomalies that were removed.

150 voter anomalies who moved and still voted in an election have no mailing address listed in the voter registration database

There is no mailing address listed in the database for 150 of the voter anomalies.

These are voters who voted in a recent election, did not reside at the registered residence address, had no mailing address on file, and yet still cast a vote. If they did not live at the registered address, and there is no alternative mailing address on file,

then how did they receive their ballots and cast a vote? Ten of these 150 voters voted again in the recent November 2021 election.

7 voters had deceased but were still listed in the voter registration database

We found seven voters who had deceased but were still listed in the voter registration database. Five of those voters died in 2021, one died in 2019, and one died “on Halloween 2017 or 2018.” No votes were recorded for the deceased voters after their reported dates of death.

By the November 2021 update to the voter registration database, the Thurston County Auditor’s Office removed the five voters who had died in 2021 from the database. However, two other deceased voters still remain registered.

1,566 voters resided at their registration address

Of the 3,746 voter registrations in this analysis, 1,566 (41.8%) of them resided at the residence address listed in the voter registration database. These were confirmed by statements from the occupants we interviewed, who affirmed that those people live there.

Interestingly, our data sources showed indications of a possible address change for 370 of these 1,566 voters (23.6%). These could be considered false positives for our change of address indicators, or the occupants we talked with incorrectly stated these voters still lived there when, in truth, they did not.

Conclusion

The findings detailed in this report suggest that there is room for improvement in the maintenance of the voter registration database in Thurston County. The data suggest that in many cases, updates to voter registration data are not being made in a timely manner.

2,164 of 3,746 voters (57.77%) had moved but their residence address in the voter registration database had not been updated. 932 (24.8%) moved more than one year ago.

We identified 636 voter anomalies (16.98%) who had not resided at that address for more than 30 days prior to an election, failed to update their residence address, and still voted from that address. 598 of these still remain unchanged in the November 2021 database. 150 of them have no mailing address on file, were not physically residing there, and somehow still voted.

We present this information in the interests of transparency and goodwill. We invite the Thurston County Auditor’s Office to contact us to request our source data for this report, to aid further investigation. We encourage the Auditor’s office to

1. Investigate, on an individual basis, the voter anomalies identified in the data
2. Update the registration of voters whose registration information is incorrect
3. Conduct a thorough assessment of their voter registration list maintenance procedures and frequency of activities, and identify action items to improve the timeliness of changes to the voter registration database, and
4. Report back to the public on the results of these efforts on a regular basis

Our volunteers plan to continue scrutinizing the maintenance of the voter registration database in Thurston County, and we hope that the Thurston County Auditor's Office is willing to engage in a collaborative effort to ensure that the voter registration database is kept accurate and up to date, and that only lawful votes are counted.