



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA  
DAILY CLIPS***

***July 27, 2017***

**MEDIA OUTLET:** Sun Sentinel

**HEADLINE:** Broward's voting rolls challenged by conservative group

**BYLINE:** Larry Barszewski

**LINK:** <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-broward-voter-lists-challenged-federal-court-20170724-story.html>

**STORY:** Broward County could have thousands of ineligible voters on its rolls, increasing the risk of voter fraud, because its election officials don't do enough to keep the lists accurate, according to a national group that has challenged voter rolls across the country.

In a lawsuit, the American Civil Rights Union, a conservative group started by a former official in President Ronald Reagan's administration, contends that in recent years Broward's voting lists have included more names than the number of voting-age people living in the county.

"Something very unusual is happening to create that situation," said Scott Gessler, a former Colorado secretary of state who testified as an expert witness in a non-jury trial that began Tuesday before U.S. District Court Judge Beth Bloom in Miami.

The ACRU wants Bloom to order Broward Supervisor of Elections Brenda Snipes to be more proactive in cleaning up the voter lists. The suit could set a nationwide precedent for how aggressive elected officials have to be to ensure that non-citizens and people who move, die, become felons or are mentally incapacitated are purged from the rolls. The group's efforts around the country have been criticized as a voter suppression effort that could snare eligible voters, too.

The suit is a "poorly devised solution to a problem that does simply not exist," said Carrie Apfel, a Washington D.C. attorney for the SEIU United Healthcare Workers union, which has intervened in the case on behalf of Supervisor of Elections Brenda Snipes. The union is concerned that if the suit is successful, it could erroneously cost some of its members the right to vote, Apfel said.

According to Gessler, some things the county should be doing are:

- \* Comparing state driver's license information with voter lists to catch more people who may have moved
- \* Checking whether non-citizens with driver's licenses are on the voter rolls
- \* Using U.S. Postal Service electronic data to ensure voter addresses are accurate
- \* Obtaining jury recusal information to see whether people are getting out of jury duty for reasons that should keep them from voting, too.

Snipes said her office isn't shirking its duties and already has a robust effort to accurately update voter lists, which she said can be difficult in a county with a transient population and more than one million voters. Her office relies on updates it receives from the state about deaths and newly convicted felons. It receives information about people who have changed addresses through mailers that are sent out but returned when there's a bad address.

“We’re always in the process of maintaining the voter rolls, updating the information,” Snipes said. A Democrat, Snipes was elected to a fourth term in November. She has held the post since being appointed by then-Gov. Jeb Bush in 2003.

Susan Carleson, president of the ACRU, said it’s critical for elections offices to remove ineligible voters because as long as those names are on the registration rolls, there’s a chance they could be used to cast an improper ballot.

“It an invitation for voter fraud,” Carleson said.

The ACRU is being represented by attorney Christian Adams, who was appointed this month to President Trump’s Commission on Election Integrity, which Trump created after claiming that he lost the popular vote because millions of people voted illegally. Adams is also president of the Public Interest Legal Foundation, a conservative nonprofit group that says it exists “to aid the cause of election integrity and fight against lawlessness in American elections.”

Adams said the Broward case is the first to look at how much elections offices are required to do to make sure their voting lists are accurate. In opening statements Tuesday, Adams said the ACRU has identified more than 100 counties across the country that show more registered voters than those counties have people of voting age.

Steven Camarotta, a demographer for the Center for Immigration Studies who specializes in analyzing U.S. Census Bureau data, testified his review of population data showed the county’s voter rolls amounted to 108.5 percent of voting-age residents in 2010 and 96.7 percent in 2014. But Apfel called that data “misleading and unreliable” and said it relied on “inflated numbers.”

Burnadette Norris-Weeks, an attorney for the elections office, said thousands of people are removed on a consistent basis. In court documents, elections office information shows Broward removed almost 200,000 names from its voter lists in a two-year period ending in January.

The civil trial continues Wednesday and is tentatively scheduled to wrap up Monday.

In 2012, Snipes office was criticized for allowing five felons to vote even after being notified by the Broward Sheriff’s Office that they were illegally on the voter rolls. At the time, Snipes said she did not purge them from the voting rolls because she relies on the state to send her a verified list of felons to be purged.

**MEDIA OUTLET:** Broward Beat

**HEADLINE:** Broward Politics: Group Takes Aim At Self-Serving County Commissioners

**BYLINE:** Buddy Nevins

**LINK:** <http://www.browardbeat.com/broward-politics-group-takes-aim-at-self-serving-county-commissioners/>

**STORY:** There is nothing electeds relish more than gerrymandering.

Broward County Commissioners gerrymander every 10 years. They draw their own election districts, excluding potential opponents and including the largest number of favorable voters.

