

Platte Chat

*An ongoing conversation about how to best preserve free enterprise,
personal responsibility and limited government in Nebraska*



The Reality of Voting Fraud

By Greg Meyer

Some voter-related issues in the 2008 presidential election between John McCain and Barack Obama left a bad taste in many American mouths. In one instance, a seven-year-old girl from Connecticut was registered as a 27-year-old voter.[1] In another, Mickey Mouse was registered to vote in Orlando.¹ Soon citizens from across the country started to notice and many worried about a rigged election. While Bernie Madoff's infamous Ponzi scheme started to unravel, the American people were learning that fraud wasn't restricted to bank accounts and hedge funds.

The issues surrounding 2008 election were a bit more complex than that of the 1960 election between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. One main area of concern was ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), a community organizing group whose goal in the 2008 election was to register as many new voters as possible. In one instance in Nevada, the group hired inmates, some of whom were convicted of identity theft, to canvass neighborhoods and register voters.[2] ACORN workers were also responsible for the aforementioned Mickey Mouse and seven year old girl cases.¹ Until the New York Times discovered records of then-Senator Obama's association with ACORN (an association that had gone back nearly 20 years), he and his campaign vehemently denied his relationship with the group. Nonetheless, records showed the Obama campaign was indirectly funding ACORN's nation-wide activities. During the primary season, the Obama campaign paid \$832,000 to Citizen Service Inc., a group that shares the same board of directors with ACORN.[3] The funding helped the group continue its practices across the country. Freddie Johnson, a Cleveland teenager, said ACORN activists gave him cigarettes and money to sign voter-registration cards (Johnson ended up registering 72 times).[4] Investigators went on to uncover 3,650 more suspicious registration cards in the Cleveland area.[5]

One of the most contested and sought after states in the nation for Presidential candidates, Ohio had additional issues with electoral fraud. In 2008, political advisor Amy Little unlawfully tried to register as an Ohio voter. Little, who had been registered as a Democrat in New York since the early 1990's, thought she could claim residency in The Buckeye State.[6] Little and some others listed the headquarters of "Vote Today Ohio" as their home. The organization's mission was to get young people across the state to vote. Registration laws in Ohio allow a newcomer to vote under the condition that they have been in state for 30 days prior to the election and that they intend to stay until at least November.[7] Although Little claimed she had been living there for some time, her request was found illegitimate, and she and the others were denied.

One modern issue in the voting world relates to new technology used to receive and tally votes. The machines were designed with the goal of saving paper and time, but have proven to be imperfect. Experts including Johns Hopkins professor Avi Rubin have found these voting

systems lack proper security measures[8] and are not 100% fully functioning. During the recent November elections in Ohio, University of Akron freshman Ian Sanderson realized that the touch screen device he was using was not working properly. The machine would not allow Sanderson to select his choice for Ohio's 16th district Congressman. Every time Sanderson attempted to click on Democrat John A. Boccieri's name, the machine would select the box for Libertarian Jeffrey J. Blevins. Luckily Sanderson could count on one piece of technology - his iPhone - and posted a video of the bizarre occurrence on YouTube.[9]

Student activists have also been a topic of conversation recently. In November, members of "Students Organizing for America" underwent scrutiny for the voter-vouching of certain members. The Minnesota students face possible felony charges if convicted after the criminal investigation. Two of the members allegedly tried to vouch for people they did not actually know. By law, a voter must prove his/her residence before taking part in the process, but even if an individual forgets an ID or piece of mail proving their residency, they can be vouched for. For this to happen, a registered voter from the same precinct has to sign an oath stating that they personally know the individual and that the person is indeed a resident in that particular area.[10]

Students and other young people trying to manipulate the system should not come as a surprise. With the President's focus on encouraging young people to become active in the political process, immense pressure has been placed on this younger generation of voters. Students have correctly predicted the outcome of the last four presidential elections, and following President Obama's victory in 2008, the political spectrum is recognizing the magnitude of the youth vote.[11] Get-out-the-vote efforts have resulted in dubious behavior from some. In one instance, a professor from the University of Texas at Brownville named Selma Zynaga (Founder of "The Texas Counselors for Social Justice") [12] pushed her fellow professors to walk to polling sites while engaging with their students. Dr. Zynaga even stated that the University would drive groups of students and faculty to a polling location if need be.

For students without overtly political professors, "guidance" can also come from the internet. Curious about the registration process for voters attending universities outside their home state, I decided to turn to the web for answers. After a quick *Google* search, I found a website called "countmore.org." The website asks students like me to answer two questions: in which state do we attend school and which state do we call home. After entering the information, it directs you to resources that help you register or vote by mail. For instance, I entered Wisconsin for the location of my university and entered Nebraska as my home state. The website proceeded to tell me that I should "Vote at School" because it says my vote would count for more.[13] I'm not so sure I agree with this. The 10 electoral votes in Wisconsin do outweigh Nebraska's five, but the principle of the matter disturbs me. Does my vote really count less if I chose to vote in my home state? Is my voice projected louder if I take advantage of this loophole? Should we be gaming the system with the help of a website? It seems the days when people considered voting to be a privilege and honor in this country are over. Whether it's pure fraud or poor ethics, it seems that the days of ballot warfare have begun.

[1] "Mickey Mouse for Obama?" 16 October 2008. [The Economist](#). 30 December 2010.

[2] "Nevada Attorney General: ACRON Hired Inmates Guilty of Identity Fraud For Voter Canvassing." 5 October 2009. [SayAnythingBlog](#). 28 December 2010.

[3] Fund, John. "Acorn Who?" 21 September 2009. [WSJ.com](#). December 28 2010.

[4] MacIntosh, Jeane. "1 Voter, 72 Registrations." 10 October 2008. [NYPost](#). 28 December 2010.

[5] MacIntosh, Jeane. "Bogus Voter Booted Amid Probe of ACORN." 14 October 2008. [NYPost](#). 28 December 2010.

[6] James, Alexa. "Hall adviser fired, linked to Ohio voting fraud probe." 29 October 2008. [TimesHeroldRecord](#). 28 December 2010.

[7] "Obama supporters convicted of voter fraud in Ohio- an update." 30 April 2009. [Warren Throckmorton](#). 28 December 2010.

[8] Rubin, Avi. "Analysis of an Electronic Voting System." May 2004. 30 December 2010.

[9] Pagonakis, Joe. "Akron student catches voting booth problem on his iPhone." 5 November 2010. [WEWS news](#). 28 December 2010.

[10] Smirnitskaya, Evelina. "Students may face felonies over illegal voter vouching." 8 November 2010. [Mndaily](#). 28 December 2010.

[11] Dahl, Melissa. "Youth vote may have been key in Obama's win." 5 November 2008. [MSNBC](#). 28 December 2010.

[12] Preston, Bryan. "Poll Watcher Witnesses Misconduct in Houston." 28 October 2010. [PajamasMedia](#). 28 December 2010.

13 "Where Does Your Vote for President Count for More?" 2008. [Countmore.org](#). 28 December 2010.

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