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Secretary of State Ken Bennett notes apparent voter-fraud cases

10 people allegedly voted in Ariz. and other state in '10

by **Mary Jo Pitzl** - Sept. 25, 2012 10:05 PM
The Republic | azcentral.com

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Ten people apparently voted twice in 2010 -- once in Arizona and again in another state, according to state officials.

Secretary of State Ken Bennett discussed voter fraud Tuesday as he urged Arizonans to register to vote for the Nov. 6 general election, which will feature decisions on the U.S. presidency, state lawmakers and a sales tax for education. Registration closes Oct. 9 and early voting begins Oct. 11.

"We want everyone to vote. Once," Bennett said at a news conference as Catholic Charities Community Services was conducting a voter-registration drive.



Arizonans can register or change their registration at their county elections office, or online at servicearizona.com.

The Attorney General's Office has received 10 cases so far this year for prosecution for double voting. The cases stem from the 2010 election and were snared by a multistate operation that compares voter data in federal elections to look for fraud.

Bennett said mail-in ballots make it easy for people to vote twice in the same election, and that appears to be the situation in the four court cases the state won last year on illegal voting.

Court records show all four convictions involved people who voted by mail in the 2008 presidential election, and the penalties were sizable.

For example, Peter Canova pleaded guilty to attempted illegal voting. His sentence was two years' probation, plus a \$9,200 fine. Documents filed with the Maricopa County Superior Court suggest he lives in Nevada.

Rodney Paul Jones, who also pleaded guilty to attempted illegal voting, received a \$4,600 fine, one month's probation and 50 hours of community service.

Arizona is one of 16 states that participate in the program that matches voter records, Bennett said. Elections officials look for matches on voter name and date of birth, and if they find a match, they investigate further.

The system is far from perfect, according to the Pew Center on the States. That's because there are few common pieces of information to compare -- primarily name and date of birth -- and that reduces the ability to ferret out duplicates, said David Becker, who works on voting research for the center.

More information, such as the last four digits of a person's Social Security number, or motor-vehicle records, could help to separate double voters from people who happen to share the same name or birth date, Becker said.

Reach the reporter at maryjo.pitzl@arizonarepublic.com.

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