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‘Totes Legit’ tipster found 282 possible voter fraud cases in Florida; few prosecuted outside The Villages

News 6 investigates how Florida officials handled double voting cases uncovered by a prolific tipster

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An anonymous tipster using the pseudonym “Totes Legit Votes” sent a barrage of emails to Florida’s Secretary of State last year, alerting state elections officials to possible voter fraud, records obtained by News 6 show.

THE VILLAGES, Fla. – An anonymous tipster using the pseudonym “Totes Legit Votes” sent a barrage of emails to Florida’s Secretary of State last year, alerting state elections officials to possible voter fraud, records obtained by News 6 show.

The tipster, who describes himself as a “citizen election integrity analyst,” combed through publicly available voter rolls from Florida and several other states in search of people who may have cast multiple ballots in the 2020 general election.

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Using electronic data extracted from those voter rolls, “Totes Legit Votes” provided Florida elections officials with the names of 282 people who appeared to have voted in both Florida and at least one other state, emails reviewed by News 6 reveal.

Willfully casting more than one ballot in an election is **a felony in Florida**, punishable by up to five years in prison.

Three residents of The Villages in Sumter County were arrested last year after “Totes Legit Votes” first identified them as possibly voting twice.

Another voter in Putnam County accused of casting multiple ballots entered into a deferred prosecution agreement before formal criminal charges were filed, records show.

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A few others flagged by the tipster have been criminally charged in other states for double voting after legally casting their first ballots in Florida.

But most of the information “Totes Legit Votes” began sharing with state leaders more than a year ago has not yet resulted in criminal prosecutions, a search of court records and interviews with election officials indicate.

Florida Secretary of State Cord Byrd, who oversees the state’s elections, did not respond to questions from News 6 inquiring about the status of the 282 potential voter fraud cases identified by the anonymous tipster.

Days after News 6 submitted those written questions, one of Florida’s top elections officials shared a batch of 45 additional tips from “Totes Legit Votes” with county-level elections supervisors.

Maria Matthews, director of Florida’s Division of Elections, told those elections supervisors that the Department of State’s newly-created Office of Election Crimes and Security may now be conducting criminal investigations related to the anonymous tips, an email obtained by News 6 shows.

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Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody is not involved in any prosecutions related to those specific voter fraud tips, according to a spokesperson.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement told News 6 it does not have any information to provide at this point.

“Totes Legit Votes” declined to disclose his real identity. But in messages sent to News 6 from the same email address he used to communicate with Florida elections officials, the tipster explained his passion for examining voter data.

“The kind of stuff I do isn’t the ‘election was rigged’ kind of analysis,” the tipster told News 6. “I’m the guy who shows that illegal votes happen, in much larger numbers than talking heads want to admit, and governments are completely incapable of preventing it.”

Although the Florida Department of State has not explained how it addressed the information it obtained from “Totes Legit” last year, a News 6 investigation has found that many of the tips were initially vetted by county-level supervisors of elections.

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Several of those tips were later forwarded to local state attorneys for possible prosecution.

Some of those cases are still actively being investigated, state attorneys and elections supervisors told News 6.

In other cases, local prosecutors declined to file charges if the voters were of advanced age and had memory issues suggesting they lacked criminal intent, authorities said.

If it appeared a Florida ballot was submitted first chronologically — and hence was legally cast — elections supervisors told News 6 they forwarded the information to their counterparts in other states, where the second ballot cast may have been illegal.

In those cases, the supervisors of elections were generally not told whether anyone was criminally prosecuted in the other state.

News 6 has attempted to identify how many criminal prosecutions were opened in other states by reviewing court records and contacting prosecuting agencies, but few out-of-state criminal cases have been confirmed at the time of this publication.

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In some cases, Florida elections supervisors concluded that no illegal activity occurred, despite state voter roll data suggesting it did.

