

A SECOND OHIO PROSECUTOR THREATENS TO CRIMINALIZE VOTING

A number of people have noted that Joe Deters—John McCain's SW Ohio Co-Chair and Hamilton County Prosecutor—has subpoenaed the information for 40 percent of those who registered and voted at the same time during Ohio's "golden week" that allowed people to do both at the same time.

Deters issued a subpoena on Friday for complete registration records for roughly 40 percent of the 671 voters who registered and cast a ballot between Sept. 30, when early voting began, and Oct. 6, the deadline for voter registration.

The subpoena, obtained by The Associated Press, is part of a grand jury investigation initiated by Deters in the county.

[snip]

It was unclear why the subpoena — which also calls upon the county's election director and deputy director to testify before the grand jury — doesn't ask for records of all voters from the weeklong window.

It's worth noting, however, that this is not an isolated example of a Republican operative using his prosecutorial powers to collect information on people who voted during that week.

It seems that the former partner of Mike DeWine (DeWine is co-Chair of the McCain team in OH) is asking for the voter registration cards of everyone in Greene County, OH, who voted during golden

week:

Greene County Sheriff Gene Fischer and representatives of County Prosecutor Stephen Haller have contacted the local Board of Elections asking for the voter registration cards of everyone who voted during the six-day window, which ended Monday.

What a coinkydink, huh?

Of course, I have no hard evidence that these two prosecutors are playing the same game, leaking news of a criminal investigation into voting. But it's worth noting that, in both cases, the prosecutors themselves claim to have received the allegations of vote fraud—not elections officials. Here's Greene County:

Greene County Sheriff Gene Fischer, a Republican, requested registration cards and address change forms Thursday for all 302 people who took advantage of the window. He told elections officials he had been flooded with telephone calls from people concerned about possible fraud.

And here's Hamilton County:

"We've had widespread complaints of fraud but we do not discuss investigations at all," Deters said. He said the complaints came from "a variety of sources."

[snip]

The fraud allegations that led to the Hamilton County grand jury investigation **did not come from local election officials**, said county elections board Deputy Director John Williams.

Brunner has ordered counties to immediately investigate any claims of fraud, and report the findings to county prosecutors and to her office.

"This office is unaware of any specific allegations of illegal voting out of that county," said Brunner spokesman Jeff Ortega.

Again, just because both of these efforts have direct ties to McCain's state campaign doesn't mean they're trying the same scheme. But here's a description of what the first Republican operative—Stephen Haller—seems to be targeting.

Tom Miller, chief of the prosecutor's civil division, said Fischer is seeking information so that he can prevent voter fraud. He made it clear to prosecutors that his concerns were not partisan, Miller said, even noting during their discussion that students at one college, Cedarville, tend to vote Republican.

Among concerns presented to county officials were that college students who voted during the window would be able to vote again in their home counties on Election Day, and that early voters might simultaneously register and vote in Ohio and in another state, Miller said.

"There's certain information that the sheriff was hoping to appear on that voter registration that might enable him to track backward and determine whether there was any voter fraud or not," Miller said.

If Deters only subpoenaed students' registration information, it might explain why he only sought records of some of the voters who had registered early.

I'm not sure what these guys are trying—aside

from raising concerns that voting may get you in trouble with the law. But it sure raises some concerns.