



Hawaii News | Kokua Line

Citizen's 'voter status' 'inactive' if data outdated

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Question: Good thing Hawaii isn't handing over all the personal information the Trump administration wants about voters ([808ne.ws/76saige](#)). However, the story said some information is already public, including "voter status." What does that mean?

Answer: Voter status reflects whether a person's voter registration is up to date. Nedielyn Bueno, a spokeswoman for the state Office of Elections, explains:

"Voter status indicates 'active' or 'inactive' on a voter-registration record. Active indicates that the record is good. Inactive indicates that there is a flag on the record that needs to be updated by the voter; for example, their mailing address.

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"Each election year, a yellow card is mailed to all registered voters. If you are properly registered to vote, you will receive in the mail a Notice of Voter Registration 'yellow card.' The 'yellow card' informs the voter of their polling place or if they will receive a ballot by mail instead. It will also have information about the voter's district precinct. This card cannot be forwarded.

"If a voter has moved, their yellow card would be sent back to the Clerk's Office, which then prompts the Clerk's Office to send a second card to voters who are identified as having moved away or changed address.

"This second card can be forwarded and will be sent to the forwarding address left by the voter at the post office. This card serves as a reminder for the voter to update their voter registration. The voter can complete the card with their new information and send it back to their Clerk's Office."

Kokua Line heard from readers objecting to the Trump administration's nationwide request for voter data. Most worried about privacy loss and potential identity theft; others described the commission's work as a voter-suppression tactic; and some said the federal government shouldn't meddle in states' election operations.

The controversy stems from a letter the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity issued June 28 asking for voter-roll data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, "including, if publicly available under the laws of your state, the full first and last names of all registrants, middle names or initials if available, addresses, dates of birth, political party (if recorded in your state), last four digits of Social Security Number if available, voter history (elections voted in) from 2006 onward, active/inactive status, canceled status, information regarding any felony convictions, information regarding voter registration in another state, information regarding military status, and overseas citizen information." The letter goes on to say that the commission will make public whatever it receives from the states.

However, most of the requested information is not public under Hawaii law, and therefore not subject to release under the terms of the letter. Per Hawaii Revised Statutes 11-97, only "a voter's full name, district/precinct designation, and voter status shall be public; but all other personal information, as provided on the voter registration affidavit, shall be confidential."

The most Hawaii should do is provide information that is already public, the League of Women Voters of Hawaii, a policy advocacy group, said in a news release. "But we question whether our state should cooperate with this effort at all, because it may be used to push through more restrictive voting laws, including photo ID and proof-of-citizenship requirements. Meanwhile, the Hawaii League is working diligently to improve voting opportunities and modernize our elections. We do not want this gross overreach by the so-called Integrity Commission to lay the foundation for undermining democracy through widespread discrimination in voting," it said.

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