

KPFK 'BradCast': Palm Beach Election Supervisor Says FL Sec. of State Yet to Return Call About GOP Voter Registration Fraud Scandal

Top state officials claiming voter purge needed to deter fraud, seemingly disinterested in actual fraud by Romney-tied firm

Susan Bucher offers exclusive new details on disturbing GOP election scheme...

By **BRAD FRIEDMAN** on 9/27/2012, 5:35am PT

Given the rampage that state officials in Florida have been on over the past year to purge voter rolls of illegal, supposedly "non-citizen" voter registrations in the state, and the draconian restrictions they've attempted to place on third-party voter registration workers and organizations, in a supposed attempt to curb voter registration fraud, you'd think they'd be all over this week's revelations of at least 100 apparently **fraudulent registration forms turned in by a third-party voter registration organization** in Palm Beach County.

If you think that, however, you'd be wrong. At least that's the indication that Palm Beach County Supervisor of Election Susan Bucher gave me on Wednesday when I interviewed her on **KPFK/Pacifica** Radio's *BradCast* concerning the fraudulent registration applications turned in to her office by a firm hired by the Florida state GOP *at the request of the Republican National Committee*. [*My full interview is posted at the end of this article.*]

"I haven't heard from anybody --- the Assistant Secretary [of State] or the Secretary [of State] --- and, ya know, we've had a couple of days and I know they have other things on their plate, but I would think this would be a front-burner issue as well," she told me.

Bucher had informed the office of Ken Detzner, Republican Gov. Rick Scott's hand-picked Secretary of State, about the fraudulent registration forms --- featuring "similarities in the signatures and certain characteristics in the applications that were very disturbing," as she described them to me --- on Monday morning "in an effort to inform them prior to my meeting with the State Attorney."

"I called on Monday morning and left both my office and my cell phone and I've yet to hear from that office," she said during our Wednesday, 6pm ET interview a full three days later.

She explained that there is no longer anyone heading up the State Division of Elections. "We're not real clear [why], but they're not there anymore," she said. "They left right before the Primary election and that position has remained open. But the contact person that we were supposed to have is the Assistant Secretary [of State]. I left him a message on Monday morning and the phone call was never returned. I haven't heard from them yet."

Bucher noted, however, that the state has just given her office 14 more names of "suspected non-citizen" voters that she is supposed to contact with a letter telling them that they must prove their citizenship within 30 days or be removed from the rolls 30 days later.

As **The BRAD BLOG covered in great detail** earlier this year, Scott and Detzner's initial purported attempt to purge the rolls of thousands of "suspected non-citizens" resulted in **no more than 9 who we were able to verify**, out of some 11.4 million registered voters in the Sunshine State. None of those 9, we also discovered during our investigation, had actually ever cast a ballot.

"It does not appear that we're going to be able to get to this [new] list and do anything with these voters until after the November 6th election based on the days that we have left," she explained. And yet, the state Republican officials seemed to show little concern about more than 100 cases of demonstrably fraudulent registration forms turned into her office.

Perhaps that's because they were turned in by Strategic Allied Consulting, the shady firm hired by the Republican Party of Florida (RPOF), operating in a number of key battleground states, and owned by Mitt Romney's paid political consultant Nathan Sproul, a man with a long history of allegedly destroying and defrauding Democratic registration forms in election after election, in state after state, year after year, as we explained in [our detailed Tuesday morning report](#) describing the latest FL GOP Voter Registration Fraud Scandal as it first broke...

After Bucher turned over the registration applications in question to the FL State Attorney on Monday, the RPOF announced they were firing the group who they had paid some \$1.3 million for voter registration services --- their largest expenditure so far this election cycle.

Bucher offered more details during our interview about the flaws discovered in the GOP voter registration applications she turned over to state law enforcement on Monday. "In some cases they were moving voters," she said, "sometimes to commercial buildings or addresses. In some places they were changing political parties."

I asked what sort of havoc and/or disenfranchisement that sort of registration tampering could have on voters during the November Presidential election in Palm Beach, as well as in the rest of Florida, and even in the other states --- all key battlegrounds like North Carolina, Virginia, Nevada and Colorado --- where Strategic Allied Consulting is still believed to be operating.

"If they're changing your address from your real address, and you did not submit that, somebody was submitting it on your behalf in a false manner, then on Election Day you will not appear on the voter rolls and you're going to have vote a provisional ballot and the law says that if you don't go to the correct polling location on Election Day and you vote a provisional ballot, we can't open the envelope and count your ballot."

That could disenfranchise voters in Palm Beach, elsewhere in Florida, or in the other states where Republicans continue to employ the group, and where they may be carrying out similar schemes.

"It's certainly very concerning as we move towards the registration deadline in a very important Presidential Election in the swing-state of Florida," Bucher says.

She told me she still has many concerns that there could be other bad registrations already entered into the system which didn't get caught --- both in her county and elsewhere --- so, she urged voters to check their registrations with the county.

"If you provided a form to a third-party voter registration group recently, or if you just want to verify that your information is correct, either call us or go on our website (PBCElections.org) where you can make sure and verify your information. We want to urge anybody who thinks their registration may be in question, or if they provided a form through a third-party voter registration organization, that if they have concerns, we want them to either look it up on the website or give us a call."

She's concerned, but state Republican officials seem to be far less so.

Though she wouldn't elaborate, Bucher seemed to indicate during our interview that, in addition to the lack of response from the Sec. of State's office, the State Attorney was treating the matter with less urgency than she might have expected.

