



THE GREAT EXIT: Why States are Leaving Politically Driven ERIC and Why More States Should Follow.

DECEMBER 12, 2023

Michael Greibrok
Senior Research Fellow

Kristi Stahr
Senior Data Analyst



TheFGA.org/research/states-can-protect-elections-leaving-eric-maintaining-voter-rolls

KEY FINDINGS



MORE THAN 43 MILLION AMERICANS CHANGED ADDRESSES IN 2021, MAKING VOTER ROLL MAINTENANCE A CONTINUAL TASK.



THE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) HAS FAILED TO HELP STATES MAINTAIN THEIR VOTER REGISTRATION LISTS, WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL TO CLEAN AND FAIR ELECTIONS.



NINE STATES LEFT ERIC IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, AND MORE SHOULD FOLLOW.



THERE ARE THREE STEPS STATES SHOULD TAKE TO HELP ENSURE CURRENT AND ACCURATE VOTER ROLLS.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

TO MAINTAIN UP-TO-DATE AND ACCURATE VOTER ROLLS, STATES SHOULD STOP OUTSOURCING VOTER ROLL MAINTENANCE EFFORTS TO POLITICALLY DRIVEN, THIRD-PARTY GROUPS LIKE ERIC AND INSTEAD FOLLOW THE LEAD OF OTHER STATES THAT ARE USING THEIR OWN TOOLS TO ACHIEVE CLEAN AND ACCURATE ROLLS.

Overview

Fair elections are the foundation of a healthy representative government. Accurate vote counts are essential for fair elections and correct counts require current and accurate voter rolls. Up-to-date and accurate voter rolls also help motivate people to vote and improve confidence in election results.¹ Accurate voter lists are so important that federal law requires states to remove ineligible voters after death or a change in address.²

ERIC was formed to help states maintain accurate voter rolls and spot illegal voting.³ But instances of duplicate voting and out-of-state or out-of-precinct voting continue despite ERIC's involvement. ERIC has failed at its stated mission of maintaining voter rolls because its true mission is to increase voter registration. Fortunately, a growing number of states are leaving ERIC, and more should follow.⁴



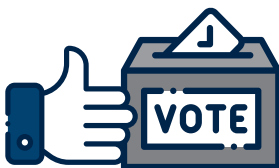
ERIC HAS FAILED AT ITS STATED MISSION OF MAINTAINING VOTER ROLLS BECAUSE ITS TRUE MISSION IS TO INCREASE VOTER REGISTRATION.

Instead of relying on a partisan third-party organizations, states should take it upon themselves to ensure their voter rolls are accurate and up to date. They can do this by requiring agencies to share data, referencing the National Change of Address (NCOA) database, and signing a memorandum of understanding with other states to securely share voter information while protecting sensitive voter data. States are already setting an example of how this may be accomplished.⁵⁻⁶

Clean voter rolls are essential to fair elections

Accurate and timely voter roll maintenance is essential to ensure that only those eligible to vote in a precinct may vote. To be motivated to vote and confident in election results, citizens must be able to trust that their vote will not be canceled out by an ineligible voter.

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) set baseline requirements for how states maintain their voter rolls to help ensure they are accurate and up to date.⁷⁻⁸ States then have a multitude of laws covering how and when voters are removed from the registration list.⁹⁻¹⁰ All of these laws are in place to safeguard elections and make sure that only eligible voters register and valid ballots are counted.



CITIZENS MUST BE ABLE TO TRUST THAT THEIR VOTE WILL NOT BE CANCELED OUT BY AN INELIGIBLE VOTER.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case, as there are several examples of double voting and voting in the wrong state.¹¹⁻¹⁵ **While out-of-state voting may get more attention for its potential effect on federal races, out-of-precinct voting can have a major impact on state and local races like those for school boards.**

Voter roll maintenance is a continuous effort

Maintaining accurate voter registration lists is no small task because of the enormous amount of data involved. In 2022, more than 203 million individuals were active registered voters for the general election.¹⁶ The year prior, 43.8 million Americans changed addresses—13 percent of the total population.¹⁷ Another 3.3 million individuals of voting age died that year.¹⁸

When the individuals who move or pass away are part of the 203 million active registered voters, voter roll maintenance is not just necessary, it is critical.¹⁹ But voter roll maintenance doesn't always keep pace.

