



Supreme Court Upholds Ohio's Sensible Voter Purge Procedure

In a 5-4 ruling on June 11, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the state of Ohio's practice of purging people from voter registration rolls if they fail to vote in two federal elections.

The plaintiffs in the case *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute* argued the Ohio law violated the National Voter Registration Act, alleging, "just as you have a right to vote, you have a right not to vote," and claimed that the state's purges risk disenfranchising eligible voters.



The lawsuit was filed initially by the ACLU of Ohio and subsequently taken up by the liberal, New York-based public policy organization, Demos, on behalf of the A. Philip Randolph Institute (an organization for African-American trade unionists) against Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted.

Husted praised the ruling, saying in a statement:

Today's decision is a victory for election integrity, and a defeat for those who use the federal court system to make election law across the country. This decision is validation of Ohio's efforts to clean up the voter rolls and now with the blessing of the nation's highest court, it can serve as a model for other states to use.

At least a dozen other states said they would adopt a similar practice if Ohio prevailed, as a way of keeping their voter registration lists accurate and up to date.

Under the procedure that had been challenged in the lawsuit, Ohio election officials have been sending notices to anyone who fails to cast a ballot during a two-year period. People who do not respond and don't vote over the next four years, including in two more federal elections, are dropped from the list of registered voters.

Justice Samuel Alito, who wrote the majority opinion, said: "We have no authority to second-guess Congress or to decide whether Ohio's Supplemental Process is the ideal method for keeping its voting rolls up to date. The only question before us is whether it violates federal law. It does not."

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