

ANSWERING YOUR BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT VOTER DATA

You may have heard that the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity has asked all 50 states to provide all of their voter data including registrants' full names, addresses, dates of birth, political parties, the last four digits of their social security numbers, voting history and registration history. Today, the bipartisan New York State Board of Elections board agreed to give the commission some of the data it requested. Allow us to answer a few questions:

WHAT INFORMATION IS THE COMMISSION GETTING?

Your name, your address, your date of birth, political party and your voting history (not how you voted, but which elections you participated in)

WHAT INFORMATION IS THE COMMISSION NOT GETTING?

Your Social Security number and/or your New York state driver's license number and your registration history (previous addresses, military or felony history and any enrollment changes)

CAN THE MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS REFUSE TO COMPLY WITH THE COMMISSION'S REQUEST?

Our voter file is shared with the New York State Board of Elections through a statewide database. The commission asked the NYS Board of Elections for the information, and the state will give over data on Madison County voters (and voters in the other 61 counties) to the commission without our input or consultation.

I THOUGHT GOVERNOR CUOMO SAID NY WOULDN'T PARTICIPATE.

State law gives the bipartisan NYS Elections Board the power to decide which information to release, not the governor.

WILL THIS HELP THE COMMISSION IDENTIFY INSTANCES OF VOTER FRAUD?

That's unclear. We know that there are still people registered in Madison County that are dead or no longer live here. With a database of over 40,000 active registrants - and no requirement that anyone tells us when their relative dies or when they move out of county - we sometimes don't catch up with people. It's likely that someone is registered here and in another state (but less likely that they are registered both here and in another county in NYS due to the cross-checks on the statewide database). Of course, that doesn't prove the voter is voting in both places.

It's also possible that lacking unique identifying information -- such as your entire social security number -- the commission's research will produce a lot of "false positives". For example, isn't it possible that two unique people named Mike Smith born on the same day could both vote in their respective states during the last presidential election?

It's important to note that the NYS Board of Elections isn't giving the presidential commission anything any of you reading this could not also receive. You want the entire NYS voter file? Fill out a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request and send it to the State Board in Albany. You want the entire voter file for Madison County? Just contact our Board of Elections office. One caveat: You must have a legitimate election purpose for needing the material. Our voter lists are generally provided to candidates running for office and political parties.

Still more questions? Call Madison County Board of Elections at 315/366-2231. We'll do our best to answer your questions.

Thank you to the Jefferson County Board of Elections for sharing their Q&A!