

# Democracy North Carolina

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## State Legislators Are Among “Duplicate Voters” Implicated by Their Colleagues’ Claims of Voter Fraud

Documents released today by the nonpartisan watchdog group Democracy North Carolina reveal that four state legislators are, or could be, targets of a criminal investigation for voter fraud, based on standards endorsed by some of their colleagues in the NC General Assembly.

The documents show that each of the legislators has a duplicate registration in another state with exactly the same first name, last name and date of birth.

The revelation of matching records comes as some lawmakers say that a report by the State Board of Elections about thousands of duplicate voters is grounds for stepping up prosecution of fraud and enacting more restrictions on voting.

The board’s report identified 35,750 voters in North Carolina whose first name, last name and date of birth matched an active voter in another state. Several legislators immediately pounced on the information as evidence of widespread voter fraud, while others (including State Board of Elections director Kim Strach) cautioned that the matching data could have many explanations.

“This [report] is proof positive that voter fraud has in fact occurred,” House Rules Committee Chair Tim Moore announced at a meeting of the Elections Oversight Committee. He told legislators that as an attorney experienced with criminal cases, “if you’ve got a [matching] first name, a last name and a date of birth, you’ve got the same person.”

“We have over 36,000 people who apparently voted in this state illegally and committed felonies,” he concluded. His remarks were widely reported and continue to stir emotions. <http://www.wral.com/state-elections-officials-seek-tighter-security/13533579/>

Bob Hall, executive director of Democracy North Carolina, called Rep. Moore’s statements “irresponsible” and said they could needlessly expose thousands of citizens to an invasive investigation and create new barriers to voting based on flawed data.

“I have a duplicate myself in Ohio – a Republican named Robert Hall with my date of birth who regularly votes – but that doesn’t mean either one of us is committing fraud. Rep. Moore apparently doesn’t realize how often people have names and birth dates in common,” Hall said.

“Before legislators get too carried away with their rhetoric, maybe it would help if they know they could be indicting themselves,” he said. “The duplicate voters who legislative leaders and conservative bloggers are going crazy about include themselves, me, and maybe even you.”

The four legislators who could be harmed by misplaced accusations of fraud are Democrats Rep. Duane Hall and Rep. Rodney Moore and Republicans Rep. Charles Jeter and Sen. Ronald Rabin.

Each one has a duplicate with the same first and last name and exact same date of birth in another state – in Florida, South Carolina, New York, and Mississippi, respectively.

At a press conference in Raleigh, Hall displayed the registration records of the four legislators and their duplicates in the other states. In all four cases, the middle initial also matches, but none of the duplicates has voted outside North Carolina for several years.

“Some of these duplicates may actually be the legislator when he lived in another state, but the record shows he has stopped voting there,” Hall said. “This kind of duplicate only proves that people routinely forget to cancel their old registration, not that there’s mass voter fraud. It’s unfortunate that some zealots are using the fear of fraud in a way that can hurt innocent people.”

The State Board of Elections is now conducting a criminal investigation of all the matching records, including those with or without identical ending Social Security numbers and records of voting in more than one state. That investigation could take months.

The Board’s list of registration records that match records in 27 other states comes from its participation in the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck Program administered by the Kansas Secretary of State’s office.

However, that program has received substantial criticism for producing excessive and inaccurate matches. Florida and Oregon recently left the program. Tony Green, spokesman for the Oregon Secretary of State, said, “We left because the data we received was unreliable.” See: <http://www.southernstudies.org/2014/04/nc-joined-controversial-voter-cross-check-program-.html>

Initial reports of large numbers of potential cases of fraud in Virginia and Colorado eventually dwindled to only a handful of cases worthy of prosecution. Hall suspects the North Carolina investigation will lead to a similar result. “I don’t doubt there are some cases of actual fraud, and even fewer that would be solved by a photo identification requirement, but there are far more citizens who are being disenfranchised because of poor poll worker training and changes that make voting more difficult,” he said. “The hysteria about fraud is diverting resources and attention from the real problems we face.”

Hall said his discovery of the matching registrations of four legislators came from searching for matches in eight states for 150 North Carolina legislators whose dates of births he could readily find. The eight states are: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

In addition, he found duplicate voters for 9 other legislators with a date of birth that was just one day off from the legislator’s: Reps. Rob Bryan, Ted Davis, Linda Johnson, Tim Moore, Stephen Ross, Roger West, and Senators William Cook, Jim Davis, and Michael Walters. And he found his own duplicate – a Robert Hall in Piqua, Ohio with a different middle name.

“When you match up large databases, you’ll find these kinds of duplicates more often than you may suspect,” he pointed out. “Among probability experts, the ‘birthday paradox’ says that in any classroom of 23 students, there’s a 50% chance of two students having the same birthday. “When you match 6.4 million registered voters in North Carolina with over 90 million records in other states, it’s not surprising that you find tens of thousands of voters with matching first and last names and birth dates in two states who are actually two different people.”

*To confirm a registration look-up in a state, here are the four legislators and their birth dates: Rep. Duane Hall (D-Wake): Feb. 6, 1967; Rep. Rodney Moore (D-Mecklenburg): July 12, 1963; Rep. Charles Jeter (R-Meck.): August 30, 1973; Sen. Ronald Rabin (R-Harnett): May 16, 1932*