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Hawaii pretty good about catching voter irregularities

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It appears that as Donald Trump's poll numbers nosedive, his belief that the November election will be stolen from him by unseen, sinister Democratic forces increases.

"The election is going to be rigged — I'm going to be honest," Trump was saying in August, as his poll numbers in Pennsylvania started to slip.

In response to a question during his disastrous performance in the first debate, Trump promised to support the results of the election — but when after another drop in the polls, Trump backed away from the pledge, telling The New York Times, "We're going to have to see. We are going to see what happens."

So exactly how easy is it to rig an election?

Every state has its own set of rules, but in Hawaii, the stumbling block for those wanting to jimmy an election is the voter's Social Security number.

Scott Nago, state elections officer, said no one can vote without registering and registration requires a valid Social Security number.

And yes, it has to be your Social Security number.

"We then bump it up against a driver's license. If it's fake, it gets flagged," Nago said in an interview.

Every precinct has a poll book with the names of everyone registered to vote; that's what you sign when you vote in person.

If you vote by mail, the elections office compares signatures. If they don't match, out it goes and Nago and company call the cops.

"We manually look at the signature of every mail-in ballot," Nago said, adding they are investigating getting a computer scanning system.

Four years ago, Nago recalled, someone tried to vote twice and was caught and the case was referred to the prosecutor.

Nago said the person forgot he had voted absentee and went to vote on election day. When the poll books were audited, the double vote was caught.

Still, Hawaii doesn't have a spotless history regarding voter fraud. There have been several big cases in the past.

In 1983, then-state Rep. Gene Albano and his wife were arrested and found guilty on 90 counts of election fraud.

He was sentenced to five years, but was given a minimum term of 18 months by the parole board.

He was paroled before his minimum term was up because of good behavior and eventually given a pardon.

Hawaii's big glamour vote fraud case occurred in 1982, when former University of Hawaii law school student Ross Segawa and several fellow students illegally registered voters in order to help his state House campaign.

Segawa was convicted of 10 counts of election fraud, criminal solicitation and evidence tampering. Segawa served 60 days.

Former state Sen. Clifford Uwaine was convicted of illegally conspiring to help Segawa. Uwaine got three months in the slammer.

Segawa also got a pardon; Uwaine did not.

Earlier this year the Associated Press discounted Trump's fears of voter fraud.

"Lorraine Minnite, a political science professor at Rutgers University-Camden, says voter impersonation fraud is rare because it's difficult to do on a large-enough scale to tip an election," said the AP.

"It's so irrational to even try just for one or two more votes," said Minnite, author of "The Myth of Voter Fraud."

Meanwhile, early voting in Hawaii starts Oct. 25 and the election is Nov. 8 — so go vote, but only once.

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