

Judicial Watch Follows Through With Threat to Sue Maryland County

Back in April, the government watchdog group Judicial Watch announced it had delivered an ultimatum to 11 states that had counties in which the number of registered voters exceeded the number of voting-age citizens.

Tuesday, it filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court against one of the counties it identified under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. The organization's Election Integrity Project director, Robert Popper—formerly deputy chief of the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department—had sent the April letter to officials in Montgomery County, Maryland, urging them to fix their voter roles or face a lawsuit.

The letter also requested access to Montgomery County voter registration lists in order to evaluate how well any “programs and activities conducted for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy and currency of Maryland’s official eligible voter lists during the past two years” were working. July 7, however, Maryland officials denied Judicial Watch access to the voter registration list because state laws restrict the release of voter registration information only to Maryland registered voters.

“But Section 8(i) of the NVRA provides that ‘[e]ach State shall maintain for at least two years and shall make available for public inspection and, where available, photocopying at a reasonable cost, all records concerning the implementation of programs and activities conducted for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy and currency of official lists of eligible voter,’” Judicial Watch said in a statement announcing the

lawsuit. "Judicial Watch regularly requests and receives records from state and local governments pursuant to Section 8(i) of the NVRA."

The government watchdog group's president, Tom Fitton, said the state's refusal to turn over the required documents suggests officials know there is a problem and don't intend to do anything to fix it.

"Maryland needs to make this voter registration information available as federal law requires," he said. "Maryland doesn't want its voter rolls mess to be exposed by Judicial Watch, and we hope the courts move quickly so we can begin the process of cleaning up the voter rolls. This is a national problem and Maryland is one of many legal battles for clean elections."

President Donald Trump's election integrity commission has begun working on potential recommendations to make our nation's elections "clean," but has also run into opposition from several states that refuse to hand over their voter registration records. Those records are generally available to the public, and in fact are sold to politicians and political organizations that wish to engage in direct-mail outreach and door-knocking campaigns. {eoa}