For instance, the year after 43.8 million Americans moved, only 5.1 million voters were removed from voter rolls for moving out of the jurisdiction.²⁰ An additional 4.8 million were removed for failure to return a confirmation of registration.²¹

AMERICANS ARE LEAVING JURISDICTIONS WITHOUT BEING REMOVED FROM VOTER ROLLS



**43.8
MILLION**
AMERICANS MOVED

ONLY 5.1 MILLION
VOTERS WERE REMOVED FROM VOTER ROLLS
FOR MOVING OUT OF THE JURISDICTION

+

4.8 MILLION
VOTERS WERE REMOVED FOR FAILURE TO
RETURN A CONFIRMATION OF REGISTRATION

On the other hand, the year after 3.3 million voting-age Americans died, 4.9 million voters were removed due to death.²² This suggests that states are still playing catch-up in maintaining their voter rolls long after voter changes actually occur.

STATES ARE PLAYING CATCH-UP

3.3 MILLION
VOTING-AGE
AMERICANS DIED



4.9 MILLION
VOTERS WERE REMOVED
DUE TO DEATH

ERIC was formed by seven states in 2012 to supposedly help address these types of issues. At one point, the organization had 34 member states.²³ Each member state is required to share voter registration and motor vehicle licensing data with ERIC.²⁴ The organization takes this data and is tasked with creating reports covering things like individuals who may have moved, may have died, and may have duplicate voter registration, or registered in another jurisdiction.²⁵

ERIC is failing and states should leave

While ERIC is supposed to help participating states maintain accurate voter rolls, the organization seems to be more interested in increasing voter registration. For instance, member states are not required to remove ineligible voters found in reports from ERIC, they are only required to initiate contact.²⁶ However, ERIC does require member states to send voter registration information to potentially eligible but unregistered individuals at least 15 days before the state's registration deadline.²⁷



While ERIC is supposed to help participating states maintain accurate voter rolls, the organization seems to be more interested in increasing voter registration.



ERIC's founder, David Becker, called the organization "probably the single most effective voter registration effort in history."²⁸ He touted that ERIC had forced states to reach out to more than 34 million unregistered voters and that at least five million of these individuals—but likely significantly more—registered.²⁹

It is not a coincidence that these notifications skew to likely Democrat voters. David Becker is also the Executive Director and Founder of the Center for Election Innovation & Research (CEIR).³⁰ CEIR is one of the organizations that funneled millions of dollars through Zuckerbucks to increase turnout in predominantly blue districts during the 2020 election.³¹⁻³²

