Demographic Analysis Shows That Registered Voters Lacking a Driver’s License or State-Issued Georgia ID Card Are Disproportionately Elderly and Minority

Secretary Cox: 22.8 percent of all registrants age 65 and older, and fully one third of African-American registrants age 65-plus, do not have the most common form of photo ID required for voting

ATLANTA ... Secretary of State Cathy Cox reported today that additional demographic analysis of a new database match between the state’s file of registered voters and the Department of Driver Services’ (DDS) data file of persons issued driver’s licenses or Georgia ID Cards shows that older and minority voters are much more likely to lack the most commonly used form of photo ID required for voting.

Last week, the records of nearly five million registered voters in the state’s voter registration database were matched against the DDS database of Georgians who currently hold a driver’s license or Georgia ID Card (issued to non-drivers). The match found that over 675,000 registered voters either had no record of a driver’s license or ID issued to them, or have had their license revoked, suspended, cancelled, denied or surrendered.

Secretary Cox said today that further analysis of the data reveals that nearly one quarter of all registered voters age 65 or older do not have a driver’s license or Georgia ID. For elderly African-Americans, the numbers are even more dramatic – 33.2% of African-American registrants age 65-plus do not have a license or Georgia ID.

The analysis also found that nearly three-quarters – 74.4% – of registered voters lacking these forms of identification were on the active voter roll. Some 502,910 ‘active’ voters were found to have no DDS-issued identification.

An additional 172,774 “inactive” voters were also found to lack these forms of identification. Under the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act and state law, registered voters are typically put into “inactive” status if they fail to participate in the electoral process during two consecutive election cycles, or if an address check indicates they may have moved from their original registration address. Under federal law, however, “inactive” voters retain full rights to cast a ballot on election day, and by doing so are moved back into “active” status.

Demographic examination of the data also indicates that African-American registrants on the whole are more likely to lack a license or Georgia ID card than white voters. While African-Americans currently comprise 27.8% of the voter roll, they represent 35.6% of those who lack a driver’s license or Georgia ID.

“There can be no more striking evidence of the flawed public policy behind Georgia’s current photo ID requirement than the fact that nearly a quarter of our state’s elderly voters, and fully a third of older African-American voters, lack the most common form of photo ID now required by Georgia law,” said Secretary Cox, who serves as the state’s chief elections official. “It is not surprising to me, but it should shock the conscience of those who wrote, and voted for, and signed this ill-advised

http://www.sos.state.ga.us/pressrel/062306.htm

6/30/2006
legislation, that fully one-third of elderly African-American voters in Georgia lack a license or state-issued ID card, the most commonly used forms of identification. As I have warned since a restrictive photo ID requirement was first proposed years ago, and after it was first passed by the Senate in 2001, and when it was considered in 2005, such a law erects significant barriers to the most vulnerable in our society – especially our elderly. While some of these registrants may have other acceptable government-issued photo identification, we can be certain that a very large number of voters do not currently possess the documentation they need to vote in person,” Secretary Cox added.

Some highlights of the demographic analysis:

Total Registrants Lacking a Driver’s License or Georgia ID Card: 675,684
  Total in “Active” Status: 502,910
  Total in “Inactive” Status: 172,774

Percentage of Voters Within Demographic Groupings That Lack License or ID:
  Among All Voters 13.6 %
  Among All African-American Voters 17.3 %
  Among All White Voters 12.1 %
  Among All Hispanic Voters 13.8 %
  Among All Asian Voters 11.5 %
  Among All 65 + Voters 22.8 %
  Among African-Americans 65 + 33.2 %
  Among White Voters 65 + 20.6 %

The State Elections Division and Georgia’s 159 county registrars’ offices regularly undertake procedures to keep the statewide voter file current and free from improper registrations. Data matches are performed monthly against death certificate data provided by the state’s Vital Records department to promptly remove deceased voters from the rolls. The collection of social security numbers from registrants helps ensure that voters are not registered more than once, and steps are taken to make certain that applications with fraudulent numbers are not added to the database. The file is also frequently matched against the U. S. Postal Service’s National Change of Address (NCOA) database to help keep registrant addresses as current as possible. Steps are also taken each month to insure that newly convicted felons are removed from the voter rolls.