

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 29, 2012

Governor Rick Scott
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

It is out of grave concern that we write to ask for the immediate suspension of the Florida Division of Elections' directive that county supervisors of elections purge up to 180,000 names from Florida's voter rolls in advance of the November 2012 elections.

While we all agree that the right to vote should be reserved only to those who are eligible, any process that could strip Floridians of their voting rights should be conducted with the utmost caution and transparency, and certainly not within six months of a major federal election and within 90 days of the primary. Providing a list of names with questionable validity - created with absolutely no oversight - to county supervisors and asking that they purge their rolls will create chaotic results and further undermine Floridians' confidence in the integrity of our elections. A rushed process will undermine both Florida and federal law requiring voter rolls to be maintained in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner.

Given that this process fails to meet basic standards of accountability, and that the legal authority for automatic removal of registered voters is currently being challenged in both state and federal court, it is irresponsible to proceed so quickly and with so little room for oversight. If the goal is truly to remove ineligible individuals who were intentionally or somehow mistakenly registered to vote, then that process must move forward in a nonpartisan manner with transparency, uniformity, and great care.

We agree that removing deceased, ineligible and fraudulently registered individuals from the voter rolls is important as part of responsible stewardship of our elections system. We support any open process to remove these names from voter rolls, but we strongly object to the process currently underway. It is already evident that many eligible voters have been included among the names of individuals to be removed, and it appears the State is on track to repeat the mistakes of 2000 and 2004 rather than learning from them.

It important to remember, Governor Scott, that Florida has never encountered problems with mass voter fraud. Unfortunately however, our state does have a troubled history of wrongfully purging from our rolls the names of legitimate voters mistakenly deemed ineligible to vote. In both 2000 and 2004, the state pursued misguided efforts to purge the voter rolls that were shown to wrongfully include legal voters in these lists. Only

when the lists and the process were made transparent could all Florida voters trust that no one would be wrongfully denied their right to vote.

It is the responsibility of the supervisors of elections to maintain accurate voter registration records, and doing so is an important part of protecting the integrity of our elections. In the same vein, individual cases of suspected voter fraud should be vigorously pursued whenever they are uncovered. But we must remember that the voting rights afforded to all Americans by our Constitution should at all times be protected. Unfortunately, state officials have spent more time restricting the ability of Floridians to vote rather than registering disenfranchised voters, protecting access to the polls, and encouraging participation in the democratic process.

Our concerns are shared by millions of Floridians. Rather than allow this unscrupulous purge to cast a shadow of doubt over the upcoming elections, we hope you take seriously our concerns and immediately suspend the purge of voter registration lists spearheaded by the Florida Division of Elections in order to ensure that not one Floridian finds his or her legitimate voting rights callously stripped away.

Sincerely,



Ted Deutch



Alcee L. Hastings



Corrine Brown



Frederica Wilson



Debbie Wasserman Schultz



Kathy Castor