



Hawaii News

Federal panel gets OK to collect voter data

[Star-Advertiser staff](#) and Associated Press

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A federal judge has cleared the way for President Donald Trump's commission on election fraud to resume collecting detailed voter roll information from the states, but at least one election official in Hawaii says he won't comply with the federal request.

The commission asked states last month to provide publicly available data including registered voters' names, birth dates and partial Social Security numbers, but it later told them to hold off until a judge ruled on a lawsuit filed by the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington.

U.S. District Court Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, in the District of Columbia, on Monday denied the advocacy group's request to block the data collection in a ruling that commission Vice Chairman Kris Kobach called "a major victory for government accountability, transparency and the public's right to know about the integrity of our elections processes."

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"The commission requested this publicly available data as part of its fact-gathering process, which is information that states regularly release to political candidates, political parties and the general public," said Kobach, the Republican secretary of state in Kansas.

The privacy group had argued that the commission should have completed an assessment of privacy concerns before making the request. The judge found that the group had standing to make that argument but said the commission is not an agency and therefore is not required to do such assessments. The judge also found the group failed to show that its members would be harmed by the data collection.

She did not say that any states must comply with the commission's request.

In Hawaii, state election officials haven't provided any information to the commission, and Honolulu City Clerk Glen Takahashi said he does not plan to do so. "It is not my intention to cooperate with that request," Takahashi said Monday. "I think it is an example of federal intrusion and overreach."

Takahashi said Hawaii administrative rules allow data from the voter rolls to be used only for an "election purpose." His understanding of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity is that the commission plans to compare data from the various states to hunt for people who are registered or voted in more than one state.

That does not qualify as an election purpose under the Hawaii rules, he said. An "election purpose" is defined as supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot issue, encouraging voter participation or registration, or qualifying a political party or presidential candidate for the ballot, he said.

"This is a voter fraud hunt, basically. ... That much has become clear even from the president's statements to the commission," Takahashi said. If federal officials are concerned about voter fraud, the U.S. Department of Justice is the appropriate agency to pursue that issue, he said.

Kobach wrote to Lt. Gov. Shan Tsutsui on June 28 to request publicly available Hawaii voter data. That request sought the names, addresses, dates of birth, voter history, voter status, political party affiliation and the last four digits of voters' Social Security numbers. The request also sought any information about felony convictions and military status, and any information about voter registration in another state.

Tsutsui replied that Kobach's inquiry should be directed to the state Office of Elections, but state Election Chief Scott Nago said he hasn't received a follow-up request. If a new

request does arrive, Nago said, he will refer it to the city and county clerks, who are responsible for that data.

Takahashi said some of the information being requested, such as party affiliation and military status, is not collected in Hawaii for voter registration purposes. Other pieces of information such as date of birth and Social Security numbers are collected but not made public, he said.

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser's Kevin Dayton contributed to this report.

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