



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Voting Rights Advocates Respond to Court Ruling On Purged Voters** *Launch Registration Campaign To 'Verify The Vote'*

Columbus, OH – A coalition of voting rights advocates applauded a court ruling today that found the state has improperly removed hundreds of thousands of voters from the registration rolls ahead of the 2016 Presidential Election.

Ohio voter advocates said the U.S. 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals' decision rightly restores voting rights to those Ohioans who were wrongly dropped from the registration rolls simply because they chose not to vote in recent years.

"We're pleased the court recognized that voter inactivity is not sufficient reason to block properly registered voters from making their voice heard in this year's Presidential Election," said Carrie Davis, executive director of the League of Women Votes of Ohio.

State election officials have removed roughly 2 million voters from the registration rolls since 2011, including 400,000 last year. The total number of purged eligible voters is unknown since the secretary of state's office failed to distinguish between deceased and inactive voters. Reuters recently estimated that at least 144,000 inactive voters were purged in Cuyahoga, Franklin and Hamilton counties alone.

"Unfortunately, it's unclear whether these voters' rights will be automatically restored since the state treats deceased voters the same as people who sit out a few elections," said Davis. "If the state is intent on managing the voter rolls effectively, why wouldn't they have the ability to make such an important distinction?"

In light of the state's policy of removing eligible voters from the registration rolls, the coalition, which includes the League of Women Voters of Ohio, Common Cause Ohio, the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition, and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio, launched the Verify Your Vote campaign to encourage eligible voters to check their registration status and re-register if necessary.

“No matter what federal judges or Statehouse politicians do, you can still have your say in this election. So take charge and verify your voter registration online to make sure it’s still current before the Oct. 11 deadline, and then make a plan for how you want to vote – early in-person, by mail, or on Election Day,” said Camille Wimbish of Ohio Voter Rights Coalition.

Voters can easily check their registration status online through the Ohio Unity Coalition website: <http://ohiounitycoalition.org/are-you-registered-to-vote/> or [www.myohiovote.com](http://www.myohiovote.com), or by calling your county Board of Elections.

While the General Assembly authorized online voter registration earlier this year, the system will not be available until 2017. Therefore, voters who need to re-register can print out a voter registration form or obtain one from a public library and mail it in to their local board of elections or the Ohio Secretary of State’s office before Oct. 11.

“Election Day is still a long way away but it’s coming up quickly. So take charge now and verify your vote,” said Catherine Turcer, of Common Cause Ohio. “And with early voting open to all Ohio voters, you can cast your ballot anytime from Oct. 12 to Election Day on Nov. 8.”

Early voting period voting will begin Oct. 12. The Ohio Secretary of State's office may file an appeal to the full 6th Circuit Court of Appeals or to the U.S. Supreme Court. While we await further court action, the best thing that voters can do is check their registration and update as needed.