In 2011, Commissioners:

Stretched central Broward District One across Interstate 595 into a tiny sliver of Davie to include then Democratic state Rep. Marty Kiar It allowed him to run for that seat.

Pushed south Broward District 5 across I-595 into a slice of Plantation to include then Commissioner Lois Wexler's home plus her Weston condo south of the interstate.

"The lines are supposed to be drawn in a fashion that's blind to political considerations. But political tinkering was done at the Dec. 13 (2011) hearing, without subtlety," Sun-Sentinel's Brittany Wallman wrote.

Now some civic leaders on the Broward Charter Commission want to end gerrymandering in Broward.

They are considering a referendum that would turn future Commission redistricting over to a non-partisan, independent group.

And surprise, surprise!

The idea has the support of the Commission's resident redistricting expert Commissioner Steve Geller.

Geller favors a three-judge panel to do future redistricting.

"In general, incumbents can't redistrict for themselves fairly," Geller says. "Any group drawing the lines for themselves will tend to favor themselves."

That is a very candid statement from Geller, who had a major role in the 1992 and the 2002 legislative redistricting.

He was also a consultant for some commissioners and cities during the Broward Commission's 2011 reapportionment. That was five years prior to his election to the County Commission.

Geller explains his position:

"Judges are clearly less political than anybody else (involved in government)."

Also, judges "theoretically" have a better understanding of laws and court decisions governing redistricting.

One big hang up, Geller concedes:

It may not be legal under the Florida Constitution to have judges involved. The Constitution stipulates a strict separation of judiciary from politics.

Retired judges could be used, but they could come with their own baggage if they currently work for a Republican or Democratic-leaning law firm, he says.

Geller “generally” dismissed having maps drawn by a so-called panel of experts or citizens.

“Experts or activists chosen (for a redistricting board) usually have an agenda, whether it be increasing minority seats or emphasizing municipal boundaries or some other criteria,” according to Geller.

Charter commissioners have not taken a position yet on what redistricting method to recommend. Or if they can even reach consensus.

During an appearance before the charter group, Geller warned them that “there is no perfect way.”

Later during an interview with Browardbeat.com, the veteran of decades of redistricting battles joked that there is one way to reapportion the Commission that is near perfection:

“I can make it simple,” Geller said. “Just let me draw the maps myself.”

**MEDIA OUTLET:** CBS Miami (Channel 4)

**HEADLINE:** Gov. Scott Pitches Law Enforcement Pay Raises

**BYLINE:** CBS Miami

**LINK:** <http://miami.cbslocal.com/2017/07/27/gov-scott-pitches-law-enforcement-pay-raises/>

**STORY:** TALLAHASSEE (CBSMiami/NSF) – As he eyes a run for the U.S. Senate, Gov. Rick Scott has unveiled the first piece of his pending election-year budget proposal: a \$30 million pay raise for state law-enforcement officers.

The initiative would provide the boost in the budget year that begins in July 2018. It would come on top of a 5 percent increase for law enforcement officers in the current budget year.

Speaking at a Florida Highway Patrol office in Jacksonville, the governor said that many law enforcement officers were grateful for the latest salary bump.

“But we cannot stop there,” Scott said. “The brave men and women who serve Florida as members of our state law-enforcement community work every day to keep Florida communities safe. And while I was proud of this important achievement, it’s clear that we must continue to build on this year’s pay raise.”

The next budget Scott proposes will be the last before he leaves office because of term limits in January 2019. At the same time, he is ramping up an expected challenge to U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, an incumbent Democrat up for re-election in 2018.

In the meantime, the governor has been sprinting across the state and highlighting politically popular measures like the recent raise for law enforcement officers.

Heads of the state’s major law-enforcement agencies, on hand for Wednesday’s announcement, said the proposed raises would help them hire and keep employees that they now sometimes lose to local police forces.

“We can’t afford to continue to train these highly qualified young men and women to go out and defend the streets and the public safety for the state of Florida, only to lose them to other states, other agencies within the very near future just because they’re not making enough money,” said Col. Gene Spaulding, director of the Florida Highway Patrol.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Rick Swearingen said the increases could help him hire the more experienced personnel that his agency seeks.

“It’s getting more and more difficult to recruit those seasoned investigators when local agencies are paying more than the state investigative agency,” Swearingen said.

Scott’s office said the state’s law-enforcement agencies would work out the details of how the \$30 million would be distributed. And the Legislature would still have to approve Scott’s plan in its annual session, which begins in January.

It is likely to have at least some politically powerful allies. Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, whose agency employs law-enforcement officers and who is running to succeed Scott in 2018, applauded the plan.

“Our state law-enforcement officers deserve all the support we can give them, as they’ve achieved a 46-year crime low and face unprecedented challenges, such as the current opioid crisis,” he said. “Our 240 law enforcement officers with the Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement and their peers at other state law enforcement agencies deserve a raise.”