

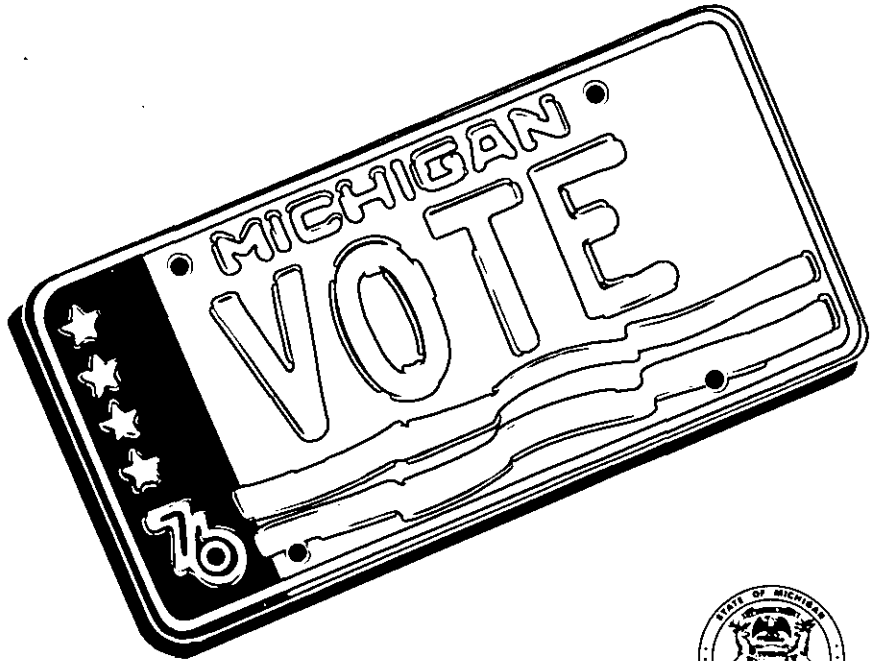
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A NEW APPROACH TO VOTER REGISTRATION



Richard H. Austin
Secretary of State

Among my responsibilities as Michigan Secretary of State I oversee both the registration of Michigan voters and the licensing of Michigan drivers.

When I assumed the duties of Secretary of State in 1971, I was concerned to find that where the state had done much over the years to make licensing more convenient for Michigan drivers—nothing had ever been done to make it easier for electors to register to vote. Additionally, the recordkeeping system involved with voter registration lagged far behind the technologically advanced computer system used to keep driver licensing records.

Searching for ways to close this gap, I directed my staff to investigate whether the administrative systems and technology which were used to streamline the driver licensing program could be used to update the state's voter registration system. After studying the problems involved, we created the Secretary of State Branch Office Voter Registration Program. Established by Public Act 28 of 1975, the program affords Michigan electors the opportunity to apply for and update voter registrations wherever driver licenses are issued. In Michigan, driver licenses are issued through 179 Secretary of State Branch Offices and 14 Police and Sheriff Departments across the state.

Now in operation for nearly ten years, the registration program is widely viewed as an unqualified success. It is responsible for a significant increase in the number of registered voters in the state; is partially responsible for an upward trend in the number of electors who vote in Michigan elections; has eliminated the need for extensive pre-election registration drives; makes the updating of registration records less costly and more efficient; has eliminated the long lines which traditionally formed at clerks' counters on the last day to register before an election; and perhaps most importantly—makes registering to vote a great deal more convenient for Michigan electors.

