



YAVAPAI COUNTY IS SENDING MULTIPLE PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE BALLOTS TO CITIZENS - BILL WILLIAMS

Posted on March 2, 2024 by Bill Williams, Investigative Reporter



Photo: Yavapai County Recorder Michelle Burchill, working in her office

Is this safe, is it a normal occurrence or a serious problem?

Earlier this week, a woman posted on a social media site that she had received two ballots from Yavapai County government for the upcoming presidential primary election. She stated she was quite worried that the county could open itself up for problems. And then another person said she and her husband had both received two. And then another person said they had received two and asked if they could vote twice.

As with all social sites, many people began chiming in like the man who said, "you better not vote twice or there could be police knocking at your door soon."

Then someone said "call the county recorder," and another said "surely there must be safeguards in place to prevent double voting." Another person typed the county recorder's name and number and soon the County Recorder Michelle Burchill began typing comments trying to assure those concerned that everything is fine and that bar codes on ballots will prevent two ballots from being used by one person.

When Two Ballots Are Too Much

Lisa N. from Prescott posted, "My husband and I got two ballots. The first was for Democrat voters and the second was for Republican voters." Danielle Howard of the Stoneridge neighborhood in Prescott Valley had begun the postings with, "I had two ballots sent to me for president of the U.S. and that is so upsetting to me to think I could possibly vote twice and that it could be counted; our voting system is in need of a lot of supervision."

Burchill said she responded saying, "we received two voter registration forms from you in the last few weeks. One was received before the early ballots were scheduled to be sent."

When asked about the issue of multiple ballots being sent to one voter, Burchill said, "This is perfectly normal. When people change their

voter information the system is designed to update the new information. Unique identifiers of each voter using the mail-in system are recorded by the computer and it prevents the first one from counting as a vote. The first is automatically cancelled.”

This hubbub involves the presidential preference election with a deadline to vote of March 19. Burchill points out that half the population does not get to vote because they may be voters but list themselves as something other than Republican or Democrat. Currently, there are 50,000 Independents. There are about 168,000 active voters and 20,000 inactive voters in the county. The inactive ones will eventually be taken off the list after a couple of election cycles of inactivity.

People move, they change addresses or add an apartment number or middle initial; one woman put in a second paper form even though she was already registered and the system caught that.

But skeptical TV news producer and pilot Craig Kennedy wasn't buying the excuses. "Is this the result of malice, incompetence or ignorance?" Kennedy asked. "Already skeptical voters need to know."

And as he and this reporter began discussing the problem, we agreed double ballots create a potential for cheating and conjure past images of Stop the Steal protests and Stolen Elections commentary, and the debacle of the Maricopa County election recount (which we witnessed live on TV) and lawsuits over the vote counts plus questions surrounding the ethics of Governor Katie Hobbs being in charge of her own vote count as Secretary of State that led to her victory in the Governor's race.

One of the commentators on the social media site in question - Next Door (a San Francisco-based company that has assigned multiple "minders" and "censors" to the Prescott region) said, "I too received two ballots." And then, as if coming to the defense of the mistake, locals began offering excuses and their own takes on why it was no big deal to receive two ballots. That included one of the leaders of the Prescott Valley Citizens Alliance, which is known for its liberal alliance leaders.

Concerned about ballot harvesting issues, this reporter observed three voters among the first 30 commentators on the Next Door site receiving two ballots and complaining about the situation. This is in no way a valid survey or poll ... just an indicator that about one in ten who chose to comment felt they were affected.

Burchill, who hails from California, worked her way up in the county elections office because she was driven to ensure safe and legal voting. She reminded this reporter that there was a mass exodus of voting district workers and recorders and elections officials nationwide after the 2000 election and that included her colleagues. Yavapai County Supervisors appointed her to the open position of recorder and she will run for election in this election cycle.

Photo: This reporter filling out his ballot

There were many shots taken at the issue of double Yavapai County ballots on the social media site, and Burchill has spoken to several people by phone about it.

Photo: Sealing the envelope

"I understand the skepticism raised by those commenting on the social media site," said Burchill, "But I'm working hard to make sure we have fair and accurate elections."

Photo: Placing his ballot in the indoor Ballot Box

Burchill often works until 8 p.m. and visits many locations throughout the county as part of her job. She practically guarantees that if someone tries to vote with your extra ballot, the system will recognize that and won't allow another to vote. And you can also ask that your ballot be cancelled if you don't receive it and suspect some impropriety.

“There won’t be any ‘*Muling*’ in our system,” Burchill said, in reference to the movie *2000 Mules*, produced by filmmaker Dinesh D’Souza who examined evidence of coordinated voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election, and people stealing ballots and trying to vote with them.



The recorder’s office offers this [livestream](#) of the ballot counting room.

It is advised that mail in ballots be posted in mailboxes or drop boxes seven days prior to the March 19 deadline.