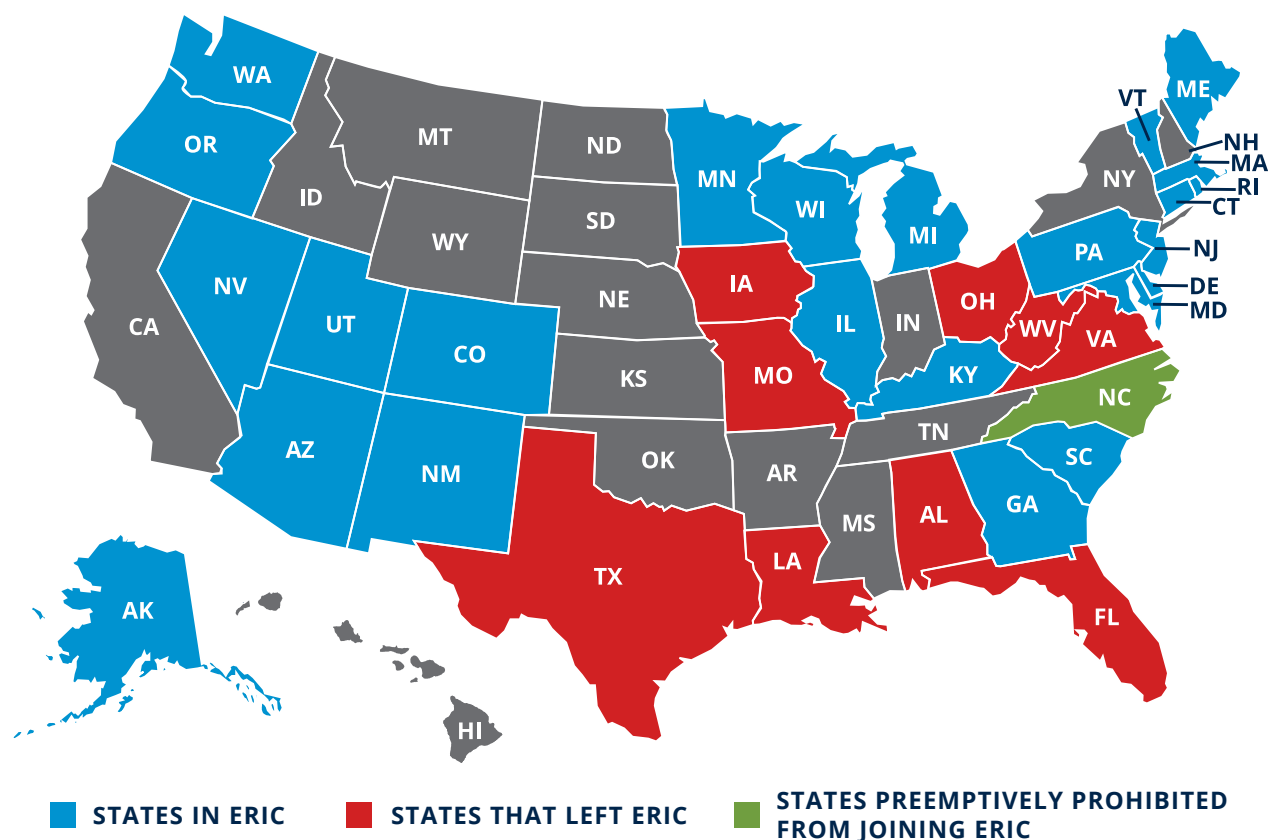
The fact that ERIC shares data collected by the states with third parties like CEIR for political purposes should be alarming for voters and legislators alike.³³ Pennsylvania's secretary of state recently sent a letter to ERIC demanding that they stop sharing data with third parties for get-out-the-vote efforts.³⁴

Another issue with ERIC is that participating states do not go through the normal procurement process that helps ensure transparency and that taxpayer money is spent efficiently.³⁵ This may be contributing to ballooning costs. For example, Florida was told their fees could decrease as more states took part, instead their costs increased by 55 percent.³⁶

States are taking note of these issues and exiting the organization. Louisiana was the first state to leave ERIC in January 2022.³⁷ Since then, a total of nine states have left in less than two years.³⁸ To date, only 24 states are still ERIC member states.³⁹ In addition, North Carolina has preemptively prohibited the state from joining ERIC.⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ These states are now showing the blueprint for maintaining current and accurate voter lists without ERIC membership.

WHICH STATES ARE NEXT?

Current ERIC member states and states that have left ERIC to create their own voter roll maintenance system



Source: Ballotpedia and authors' calculation.

States should maintain their own voter rolls with a three-pronged approach

States looking to exit ERIC and establish their own processes for accurate and timely voter roll maintenance should take three simple steps.

First, they should require state agencies to share data with the chief election official to verify voter registration. Along with removing individuals who have passed away or moved to another jurisdiction, states should also flag individuals who have been ruled mentally incompetent, convicted of a felony, or have become ineligible to vote for another reason.

Next, states should regularly compare their voter rolls to the NCOA database. This database compiles change-of-address requests from individuals to have their mail forwarded to a new address.⁴² States can use this list to reference voters who have either moved out of the state or moved to a different jurisdiction.

Ultimately, states should sign a memorandum of understanding with other states to securely share voter information to cross-check lists for duplicate or fraudulent registrations.