This booklet has been prepared to answer the many inquiries the Department receives on the operation and benefits of the Branch Office Voter Registration Program from government officials and private citizens across the country. I am very proud of the program's performance—and I am glad to have this opportunity to tell you why.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Austin
Secretary of State

A MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY OF STATE

RICHARD H. AUSTIN



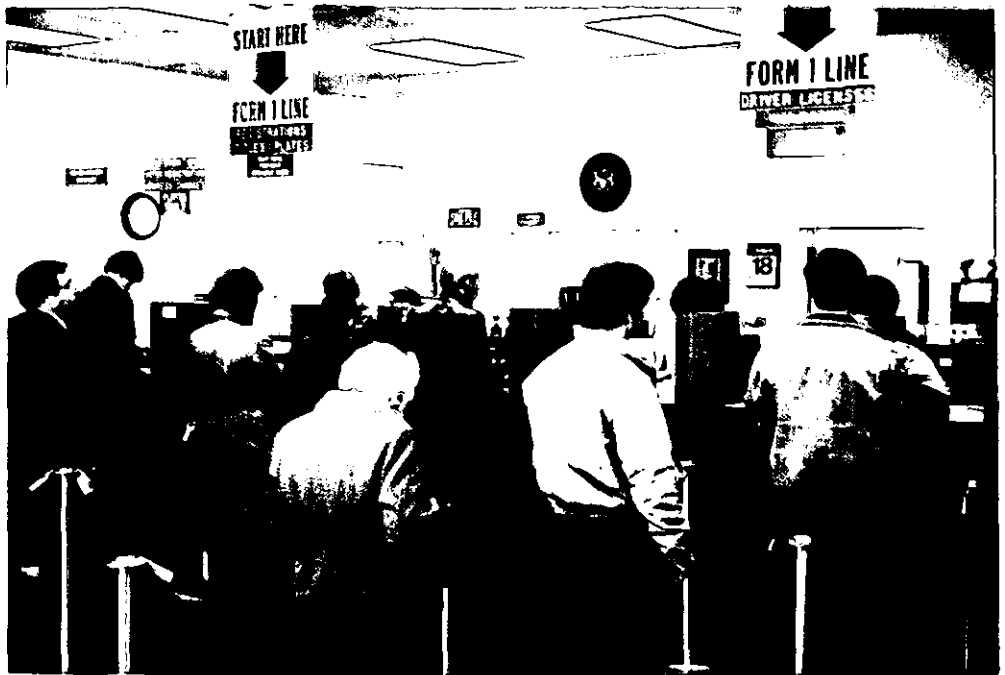
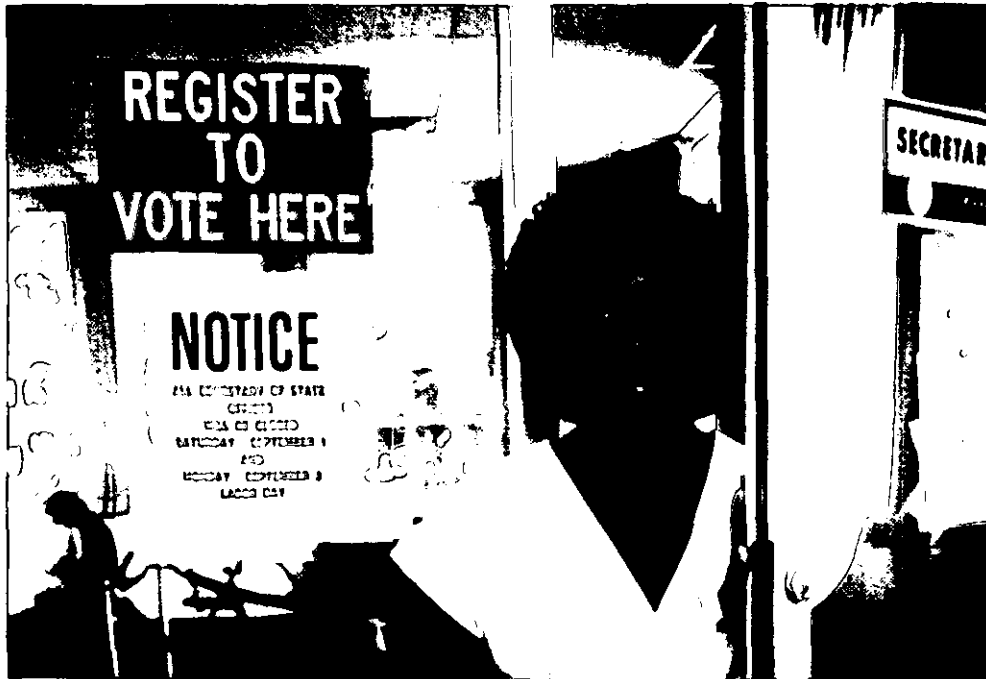


