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Fraudulent voter forms reappear in Lafayette

By Nick Marnell

Anxiety flooded through Lafayette as reports of fraudulent voter information forms emerged, rekindling concerns of a similar situation that occurred during the 2016 general election.

"I received a voter guide addressed to someone who, to the best of my knowledge, has never lived at this address," said Lafayette resident Stacy Schirmer. Scott Sommer received five false voter packets mailed to his address and Victoria Singh received two. "This actually started with the last big election. I reported them to the voting agency this time," Singh said.

Reporting the names to the county elections division is the proper thing to do, said Scott Konopasek, assistant registrar of voters for Contra Costa County. The erroneous registrants in these situations are not real people, he said, but falsely supplied information on a voter registration form provided by a signature gatherer in 2016. Once the phony names are reported, the elections division will cancel the fraudulent voter and the name will not appear on the roster at the polls.

"This is not an attempt at voter fraud and we have not received any such reports," Konopasek said.

Through mid-May, the elections division had received 40 reports of 67 fictitious voters, and all of the reports came from addresses in Lafayette. In every case, the fictitious voters were registered through a voter registration drive. "Who knows why in 2016 a signature-gathering employee defrauded his employer by creating fictitious voters in Lafayette in 2016," Konopasek said. He confirmed that the district attorney has issued an arrest warrant for one of the signature-gathering suspects, who is not a Lafayette resident.

"There is nothing in this situation that was created by or poses any threat to the current political situation in Lafayette," Konopasek said. "I live adjacent to Lafayette and I am directly affected by the effects of the Deer Hill development and the outcome of Measure L. I am well aware of the emotions in the city and neighboring areas."

Those who receive suspicious voter information or ballots should call the Contra Costa County Elections Division at (925) 335-7800, or send an email to voter.services@vote.cccounty.us. Include the fictitious name and the address to where the bogus paperwork was sent, and then destroy the material.

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