TO-DO LIST: MAINTAIN ACCURATE VOTER ROLLS



Require state agencies to share data to verify voter registration



Compare voter rolls to the NCOA database



Sign agreements with other states to securely share voter information

States that have left ERIC are already taking these actions and seeing results

Alabama recently created the Alabama Voter Integrity Database and is already getting results. Its partnership with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency identified 8,000 registered voters who received driver's licenses from other states, strongly suggesting they no longer lived in Alabama.⁴³ In addition, using the NCOA database, the state identified more than 30,000 active registered voters who no longer lived in Alabama.⁴⁴⁻⁴⁵

Alabama has also signed memorandums of understanding with Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee to securely share voter information.⁴⁶ Analysis of data from Tennessee revealed 8,500 individuals who had recently voted, or registered to vote, in Tennessee but continued to appear on Alabama's voter rolls.⁴⁷



Analysis of data from Tennessee revealed 8,500 individuals who had recently voted, or registered to vote, in Tennessee but continued to appear on Alabama's voter rolls.



In Ohio, the secretary of state has signed agreements with Florida, Virginia, and West Virginia to establish data-sharing and security protocols to securely exchange voter information between the states.⁴⁸ The state also requires several state agencies to share information with the secretary of state each month.⁴⁹ These actions have yielded results, with nearly 27,000 ineligible voters removed from the rolls.⁵⁰

While these figures may be shocking, they should not be surprising. Research has shown that states that do not participate in ERIC have a higher rate of identifying and removing ineligible voters from their voter rolls.⁵¹⁻⁵²

THE BOTTOM LINE: To maintain up-to-date and accurate voter rolls, states should stop outsourcing voter roll maintenance efforts to politically driven, third-party groups like ERIC and instead follow the lead of other states that are using their own tools to achieve clean and accurate rolls.

To ensure voter confidence and fair elections, voter rolls must be current and accurate so that eligible voters' ballots count, and ineligible ballots do not.

ERIC operates more as a voter registration group with clear partisan leanings. ERIC also shares individual data collected by the government with third parties and lacks transparency. For these reasons, a growing number of states are leaving ERIC and taking a better path toward ensuring fair elections for their citizens.



To ensure voter confidence and fair elections, voter rolls must be current and accurate so that eligible voters' ballots count, and ineligible ballots do not.



To instill voter confidence, more states should follow suit. **Instead of relying on ERIC and its politically driven voter registration scheme, states should take steps to maintain current and accurate voter rolls themselves.**

States should require that state agencies regularly share data with the secretary of state to verify voter registration. Second, they should compare their voter rolls with the NCOA database. Finally, they should sign a memorandum of understanding with other states to securely share voter information and cross-check for duplicate or fraudulent registrations.