“Frequently it pans out there’s not actual double voting,” said Leon County Supervisor of Elections Mark Earley, who indicated that data errors or coincidences — like twins sharing the same names and home address — could account for anomalies. “You really have to dig deep.”

At least some of the tips appeared to have slipped through the cracks, records show, while the specific outcome of others could not be immediately determined.

In at least two cases, elections supervisors told News 6 they reported the possible voter fraud to the offices of their local state attorney, but those prosecutors claim they did not have a record of receiving the complaints. One of those reports may not have been received because the sender typed in an incorrect email address for the state attorney’s office.

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A spokesperson for Florida’s secretary of state did not respond to questions from News 6 inquiring whether the new election crimes office is specifically investigating tips the agency received from “Totes Legit Votes.”

But Governor Ron DeSantis has indicated the Office of Election Crimes and Security unit is looking into reports of double voting.

“There are investigations ongoing into people that have voted in two different jurisdictions, and I imagine you are going to see prosecutions on that,” DeSantis said at a news conference last month while announcing the **arrests of 20 convicted felons who are accused of illegally voting**.

“I’m not looking for people to get hammered, just documented,” the anonymous tipster told News 6. “Most people only think there were a few illegal votes. Most will never hear about the ones that can’t even be solved.”

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‘Florida data will be one of my hobbies’

In March 2021, Florida’s Division of Elections received the first of what would eventually be more than 100 emails from “Totes Legit Votes” in which he requested a copy of the state’s voter list and voter history data.

About a month later, the tipster sent a batch of emails alerting election officials in Florida and other states about suspicious information he found in the voter rolls.

“Hello Florida and Georgia!” one of the emails stated. “I was looking at voter data between Florida and Georgia and I noticed a couple records that seem similar between your two states.”

In the email, “Totes Legit Votes” identified several people who appeared to be simultaneously listed on voter rolls in both Florida and Georgia and who were documented as voting in both states in the 2020 general election.

The first and last names, birthdates and mailing addresses of those voters matched up on the two sets of voter rolls, according to the data.

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Many more emails from “Totes Legit Votes” containing many more names of potential illegal voters would follow.

“Florida data will be one of my hobbies for the next while,” the tipster wrote to the state’s division of elections director in April 2021.

By the end of the year, “Totes Legit Votes” had provided Florida election officials with the names of 282 voters who may have cast second ballots in at least one of 19 other states including Arizona, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

“Totes Legit Votes” continued providing additional tips to Florida elections officials into 2022 as he acquired and examined voter rolls from more states like Texas.

“There will most certainly be some innocent coincidences among my reports,” the tipster told News 6. “I only ask that the states in question take a look. If they report back, ‘Those are actually twin sisters who are roommates who have the same first name,’ then I’ll say, ‘Roger that. Sorry to waste your time.’ But I’m providing ‘reasonable-person-standard’ crime reports, like someone who sees a possible burglary.”

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“Totes Legit Votes” tips lead to arrests in The Villages

In early May 2021, “Totes Legit Votes” sent an email to the Florida Department of State identifying **Sumter County resident Jay Ketcik** as potentially voting in both Florida and Michigan.

Exactly 29 minutes later, Florida’s Division of Elections director forwarded the tipster’s email to Sumter County Supervisor of Elections Bill Keen.

“Please research, if you would please, and provide feedback, if any, to [the Florida Department of State] regarding the outcome and if you or the other state election official have further exchange of information necessary to determine the underlying allegation and what action, if any, you or the other jurisdiction plan to take,” Matthews wrote.

Matthews had received additional emails from “Totes Legit Votes” one week earlier indicating **Joan Halstead** and John Rider may have cast ballots in both Sumter County and New York.

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In mid-August, an attorney representing the Sumter County Supervisor of Elections sent a letter to State Attorney Bill Gladson stating that their office had investigated the three voters from The Villages and believed they had illegally voted twice.

Following a secondary investigation conducted by the state attorney’s office, Gladson filed felony charges against Halstead, Ketcik and Rider on November 29.