On Monday, during her meeting with FL State Attorney Peter Antonacci and Chief Assistant State Attorney Paul Zacks, Bucher was surprised to learn that "it would be a longer process than I really expected".

Wasn't the State Attorney as concerned as she was about the broad implications of the statewide voter registration effort by the Republican Party's contractor resulting in potential disenfranchisement all across the state? Wouldn't they want to be combing over all of the new registration records with urgency to determine if there isn't still more fraud that has yet to be discovered?

"I certainly would have hoped so," she responded tersely.

When I pressed for more of an explanation, she said: "We gave them the records and the documents and it just seems like it was going to take them a really long time and I'm very concerned because we have a deadline for accurate voter registrations and it's October 9th and we're headed to a Presidential election and we want to make sure that all of our voters that are eligible have the ability to come into their regular polling location and vote a regular ballot. We know that provisional ballots are difficult and in the 2008 general election we had over 35,000 provisional ballots and only 48% of them were counted. And we certainly don't want to end up with that kind of situation in the swing-state of Florida."

As I detailed in [my report on late Tuesday/early Wednesday](#), what appears to be happening in Palm Beach County is the very same thing that Republicans had *claimed*, inaccurately, that the group ACORN had been doing years ago. Though, as The Nation's [Lee Fang pointed](#) out while covering the FL GOP Voter Registration Fraud Scandal late Wednesday night, during a 2009 Congressional hearing on voter suppression, even Republican Utah Congressman Chris Cannon was honest enough to point out that "The difference between ACORN and [Nathan] Sproul is that ACORN doesn't throw away or change registration documents after they have been filled out."

Moreover, as I noted again during the KPFFK interview with Bucher, ACORN also verified each registration for validity before turning them in, flagged those which appeared to be fraudulent, and turned in the names of the workers who defrauded them to officials.

Bucher says Sproul's Strategic Allied Consulting and the FL GOP, while assuring her that they were doing exactly that, apparently did not.

"We got some registration forms that are Florida voter registration forms and they were trying to register voters in different states --- New Jersey and Connecticut and Michigan --- and you can't just put somebody's name on a Florida voter registration and have it be valid in a different state," she said. "So, I question whether anybody even looked at these."

She also responded to a few of my questions on one other disturbing matter, with perhaps even larger national implications, which occurred in Palm Beach County earlier this year. In municipal elections last March, the paper ballot optical-scan system used to tally results in her county (the exact same ones used in hundreds of

others across the nation) declared the results of three different races incorrectly, naming two losing candidates as "winners" in two different cases.

As [The BRAD BLOG reported at the time](#), the failure was only discovered thanks to a manual spot-check of paper ballots by Bucher's office after the elections. A [full hand-count of all of the paper ballots](#) in the election was subsequently required to determine the *actual* winners of the contests.

Those same optical-scan computers, made by Sequoia Voting Systems, which is now owned by the Canadian-owned Dominion Voting, are used in some 285 jurisdictions across the country, [according to Verified Voting's database](#), including Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia and almost all of Wisconsin, where they were used during the [still-unverified June 5th recall election of Gov. Scott Walker](#).

Similarly flawed optical-scan systems made by other companies are used to tally ballots almost everywhere else (at least where 100% unverifiable touch-screen systems are not used.)

In most of those states and, indeed, across all of Wisconsin, the "winners" of elections will be declared on the night of the November 6th Presidential Election, without bothering to have verified that even one of the paper ballots tallied by oft-failed, easily-manipulated systems has been recorded accurately.

While Bucher told me that the company admitted the failure was due to a flaw in all versions of their software, even after upgrading recently, the same issued that caused the problem in March occurred again during the August state primary election.

[The BRAD BLOG has long warned](#) of this very serious concern. Few, if any, elected officials in a position to do anything about it, on either side of the aisle, have shown much concern.

Bucher, however, remains concerned, but determined to take all necessary steps to ensure that voters in her county, at least, can have confidence in the results reported by the electronic systems.

"Ya know, I've been a Supervisor only four years," she told me, "but I've been involved in the process for a really long time and you know I'm not somebody who goes out there and says 'Trust me, trust me! Ya know me, I'm a good guy!' I think that we have the responsibility to the voters, and most particularly in Florida, and especially in Palm Beach County, to have to *prove* it. You have to make sure that you can prove your results. And if somebody wants to come and see, you should open up and have complete transparency and be able to prove it. And so that's what we're working hard to do."

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My complete interview with Palm Beach County Supervisor of Election Susan Bucher --- along with a bit more on this scandal and its potential direct ties to the [GOP voter registration worker caught on a disturbing video in CO](#) over the weekend screening out Obama supporters before allowing them to register (I hope to have even more on that soon) --- follows below, during the first half of Wednesday's *BradCaston* KPFK.

In the last part of the show, Desi Doyen joins me to discuss (okay, rant about) [her very personal perspective](#) on Sen. Scott Brown's (R-MA) attack on Elizabeth Warren's Cherokee family heritage during their first debate last week, as well as for our latest [Green News Report](#).

Download MP3 or listen online below [appx 58 mins total]...

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UPDATE 9/28/12, 11:52am PT: As of late last night (Thursday), the FL Sec. of State had still not returned Bucher's Monday morning call. They have also, so far, failed to respond to our request for comment as to why. In the meantime, the Republican National Committee has now fired the group --- which they claimed to have paid \$3 million for work in five states (though I'm looking into evidence showing that Sproul's companies were/are working in more than just those five states) --- and "irregular" registrations said to be from the same group have also now emerged in *ten* different Florida counties. *Full details now here...*

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