REFERENCES

1. Lawyers Democracy Fund (LDF), "Voter registration list accuracy," LDF (2023), <https://lawyersdemocracyfund.org/other-issues/voter-registration-list-accuracy/>.
2. Legal Information Institute, "52 U.S. Code § 20507," Cornell Law School (2023), <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/52/20507>.
3. Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), "What is ERIC," ERIC (2023), <https://ericstates.org/about/>.
4. Shawn Fleetwood, "Texas announces exit from leftist-controlled voter-roll 'management' group ERIC," The Federalist (2023), <https://thefederalist.com/2023/07/24/texas-announces-exit-from-leftist-controlled-voter-roll-management-group-eric/>.
5. Staff Reports, "LaRose signs election integrity agreements with multiple states," Miami Valley Today (2023), <https://miamivalleytoday.com/larose-signs-election-integrity-agreements-with-multiple-states/>.
6. Shawn Fleetwood, "Alabama's new 'voter integrity database' shows states don't need leftist-linked ERIC to manage voter rolls," The Federalist (2023), <https://thefederalist.com/2023/09/19/alabamas-new-voter-integrity-database-shows-states-dont-need-leftist-linked-eric-to-manage-voter-rolls/>.
7. Civil Rights Division, "About the National Voter Registration Act," U.S. Department of Justice (2023), <https://www.justice.gov/crt/about-national-voter-registration-act>.
8. Wendy Underhill, "The Help America Vote Act: 20 years later," National Conference of State Legislatures (2022), <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/the-help-america-vote-act-20-years-later>.
9. National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), "Voter registration list maintenance," NCSL (2023), <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/voter-registration-list-maintenance>.
10. National Association of State Secretaries (NASS), "Maintenance of State Voter Registration Lists: A Review of Relevant Policies and Procedures," NASS (2017), <https://www.nass.org/sites/default/files/reports/nass-report-voter-reg-maintenance-final-dec17.pdf>.
11. Ashley Kaster, "Fond du Lac man sentenced and fined for dual-state voting fraud," Fox11 News, Wisconsin (2023), <https://fox11online.com/news/local/fond-du-lac-man-sentenced-and-fined-for-dual-state-voting-fraud-edward-malnar-michigan-wisconsin-november-2020-election-absentee-ballot>.
12. WTVC, "Walker County man convicted of voter fraud, sentenced to 25 years, DA says," News Channel 9 ABC, Georgia (2022), <https://newschannel9.com/news/local/walker-county-man-convicted-of-voter-fraud-sentenced-to-25-years-da-says>.
13. Shawn Fleetwood, "West Virginia Resident Pleads Guilty To Casting A Second, Illegal Vote In The 2020 Election," The Federalist (2023), <https://thefederalist.com/2023/08/31/west-virginia-resident-pleads-guilty-to-casting-a-second-illegal-vote-in-the-2020-election/>.
14. Chattanooga, "LaFayette Man Must Serve 15 Years In Prison For Trying To Vote Twice In Same Election," Chattanooga (2022), <https://www.chattanooga.com/2022/11/28/460046/LaFayette-Man-Must-Serve-15-Years-In.aspx>.
15. Heritage Foundation, "Voter Fraud Report: Edward Amirault," Heritage Foundation (2022), <https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/10151>.
16. Authors' calculations based on data obtained from responses to the biennial Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Report. U.S. territories were not included in this analysis. See, e.g., United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC), "Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) comprehensive report," EAC (2022), <https://www.eac.gov/research-and-data/studies-and-reports>.
17. Census Bureau, "Residence 1 year ago/migration," U.S. Census Bureau (2023), <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/about/why-we-ask-each-question/migration/>.
18. Authors' calculations based on data obtained from responses to the biennial EAVS Report. U.S. territories were not included in this analysis. See, e.g., EAC, "Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) comprehensive report," EAC (2022), <https://www.eac.gov/research-and-data/studies-and-reports>.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. ERIC, "What is ERIC," ERIC (2023), <https://ericstates.org/about/>.
24. ERIC, "Bylaws," ERIC (2023), <https://ericstates.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/ERIC-Bylaw-MA-FINAL.pdf>.
25. Ibid.
26. Judicial Watch, "What's wrong with ERIC? Judicial Watch study details left-leaning roots, data security concerns, possible violations of federal law at the Electronic Registration Information Center," Judicial Watch (2023), <https://www.judicialwatch.org/whats-wrong-with-eric/>.
27. State Board of Elections, "Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) FAQ," Commonwealth of Kentucky (2023), <https://elect.ky.gov/Resources/Documents/ERIC%20FAQ.pdf>.
28. Mitchell Brown, et al., "The future of election administration: Cases and conversations," Restoration of America (2019), <https://www.restorationofamerica.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/future-of-election-administration-2019.pdf>.
29. Ibid.
30. Center for Election Innovation & Research (CEIR), "David Becker," CEIR (2021), <https://electioninnovation.org/who-we-are/our-team/david-becker/>.

