

# Voter Registration

**OLA** Office of the Legislative Auditor  
State of Minnesota

## Voter Registration

April 11, 2018

## Key Facts & Findings

- Voter information receives different scrutiny prior to voting
- Voter records may be inaccurate on election day
- Registration and voting by ineligible persons occurs
- Various organizations provide registration services, but barriers remain

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## Statutory requirements for voter eligibility

Eligible	Ineligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At least 18</li><li>• U.S. citizen</li><li>• Minnesota resident for 20 days</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serving a sentence for felony conviction</li><li>• Under guardianship with right to vote removed by a court</li><li>• Declared by a court to be legally incompetent</li></ul>

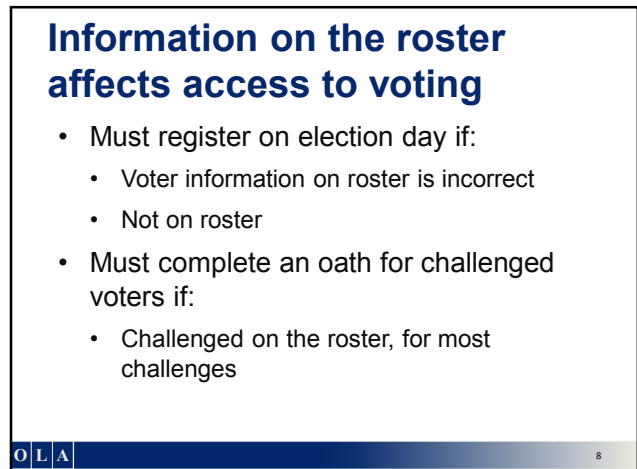
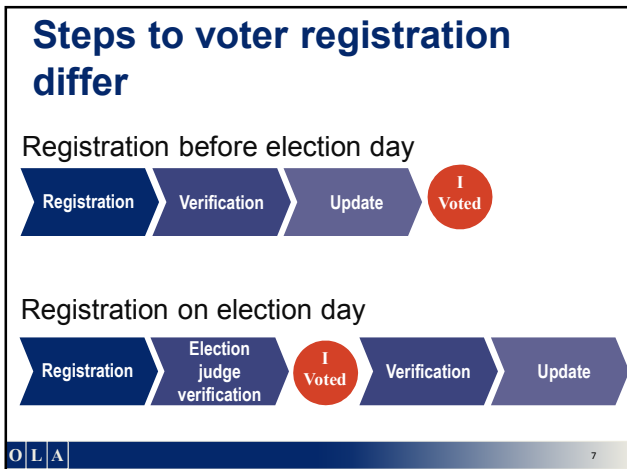
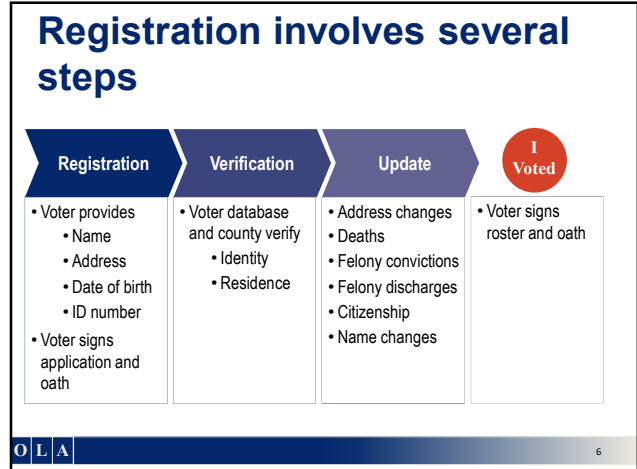
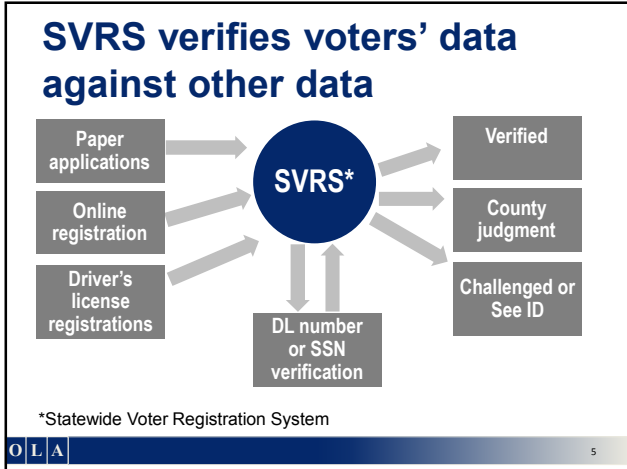
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## Registration involves several steps

