

“Virginia Pilot”

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Hampton resident Caroline Arthur received mail two months ago informing her she had to take action so her Virginia voter registration wasn't revoked. She assumed the letter was fake.

The 27-year-old has lived in the U.S. since 1999 and been a citizen since 2018. She's voted in previous elections without issue.

A few weeks later, Arthur received another letter saying she was removed from Virginia voter rolls that she became concerned.

“So I looked up my registration status on the voter registration website, and I wasn't registered to vote,” she said. “So I was like, ‘Oh, this is actually real.’ And then I called the local office, and they were like, ‘Yeah, it seems like you went to the DMV and checked that you're not a citizen. So we took you off.’”

Arthur had no recollection of when she may have incorrectly marked that she wasn't a citizen at the DMV and was confused about why this was happening.

“My first thought was like, ‘Oh, did something happen with my citizenship? Because I'm a citizen, and this is coming out of nowhere,’” she said.

Arthur is among roughly 1,600 Virginia residents who had their voter registrations revoked over the past two months as part of [an order signed by Gov. Glenn Youngkin](#) requiring election officials to more aggressively find and purge noncitizens from the state's voter rolls.

A coalition of immigrant-rights groups and the League of Women Voters in Virginia filed a federal lawsuit to block the ongoing “purge” of voter rolls they said would disenfranchise legitimate voters. The [Department of Justice also filed suit](#) and accused the state of striking names from voter rolls in violation of federal election law. But the U.S. Supreme Court's conservative majority on Wednesday [upheld the program](#), which Virginia officials said is aimed at stopping people who are not U.S. citizens from voting.

The program succeeded in removing some noncitizens from voter rolls. The Virginian-Pilot reached out to dozens of Hampton Roads residents who were removed from the voter rolls. Three Hampton and two Newport News residents confirmed they are not U.S. citizens and that their names were correctly removed. Two residents from Virginia Beach and one from Norfolk said they are permanent residents but not citizens. Permanent residents, or green card holders, cannot vote in federal, state, or local elections. Each received letters indicating that they were removed from the voter rolls.

State officials and advocates who opposed the program emphasized that any voters who believe they were improperly removed from the rolls can still vote in the election because Virginia has same-day registration.

“We want to remind all Virginia voters that the commonwealth does allow voters to register at their polling place on Election Day and at any early voting site between now and Nov. 2,” said Joan Porte, president League of Women Voters in Virginia during a Wednesday call with reporters. “Virginia voters who may find themselves removed from the rolls should reregister at the polling sites and cast their ballots.”

Eligible voters can same-day register at a registrar’s office or satellite voting location during the early voting period, which runs through Saturday. On Election Day, they are required to go to the polling place for the precinct in which they reside.

Residents who complete same-day registration are given a provisional ballot. Those are not processed by a vote counting machine at the time the ballot is cast. Instead, they are subject to approval by the local electoral board prior to being counted, according to Virginia Department of Elections.

Porte said anyone who runs into a problem reregistering to vote can call the organization’s voter hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE.

Arthur ultimately had to reregister. She received confirmation in the mail this week that her registration was reinstated. She is relieved the situation has been resolved and headed to the polls Thursday to vote early. But she said it’s “awful” that the problem arose in the first place.

The National Voter Registration Act requires a 90-day “quiet period” ahead of elections for the maintenance of voter rolls so that legitimate voters are not removed from the rolls by bureaucratic errors or last-minute mistakes that cannot be quickly corrected.

Youngkin issued his order Aug. 7, the 90th day before the Nov. 5 election. It required daily checks of data from the state Department of Motor Vehicles against voter rolls to identify people who are not U.S. citizens.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.

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