REFERENCES CONT'D

31. William Doyle, "Mark Zuckerberg spent \$419M on nonprofits ahead of 2020 election—And got out the Dem vote," *New York Post* (2021), <https://nypost.com/2021/10/13/mark-zuckerberg-spent-419m-on-nonprofits-ahead-of-2020-election-and-got-out-the-dem-vote/>.
32. Jonathan Bain, "The Wisconsin 'Zuckerbucks' problem: New data reveals private funding of election offices was more widespread than initially estimated," *Foundation for Government Accountability* (2022), <https://thefga.org/research/the-wisconsin-zuckerbucks-problem/>.
33. Hayden Ludwig, "There are more reasons than ever to exit ERIC," *Restoration of America* (2023), <https://www.restorationofamerica.com/restoration-news/eric/there-are-more-reasons-than-ever-to-exit-eric/>.
34. Jan Murphy, "Pa. Senate hearing to focus on sharing driver data with outside organizations," *Penn Live* (2023), <https://www.pennlive.com/politics/2023/09/pa-senate-hearing-to-focus-on-sharing-driver-data-with-outside-organizations.html>.
35. Data obtained from responses to public records requests submitted by the author and data available online.
36. Authors' calculations are based upon data provided through a public records request by state offices in Florida.
37. News Release, "Louisiana to suspend participation in voter registration compact," Kyle Ardoin, Louisiana Secretary of State (2022), <https://www.sos.la.gov/OurOffice/PublishedDocuments/FINAL%20VERSION-1.27.22%20ERIC%20PR.pdf>.
38. Shawn Fleetwood, "Texas announces exit from leftist-controlled voter-roll 'management' group ERIC," *The Federalist* (2023), <https://thefederalist.com/2023/07/24/texas-announces-exit-from-leftist-controlled-voter-roll-management-group-eric/>.
39. ERIC, "About ERIC," ERIC (2023), <https://ericstates.org/about/>.
40. Hayden Ludwig, "There are more reasons than ever to exit ERIC," *Restoration of America* (2023), <https://www.restorationofamerica.com/restoration-news/eric/there-are-more-reasons-than-ever-to-exit-eric/>.
41. North Carolina General Assembly, "2023 Appropriations Act," North Carolina General Assembly (2023), <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2023/H259>.
42. United States Postal Service (USPS), "NCOALink," USPS (2023), <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing-and-shipping-services/NCOALink>.
43. Shawn Fleetwood, "Alabama's new 'voter integrity database' shows states don't need leftist-linked ERIC to manage voter rolls," *The Federalist* (2023), <https://thefederalist.com/2023/09/19/alabamas-new-voter-integrity-database-shows-states-dont-need-leftist-linked-eric-to-manage-voter-rolls/>.
44. Sarah Coffey, "ERIC is a problem for voter confidence in elections—Here's why," *Foundation for Government Accountability* (2023), <https://thefga.org/blog/eric-is-a-problem-for-voter-confidence-in-elections-heres-why/>.
45. Wes Allen, "AVID: Alabama voter integrity database," Alabama Secretary of State (2023), <https://www.sos.alabama.gov/sites/default/files/press/AVID%20Alabama%20Voter%20Integrity%20Database.pdf>.
46. Shawn Fleetwood, "Alabama's new 'voter integrity database' shows states don't need leftist-linked ERIC to manage voter rolls," *The Federalist* (2023), <https://thefederalist.com/2023/09/19/alabamas-new-voter-integrity-database-shows-states-dont-need-leftist-linked-eric-to-manage-voter-rolls/>.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Staff Reports, "LaRose signs election integrity agreements with multiple states," *Miami Valley Today* (2023), <https://miamivalleytoday.com/larose-signs-election-integrity-agreements-with-multiple-states/>.
49. Sarah Coffey, "ERIC is a problem for voter confidence in elections—Here's why," *Foundation for Government Accountability* (2023), <https://thefga.org/blog/eric-is-a-problem-for-voter-confidence-in-elections-heres-why/>.
50. Emma Henderson and Dave DeNatale, "Nearly 27,000 Ohioans purged from voting rolls: Here's how to see if your name was included," *Cleveland WKYC Studios* (2023), <https://www.wkyc.com/article/news/local/vote/ohio-secretary-state-frank-larose-purges-nearly-27000-people-voting-rolls/95-5bcc6ca7-ecb0-4c57-8833-2480affdbf6b>.
51. Judicial Watch, "What's Wrong with ERIC? Judicial Watch study details left-leaning roots, data security concerns, possible violations of federal law at the Electronic Registration Information center," *Judicial Watch* (2023), <https://www.judicialwatch.org/whats-wrong-with-eric/>.
52. Hayden Ludwig, "Do ERIC states have clean voter rolls," *Restoration of America* (2023), <https://www.restorationofamerica.com/restoration-news/eric/do-eric-states-have-clean-voter-rolls/>.



15275 Collier Boulevard | Suite 201-279
Naples, Florida 34119
(239) 244-8808

TheFGA.org | [X @TheFGA](https://twitter.com/TheFGA) | [@ TheFGA](https://www.instagram.com/TheFGA) | [f TheFGA](https://www.facebook.com/TheFGA)