Registration	Verification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Voter provides<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name</li><li>• Address</li><li>• Date of birth</li><li>• ID number</li></ul></li><li>• Voter signs application and oath</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Voter database and county verify<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identity</li><li>• Residence</li></ul></li></ul>

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## Most 2016 election day registrants updated or reactivated their registration

	Election Day Registrants (approx.)*
Updated registration	153,000
Registered for the first time	115,000
Reactivated registration	<u>89,000</u>
	356,000

\*Numbers do not sum to total due to rounding.

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## Postal returns were behind most “challenged” voter records in 2017

	Challenges (approx.)
Challenged – Postal return	17,900
Challenged – Felony	7,800*
Other challenges	<u>4,900</u>
	30,700

\*612 persons challenged due to a felony conviction voted in 2016.

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## A voter’s listing in the roster may be inaccurate on election day

County Practices	Data Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorrect updates</li> <li>• Timeliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeliness</li> <li>• Completeness</li> <li>• Inaccuracies</li> </ul>

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## Apparent inaccuracies in felony challenges occurred in both directions

- In some cases, it appeared that challenges:
  - Should not have been on the voter’s record
  - Should have been on the voter’s record

**RECOMMENDATION** ▶ The Secretary of State should develop a report to identify inactive, challenged voters who register on election day.

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# Voter Registration

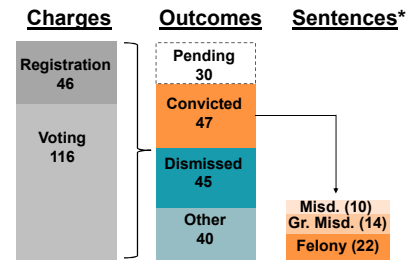
## Nearly two years of reports show ineligible persons register and vote

- Reports suggest 69 cases of persons registering or voting while ineligible
- Most investigations did not find registration or voting by an ineligible person
- But, reports:
  - Did not include all investigations
  - Included investigations into voters' challenge status
  - Did not include detailed information

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## Most charges for registering or voting while ineligible did not lead to conviction, fiscal years 2013-2017



\* One conviction did not have a sentence.

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## Agencies reported providing voter registration services in 2016

- Law requires agencies to provide voter registration services to employees and the public
- 14 of 23 Cabinet-level state agencies did 9 agencies provide services to employees only
  - Some state agencies reported uncertainty about providing services to the public

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## Agencies reported providing voter registration services in 2016

- Law requires agencies to provide voter registration services to employees and the public

**RECOMMENDATION** ► The Legislature should clarify expectation of state agencies to provide voter registration services to the public.

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# Voter Registration

## Agencies reported providing voter registration services in 2016

- Secretary of State
- County and select city election officials
- Community Action agencies

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## Community Action agencies identified registration barriers

- Understanding registration requirements
- Feeling disconnected/disinterested
- Lack of transportation
- Other issues, for example:
  - No proof of ID or residence
  - Language
  - Literacy

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## Additional Recommendation

- Secretary of State:
  - Modernize SVRS—the Statewide Voter Registration System

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## *Voter Registration*

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