Ketcik, 64, and Halstead, 73, recently entered a pretrial intervention program that spared them from prison time but required them to take a civics course and perform community service.

Both admitted their wrongdoing, court records show.

Rider, 62, is still awaiting trial. He has pleaded not guilty.

By coincidence, just days after the state attorney’s office began investigating the trio, a Connecticut election official discovered a fourth voter from The Villages may have illegally cast a second ballot in that state.

Charles Franklin Barnes was eventually charged with the same offense. Like Ketcik and Halstead, he entered a pretrial intervention program.

"Totes Legit Votes" did not identify Barnes as a potential double voter because he did not have access to Connecticut's voter data, the tipster told News 6.

"If elections were 'secure' [double voting] couldn't happen at all," he said.

Prosecutions from 'Totes Legit Votes' tips hard to come by

Following the voter fraud arrests in The Villages, News 6 submitted a public records request to the **Florida Department of State** in December 2021 seeking copies of all emails it received from "Totes Legit Votes" last year.

The agency produced those 111 emails and attachments more than eight months later without making any redactions.

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In those emails, "Totes Legit Votes" listed the names and voter registration numbers of 282 Florida voters who may have cast second ballots in other states.

News 6 has independently obtained and corroborated much of the voter roll data used by "Totes Legit Votes" to identify those potential double voters.

Last week News 6 submitted about a dozen written questions to the Department of State inquiring how the agency addressed the tips it received from "Totes Legit Votes".

The agency did not respond.

To see how state officials may have handled those tips, News 6 searched online court record databases throughout Florida for all 282 names identified by "Totes Legit Votes".

The three residents of The Villages in Sumter County are among the only voters to be formally prosecuted in Florida so far, court records indicate.

At least one other Florida voter, Philip Poirier, entered into a deferred prosecution agreement before the state attorney in Putnam County decided whether to file formal criminal charges against him. Poirier, 67, agreed to perform 50 hours of community service but did not acknowledge any wrongdoing, records show.

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News 6 also searched court databases and other criminal records in other states where “Totes Legit Votes” identified other potential double voting cases tied to Florida.

Two people in Rhode Island and at least one in Idaho were prosecuted for allegedly casting second ballots after first voting in Florida.

Richard Guggenheim, 42, entered into a plea agreement requiring 100 hours of public service and three years of unsupervised probation, Idaho court records show.

Rhode Island residents Robert Nickerson, 80, and Paul Krikorian, 72, recently pleaded no contest to mail ballot violations. Nickerson received a deferred sentence, court records show. Krikorian’s sentence was not immediately available.

Which vote is illegal?

To determine how other cases were addressed, News 6 contacted the supervisors of elections in 46 Florida counties where “Totes Legit Votes” had identified questionable voting activity.

Each office handled the tips differently upon receiving them from the Secretary of State, responses from those elections officials show.

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The supervisor of elections in Alachua County told News 6 it turned over documentation about one possible double voting case to the local state attorney. But prosecutors do not have record of the complaint, according to a state attorney spokesperson, and the investigator who the election supervisor reportedly contacted is no longer employed there.

Brevard County’s supervisor of elections said seven voters identified by “Totes Legit Votes” were part of an active investigation and could not provide further comment.

In Broward County, the names of 32 potential double voters were forwarded to the state attorney’s office, a spokesperson for the Supervisor of Elections said.

The elections supervisor in Charlotte County said their office received a subpoena from North Carolina for documents in one case. In another case flagged by “Totes Legit Votes,” elections officials said they had rejected the voter’s provisional ballot and did not count it.

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The Citrus County supervisor of elections forwarded four cases to elections officials in Georgia, Michigan and New York, since it appeared those voters had cast their first ballots in Florida legally.

One case tied to Collier County was prosecuted in Idaho instead of Florida.

In another Collier County case, local prosecutors declined to file criminal charges due to the 78-year-old voter's age, rapidly declining health, and investigators' belief that she did not willfully cast ballots in both states, an elections official told News 6.

