



# VIEWPOINT

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eternal vigilance.”*

## Counting the ACORN Seeds of Election Fraud

By Jennifer Miller

The presidential election ended with a whirlwind of activity in Ohio. Some of us are exuberant, others are disappointed, but most of us are relieved Election Day has passed. Whether you are celebrating Democrat victories or frustrated by Republican defeats, Ohioans cannot close the book on this election until questions about unlawful voter registrations are resolved.

I remember my first presidential election: it was 1976 and I watched Jimmy Carter beat Gerald Ford. That was my first time voting, as well as the first time I heard about election fraud. Days before the election, Carter was slammed by an investigation that exposed his campaign had tampered with ballot boxes.

In 1976, election fraud appeared to be something that occurred infrequently, by crooked campaigns and dishonest precinct captains. Today, election fraud seems ubiquitous, especially among political non-profits.

Slightly prior to Carter’s election, a group called Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) was founded. ACORN is a national non-profit that organizes on behalf of low-income and urban minorities.

Although ACORN has existed for nearly four decades, I hadn’t heard of them until recently. A few weeks ago the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported that the Hamilton County Board of Elections was investigating voter registrations submitted by ACORN of people who didn’t exist. Later, I learned similar investigations were occurring in Columbus, Cleveland and other places across the state.

Our state isn’t the only place ACORN has a bad reputation. In Wisconsin and Colorado, former employees have been convicted of fraud, and more workers have been indicted for submitting false registrations in Nevada, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and here in Ohio.

You would think that after ACORN employees are caught, reprimanded, and the overall organization experiences a public relations nightmare, they would stop their questionable behavior.

Not even close. In fact, an ACORN representative told election officials the organization “lacks resources” to monitor their work. How is this possible, when the Obama campaign paid their affiliate Project Vote \$832,000 to help with their quality control system?

This is not a sign of lacking resources, but rather of indifference toward crime.

ACORN’s reckless efforts erode the work of our already busy county election boards, requiring our local governments to spend countless hours double-checking their ill-advised registrations.

So how many problematic registrations should Ohioans expect from ACORN?

During an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Ali Cochran, a regional quality-control manager for ACORN, said we should anticipate at least “3 percent [of registrations] to be incomplete or problematic.”

This means at least 7,200 from the 240,000 registrations submitted by the Ohio chapter of ACORN will be “problematic.”

And considering the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision – Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner is not required to provide county boards with the resources to verify voter eligibility – citizens like you and me have to monitor, prevent, document, and report election fraud, because our government won’t.

This brings me to the following question: why should Ohioans let ACORN stay in business after we have heard anecdote after anecdote of illegal activity? Some of its employees even bribed a Cleveland man with cigarettes and money to fill out 72 voter registration forms.

Our state deserves fair and clean elections. If ACORN can’t play by the rules, the state shouldn’t allow them to do business here.

That’s why I have filed a lawsuit with the Buckeye Institute, a non-profit organization that advocates for limited government and personal responsibility, to challenge ACORN’s questionable behavior.

As Thomas Jefferson said, “The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.” That’s a price I’m prepared to pay.

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