



New Jersey: Tens of Thousands of Voter Registrations Are Duplicated, Missing Critical Information

JUNE 2022 – PILF recently alerted¹ the New Jersey Secretary of State to what appears to be thousands of examples where registrants are stored in duplicate. Tens of thousands of other voter records were highlighted for missing or fictitious biographical information like dates of birth. These represent *current* and *future* problems with voter roll list maintenance that the Garden State needs to address. To get to the root of the problems, PILF also filed a federal lawsuit² to access copies of list maintenance procedural guides after the NJSOS denied requests for fear of hacking risks. This brief summarizes the data issues raised with state officials.

2022 Findings

Same-Address Duplicate Registrations – 8,239 New Jersians managed to become registered twice or more under variations of their names. New Jersey’s voter registration system, like nearly every other studied by PILF, can be tricked into registering a person multiple times with extremely similar biographical data inputs at the same addresses. These serve as an administrative challenge to be resolved as we see more automation to vote-by-mail. Otherwise, “John Public” and “John Q. Public” could each vote once, while the actual John is voting twice.

The most common finding type, clerical/typographical error, can be as subtle as transposed letters. As an example, *Julia Rose* and *Juila Rose* are the same person, but she has duplicate registrations with unique voter identification numbers.

Findings also include quadruplicates (4x), pentuplicates (5x), and a sextuplicate (6x). With these definitions in mind, the findings per category are laid out in the following table.

Type	Sets
Clerical/Typographical Error	3,011
Identical Duplicate	2,247
Married/Maiden Name Conflict	1,323
Multiple Issues	898
Middle Name/Initial Conflict	688
TriPLICATE	61
Quadruplicate	7
Pentuplicate	3
Sextuplicate	1
TOTAL	8,239

¹ <https://publicinterestlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/4.11.22-NJSOS-Data-Overview.pdf>

² <https://publicinterestlegal.org/press/lawsuit-new-jersey-hides-voter-list-cleanup-rules-amid-thousands-of-duplicate-registrations/>

Two common first names were standouts, indicating a potential recurring, systematic error. Repeatedly, “Christopher” and “Jaqueline” were stored in duplicate with obvious clerical entry errors across the state. The pairings appeared as Christopher vs. Christoph and Jaqueline vs. Jacquelin. While the cause may be unknown at this time, this issue must be examined and addressed

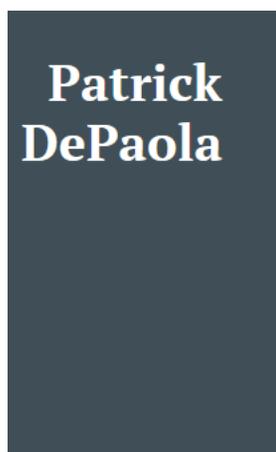
Administrative fixes such as these can legally occur up to the final days before the election without a federal safe harbor protection.

Finally, a subset within these duplicate findings evidences the possibility of duplicate vote credits assigned to some registrants during the 2020 General Election. Due to the aforementioned lack of disclosure regarding documents, PILF cannot reach a conclusion as to what the duplicate vote credits mean.

Registrants Aged 105+ in Years -- 2,398 registration records. There are 2,398 registrants showing dates of birth in 1917 or before across New Jersey. Given that the most recent average life expectancy data show to be 80.7 years in the state, the thousands of registrants aged well beyond 100 years deserve closer examination.³ Potential causes include, but should not be limited to, incorrect date of birth or overlooked list maintenance opportunities.

party	status	reg_date	last	first	dob	city	county
Republican	Active	1927-06-02	DEPAOLA	PATRICK	7/28/1905	Bayonne	Hudson

One startling example of missed list maintenance opportunities is Patrick DePaola of Bayonne. He was born, according to the voter roll, on July 28, 1905. On June 2, 1927, he likely heard that the Yankees beat the Tigers with Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig hitting 3.⁴ He also registered to vote that day. He worked for 50 years as a printer for *The New York Times*. He died at the age of 105 on December 9, 2010.⁵ In 2022, he was still showing as an ACTIVE registered voter in Hudson County.



PATRICK DePAOLA BAYONNE Patrick DePaola, 105, passed away on Thursday, December 9, 2010 at Bayonne Medical Center. Patrick lived most of his life in Bayonne. He retired from the New York Times newspaper, where he was a printer for 50 years. Beloved Husband of the late Antoinette (DioGuardi). Devoted Father of



Relatives and friends are invited to attend the Viewing on Sunday from 2 -4 and 7-9 PM at the G. Keenen O'Brien Funeral Home. A Funeral Mass will be offered on Monday, at 10:00 AM, at St. Vincent's Church. Interment to follow, Holy Cross Cemetery, North Arlington, NJ. G. Keenen O'Brien Funeral Home, Inc. 984 Avenue C Bayonne, NJ 07002 (201) 339-0220

³ https://www-doh.state.nj.us/doh-shad/indicator/complete_profile/LifeExpectancy.html

⁴ <https://www.baseball-reference.com/boxes/NYA/NYA192706020.shtml>

⁵ <https://obits.nj.com/us/obituaries/jerseyjournal/name/patrick-depaola-obituary?id=23967384>

Placeholder/Fictitious Dates of Birth -- 33,572 affected registration records. The largest finding in terms of volume of affected voter registration records involves placeholder or fictitious dates of birth. The voter roll purports to show an excess of 33,000 registrants without dates of birth indicating eligibility. To be clear, PILF *does not* conclude or suggest these are ineligible registrants, rather, PILF observes that these records simply do not demonstrate on their face to include an acceptable birthdate.

The most common placeholder/fictitious date in the voter roll is January 1, 1800 (displayed as “1800-01-01” in the actual data file).

County	Count
Essex	8,064
Middlesex	5,601
Passaic	4,285
Union	3,115
Morris	2,064

PILF’s concerns with the finding are two-fold. The shortcomings in the retention of critical information like date of birth can put the onus on poll workers to try to complete the record at check-in. The longer-term concern is that a lack of birthdate information could complicate future list maintenance efforts.

Placeholder/Fictitious Dates of Registration -- 6,863 affected registration records. Thousands of records do not include an actual date of registration. The bulk of the flagged records distributed by birthdate across time are situated between 1941 and 1960. Finally, the registrants are overwhelmingly placed in Middlesex County, which accounts for 95 percent of the dataset.

Placeholder/Fictitious Dates of Birth AND Registration -- 906 affected registration records. There are 906 examples where the official voter roll extract cannot state when a registrant became registered, nor when they were born. These are almost exclusively in Middlesex County.

Dates of Birth from Centuries Ago and in the Future -- 56 affected registration records. PILF identified records containing what appear to be typographical errors within date-of-birth fields. The vast majority of these records show dates from longer than a century ago, but some even stretch back to the time of the Byzantine Empire. The earliest date of birth belonging to an ACTIVE registrant is 956 A.D. (“0956-11-17” in the voter roll). The voter roll also includes registrants who claim to be born on a date in the future, such as January 14, 2028, and September 30, 2029.

C	D	E	J	K
party	status	reg_date	dob	street_num
Unaffiliate	Pending	2021-10-19	9/30/2029	8
Unaffiliate	Active	1993-03-19	1893-03-19	10
Republican	Active	1993-05-12	1893-05-12	22
Republican	Active	1985-01-01	1038-06-30	108
Unaffiliate	Active	2020-09-28	0956-11-17	21

PILF President J. Christian Adams

“New Jersey has some explaining to do in how it collects and maintains basic voter information. As we have already demonstrated, PILF will pursue available remedies to correct often long-neglected government records.”