Exhibit 12

Steve Bousquet, “Democrats, Florida Elections Officials Criticize GOP Mailing,”

*St. Petersburg Times*

(September 16, 2008)
Democrats, Florida elections officials criticize GOP mailing

By Steve Bousquet, Tallahassee Bureau Chief

Published Tuesday, September 16, 2008 7:26 PM

TALLAHASSEE — A new pitch for John McCain's presidential campaign aimed at older Democratic voters is causing complaints by Democrats and concern by elections officials.

The piece, paid for by the Republican National Committee and authorized by McCain, tells voters it is seeking to double-check their "unconfirmed" party affiliations while asking for money. A letter signed by McCain tells the Democrats: "We have you registered as a Republican."

"I was a little bit shocked and a little bit surprised," said recipient Bill Smith, 81, of Tampa, who calls himself a lifelong Democrat and has been registered at his current address since 2000. The retired plant engineer is one of about a dozen senior citizens that Democratic Party leaders identified as recipients, all of them longtime Democrats.

The RNC declined to discuss the mailer, which Democrats said has landed in five counties: Duval, Hillsborough, Collier, Miami-Dade and Escambia.

"This is simply a fundraising piece," said spokeswoman Amber Wilkerson, adding in an e-mail it was not "worth writing about."

Two top Florida elections officials, both Republicans, faulted the GOP mailing, calling it "confusing" and "unfortunate" because of a potential to undermine voter confidence by making them question the accuracy of their registrations.

"It is unfortunate, because it does put a lot of doubt in people's minds," said Secretary of State Kurt Browning, the state's top elections official.

After his office received dozens of calls, Duval County Supervisor of Elections Jerry Holland issued a media alert that his office had nothing to do with it. "They were upset folks and they were very concerned," said Holland, a Republican. "They mainly said their party (listing) was different than it was."

Some Democrats suspect a motive beyond raising money. The first-class GOP mailing has a "Do not forward" instruction on the envelope, meaning they will be returned to the GOP if a recipient has had mail forwarded, perhaps to a summer address, or has moved.

Letters returned as undeliverable can be compiled into "challenge lists" of unverifiable addresses and can be used to challenge voters' eligibility during early voting or on Election Day. The vote suppression technique is known as 'vote caging.'

"That postcard is a little disconcerting," said letter-recipient Steve Heming of Naples, chairman of the Collier County Democratic Party and a state party official. "You don't know if they're going to use it to challenge somebody's right to vote."

The letter asks recipients to note changes on an "RNC File Card" and return it to the party by Sept. 26. The card shows a nine-
digit "voter ID" number, but the supervisor of elections in Jacksonville's Duval County said the numbers are wrong and do not match the state's voter database.

Hillsborough Democratic Party Chairman Michael Steinberg said it makes no sense for Republicans to question the party affiliations of Democratic voters. "I don't understand their logic," he said.

Allegations of Republican vote caging in predominantly black Jacksonville precincts in the 2004 presidential election surfaced last year in testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee.

Steve Bousquet can be reached at bousquet@sptimes.com or (850) 224-7263.