Hendry County elections officials forwarded one case to their counterparts in North Carolina, they said.

The state attorney in Hernando County is still investigating one potential double voter case there, a spokesperson said.

The Indian River County supervisor of elections forwarded one case to the local state attorney there, which was later prosecuted in Rhode Island, records show.

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A Lake County voter has a pending prosecution in Teton County, Idaho, according to the prosecuting attorney in that community.

Prosecutors in Lake County said they opted not to charge a 60-year-old voter who they concluded had a medical condition that severely affected her memory.

Two other voters in Lake County were not prosecuted because it appeared they had voted legally in Florida first, a spokesperson said.

The Lee County supervisor of elections forwarded two cases to New Jersey and Pennsylvania for further investigation. A third case was sent to Florida's secretary of state, the office said, while a fourth case was closed after review by a local detective.

The Marion County supervisor of elections concluded one resident identified by "Totes Legit Votes" did not vote in the 2020 general election and the office could not determine when a second voter cast her ballot. Three other cases were forwarded to other states for potential prosecution, the supervisor said.

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The Orange County supervisor of elections said his office reported five cases to the Florida Department of State. Two of those were also reported to the local state attorney, he said. But the prosecutor's office could not immediately find record of receiving those complaints, a state attorney spokesperson indicated.

The Osceola County supervisor of elections told News 6 an employee forwarded one double voter complaint to the local state attorney's office for review last year but never received a response. A state attorney spokesperson later determined their office never received the original complaint because it was sent to an incorrect email address. The elections supervisor also said the office sent the complaint to the FBI but was led to believe the federal agency would not have jurisdiction over an election issue.

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The Palm Beach County supervisor of elections did not provide specific information about 58 potential voting cases it received from the secretary of state but said it followed the instructions and directions asked of it by the state.

The state attorney's office that prosecutes cases in Flagler and Volusia counties has not received any information from elections supervisors about the eight potential double voting cases identified by "Totes Legit Votes" in those two counties, a spokesperson said.

The elections supervisor in Santa Rosa County said her office verified information about one potential double voter and forwarded it back to the secretary of state's office.

In Gilchrist County, the Supervisor of Elections said she sent an email to a potential double voter "asking if he lived in another state" but never received a response to the email.

Two cases remain under investigation in St. Johns County, according to the elections supervisor's office. In two other cases, prosecutors believe the first ballots were legally cast in Florida. One of those cases involved a voter with a possible cognitive disorder, and there was no evidence confirming the other voter actually cast a ballot in New York, records show.

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Besides the three residents of The Villages, "Totes Legit Votes" identified two other Sumter County residents who may have cast multiple ballots. The Sumter County supervisor of elections said his office had no record of those two additional voters until News 6 inquired about it and is currently reviewing the matter.

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Gov. DeSantis Accuses Local Supervisor of Elections of Not Caring about Election Laws

New Elections Police Unit May Be Investigating

The Florida Department of State did not respond to questions from News 6 inquiring whether its newly-created Office of Election Crimes and Security would be investigating the tips received from "Totes Legit Votes."

Days after News 6 made that inquiry, Florida Division of Elections Director Maria Matthews discovered she may have failed to notify several supervisors of elections about an email "Totes Legit Votes" sent her more than a year ago containing the names of 45 people who appeared to have voted in both Florida and New Jersey.

In an email sent last week, Matthews urged the elections supervisors to "triage" those additional records by ensuring the voters' identity and voting history were accurate.

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Matthews then instructed the elections supervisors to contact Peter Antonacci, the director of the new unit, which was established in July.

That office, based within Florida's Department of State, is charged with investigating voter fraud and other election crimes.

"(Please) share whatever information or action you have taken immediately with Pete and his Office of Election Crimes and Security," Matthews wrote in the Aug. 29 email. "Also include whether you have already been contacted by New Jersey on the matter and if you have anything from them to share with Pete to proceed with criminal investigations."

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