

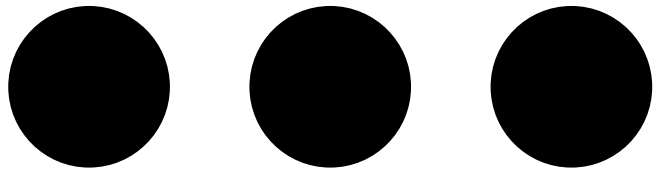


Written by [Kurt Hyde](#) on December 8, 2017

Intimidating Anti-Moore Ad Removed

An intimidating online advertisement that has left some Alabama voters confused as to whether their ballots in the December 12 election would be secret has been removed at the request of the Alabama Secretary of State's office, which posted on its website a news release saying:

December 6, 2017 — MONTGOMERY — Recent reports to the Alabama Secretary of State's Office indicated the existence of an ad that was targeting Alabamians with incorrect or inaccurate information intent on confusing voters. The ad made claims that the candidate a voter casts their ballot for would be made public and would be shared with members of their community.



This ad, paid for by the Highway 31 political action committee, was reported to be on YouTube among other digital platforms. Once the ad was reported, Secretary of State John Merrill instructed his team to work quickly to ensure Alabamians were not confused or dissuaded from participating in the democratic process due to misinformation or fear of retribution for how they cast their ballot.

Secretary Merrill's team contacted the Media and Advertising team at Google (YouTube's parent company), and through several intense discussions and many references to Alabama state law, the group at Google concluded that the ad should be "disapproved," as it was in violation of the AdWords advertising policies. Therefore, at the request of the Alabama Secretary of State's office, the intimidating ad was [removed](#) by Google.

The advertisement is no longer online, but Alabama news site AL.com quoted it as saying:

If you don't vote and Roy Moore — a child predator — wins, could you live with that? Your vote is public record and your community will know whether or not you helped stop Roy Moore. On Tuesday, December 12, vote for Doug Jones.

The statement "Your vote is public record" can be confusing. The record of who has voted or not voted must be public information as a safeguard against stuffing the ballot box in elections. For example, in 1948, when 200 additional ballots were cast in Ballot Box 13 in Jim Wells County, Texas, it was the names of the 202 additional voters that were added alphabetically and in blue ink (the preceding names in that voter sign-in sheet were in black ink) that enabled J. Evetts Haley and other researchers to question the election of LBJ. Luis Salas, the election judge, confessed to the public on a KHOU



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television broadcast that was aired on July 31, 1977 that Ballot Box 13 was stuffed with 200 additional votes.

But the ad did not merely say that “Your vote is public record”; it added, “and your community will know whether or not you helped stop Roy Moore.” It is therefore not surprising that some who saw or heard the ad interpreted it as saying that their ballots would not be kept secret. These are the voters to whom the Alabama Secretary of State referred in his news release.

Voters have every right to be concerned about the integrity of the secret ballot. Dictators such as Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, and Benito Mussolini were known to have intimidated voters in their sham elections by either compromising the secrecy of the ballot or by spreading rumors amongst the voters that their ballots would not be secret.

This highly controversial advertisement against Roy Moore has been pulled. But as the special election next Tuesday to fill the Alabama Senate seat nears, Moore’s opponents, fearing his victory, are ramping up the attacks.

Photo: daoleduc/iStock/Getty Images Plus



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