



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

Deceased voters' ballots are not counted

Ballots of voters who have died are rejected in Michigan, even if the voter cast an absentee ballot and then died before Election Day. Those who make claims otherwise are wrong, and the lists circulating claiming to show this is happening are not accurate.

Many of the lists do not contain enough information to accurately compare them to the Michigan Qualified Voter File. MDOS and news organizations have drawn samples and reviewed samples of lists claiming to show votes cast by deceased individuals in Michigan. We are not aware of a single confirmed case showing that a ballot was actually cast on behalf of a deceased individual. There are many reasons why these claims have proven to be inaccurate:

- Many of these allegedly deceased individuals do not appear on the Qualified Voter File at all. Instead, a deceased individual has a similar name to an individual on the Qualified Voter File. For example, a list may contain an individual named John A. Smith who died, and falsely claim it is the same individual as John B. Smith, who is alive and registered to vote in Michigan.
- In some cases, because of a clerical error, a ballot will be recorded as cast by a deceased individual when it was actually cast by a living individual with a similar name. For example, a ballot that was cast by John A. Smith, Jr., who is alive, might be accidentally recorded as having been received by John A. Smith, Sr., who is deceased.
- The Qualified Voter File might contain an erroneous birthdate or a placeholder birthdate that might make it look like an individual must be deceased based on the birthdate, when in fact that voter is alive. For example, an individual might have been born in 1990 but the birthdate was accidentally entered as 1890. Or, if the birthdate is unknown, a placeholder birthdate such as Jan 1, 1900 might be used. In this instance, the voter may have actually been born in 1990 but the birthdate is not known by the clerk. These placeholder birthdates are intentionally chosen as implausible dates so that the election official knows the voter's real birthdate needs to be added.
- In some cases, a deceased individual is still **registered** to vote, but this does not mean the individual actually **voted**. Michigan uses death data from the Social Security Administration Master Death Index to regularly remove the names of individuals who are deceased from the Qualified Voter File. In some cases, this process may not identify an individual who has died, in which case that individual will stay on the voter rolls until the local election clerk identifies the deceased individual's record and cancels it. There are safeguards in place to ensure an absentee ballot cannot be voted on behalf of another individual (deceased or otherwise), including a signature match performed on the signed absentee ballot envelope.

If found to be credible, reports of illegal voting activity would be investigated and referred for prosecution.