

No Pre-filled Ballot by Mail Applications

THE PROBLEM

Political organizations, elected officials, and candidates use pre-filled Ballot by Mail Applications to increase voter registration for their interests, for their districts, or for their party. Since the names and addresses come from purchased mailing lists—which can be old or simply incorrect—floods of applications go out that, if returned, can cause voter registration name/address conflicts and duplications.

- When the Ballot by Mail Application is sent to the county and reviewed, county office workers look at the handwriting and the signature of the applicant to determine if the application can be processed as-is, without verification or clarification. Typewritten lettering prevents them from doing their job exceptionally well.
- Pre-filled applications have also been known to go out with more than allowable pre-filled information, giving preference to a candidate, party, or issue.
- Frequently, the wrong type of ballot (Democrat or Republican) has been sent based on pre-filled information.
- Voters get confused and return a pre-filled application and then later—when they receive another one from another party/organization/candidate—may fill out that one, too.
- As a judge in a county election, I have personally been told all of these issues by the voters that come in to vote in person.

THE SOLUTION

- Disallow pre-filled Ballot by Mail Applications being sent by anyone.
- Require that the applicant fill out the application completely.
- Require that only the standardized state application be sent
- Do not promote vote-by-mail broadly; instead, protect the process from abuse while ensuring it remains available to voters who truly need it.