

01/28/2016

Pennsylvania Joins Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) Matching System to Improve Accuracy of Voter Rolls

Harrisburg, PA -

Pennsylvania is the latest state to join the national record-matching consortium Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), Secretary of State Pedro A. Cortés announced today.

ERIC is a non-profit corporation governed by a board of directors composed of member states whose mission is assisting states to improve the accuracy of America's voter rolls and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens. Founded in 2012, ERIC's data matching services were developed with financial assistance from the Pew Charitable Trusts. ERIC is completely owned, governed and managed by state elections officials.

"Improving the accuracy of Pennsylvania's voter registration database is a priority for the Department of State. That's why we have been actively working with stakeholders and other states to find the right tool to achieve that goal. The best option we have found is ERIC," said Marian K. Schneider, Deputy Secretary for Elections and Administration for the Pennsylvania Department of State.

As of December 2015, other member states include: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

Every 60 days, member states submit their voter registration data and limited information from motor vehicle records. All data is securely transferred and personally identifying information is anonymized before and after it is submitted to the ERIC data center. ERIC compares these records among states and with data from the U.S. Postal Service and Social Security Administration.

Unlike any current matching programs, ERIC compares multiple records – and multiple fields within each record – simultaneously, as well as accounting for name variations and transposed numbers. Also, matching techniques are more sophisticated across multiple databases so ERIC reports are more reliable and have fewer errors.

"Out of 14 ERIC states using the system as of November 2015, none have reported errors in the data, although care must be taken," said Secretary Cortés, who is Pennsylvania's Chief Election Official.

In addition, ERIC helps member states save money because more accurate voter rolls will result in less returned mail, fewer provisional ballots on Election Day and shorter lines at polling places. The first 20 member states to join ERIC are entitled to a seat on the Board of Directors. Deputy Secretary Schneider will represent the Commonwealth on the ERIC Board.

MEDIA CONTACT: Wanda Murren - (717) 783-1621

###