



DEBUNKING “CEMETARY VOTING”

February 2017

- There is no evidence to support the prevalent myth that ballot boxes are stuffed with votes from dead people.
- Dead people on the voter rolls is not “fraud.” Though there are sensible efforts states can and should make to keep the voter rolls up to date, dead people don’t vote, and there is no evidence to support the myth that live people are somehow voting in the names of dead people.
- For example, in 2012, South Carolina’s attorney general notified the U.S. Department of Justice of potential voter fraud after finding ballots cast in the 2010 election by voters listed as deceased, in some cases as long as six years. A subsequent review by [the State Election Commission](#) found no evidence of fraud, and that human error and clerical errors accounted for 95 percent of the cases investigated.
- A [research report](#) by the Pew Center for the States, often cited by Donald Trump and other proponents of the myth of cemetery voting, did indeed find 1.8 million voter registrations for people who had passed away. The report did not, however, suggest that this was evidence of voter fraud, only of inefficiencies in the way voter lists are maintained.
- Very few families of deceased people think to have their loved ones removed from the voter rolls. States and counties have processes for culling old, out-of-date records from the voter rolls, but these processes take time, and must be done very carefully to ensure that eligible, living voters are not inadvertently removed from the rolls.
- In this modern era of early voting, and voting-by-mail, it is also not unheard of for an eligible voter to actually die after legally casting their ballot. This is NOT “voter fraud.”
- Dead people on the voter rolls is an administrative problem, not evidence of any kind of fraud. It can and should be addressed through sensible voter list maintenance procedures that properly identify deceased individuals without putting eligible, living voters at risk of being purged.