



BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Michael Stinziano, Director Matthew M. Damschroder, Deputy Director

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With rise in absentee voting, protections in place to prevent double voting

(Columbus) When a Franklin County voter requests an absentee ballot, that voter is automatically noted in the Election Day precinct poll book so that poll workers know not to permit that voter to cast a regular ballot in the event that the voter comes to the polls on Election Day.

“We’ve been fielding a number of calls from concerned citizens about the potential for illegal voting given the unprecedented increase in absentee voting for this election,” board of elections Director Michael Stinziano said. “We have new technology and longstanding procedures in place to make sure that precinct election officials have the tools to enforce election laws at the polls.”

However, under federal and state law, a person who has requested an absentee ballot can still vote on Election Day by using a provisional ballot.

“In some cases absentee voters may not have the time to return their voted ballot or decide to go to the polls on Election Day after receiving their ballot,” Deputy Director Matthew Damschroder said. “These individuals will cast provisional ballots on Election Day that will be validated by board employees following the election to make sure that the voter’s absentee ballot was also not returned.”

Some absentee voters believe that they can return their voted absentee ballot and change their mind later at the polls. According to Director Stinziano, this is not the case.

“For a person who returns a voted absentee ballot and then goes polls to vote on Election Day using a provisional ballot, that voter’s provisional ballot will not count. However, the provisional will count if the voted absentee ballot was not also returned.

Ohio law prohibits any person from voting, or attempting to vote, twice. Such an act constitutes “double voting” and is a fifth degree felony.

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