A NEW APPROACH TO VOTER REGISTRATION

Michigan's Secretary of State Branch Office Voter Registration Program affords Michigan electors the opportunity to apply for and update voter registrations wherever driver licenses are issued. In Michigan, driver licenses are issued through 179 Secretary of State Branch Offices and 14 Police and Sheriff Departments across the state. (Police and Sheriff Departments issue driver licenses in areas where the population is too sparse to warrant the establishment of a Secretary of State Branch Office.)

Legislation to establish the registration program was introduced with enthusiastic bipartisan support in both Houses of the Michigan Legislature in early 1974. The proposal was endorsed by, among others, the Michigan League of Women Voters, the United Auto Workers, the Michigan Building Trades Council, the Michigan Education Association, the Michigan Federation of Teachers, the A.F.L.C.I.O., the Michigan Chapter of the American Association of University Women, and the Michigan Catholic Conference. The program was adopted by the Michigan Legislature, signed into law by the Governor in April 1975, and put into effect in October 1975.

Now a mainstay of Michigan's election system, the Branch Office Voter Registration Program is praised by election officials and voters throughout the state. The reasons for the acclaim are discussed on the following pages.



It takes only minutes to complete a voter registration application or update in a Secretary of State Branch Office. Since 1975, when the registration program was started, over 5 million voter registration transactions have been completed in Secretary of State Branch Offices.

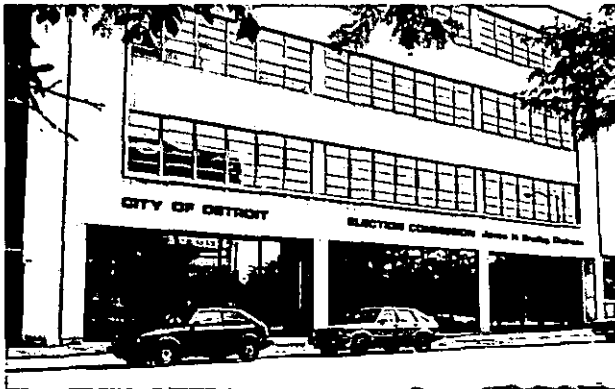
SECRETARY OF STATE BRANCH OFFICE LOCATIONS



Secretary of State Branch Offices are situated in convenient locations in practically every county in the state. Fifty-five of the 179 Branch Offices are located in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties where Michigan's population is the most concentrated.

Greater Convenience for Michigan Voters

In Michigan, voter registration is the responsibility of the 269 city and 1,242 township clerks in the state; registration rosters are not kept on a statewide—or even on a countywide—basis. Prior to the introduction of the Branch Office Voter Registration Program, many qualified electors—faced with 1,511 registration districts in the state—had a difficult time determining where they should go to register to vote. Further frustration was sometimes involved because of the irregular office hours kept by many clerks in Michigan's smaller communities. Now, a qualified elector can apply to register to vote in any Secretary of State Branch Office in the state with the assurance that his or her registration application will be forwarded to the proper jurisdiction in a matter of days. What's more, most Secretary of State Branch Offices are open eight hours a day, five days a week; 41 of the 179 offices are open on Saturdays.



Michigan's highly decentralized system of voter registration is controlled by the 1,511 city and township clerks in the state. As a consequence, Michigan's voter registration districts vary greatly in size.

Top: Headquarters of the Detroit Election Commission (602,708 registered voters).



Bottom: White Oak Township Hall (571 registered voters).

An Increase in Michigan's Registration Base

Since Michigan drivers are required to renew their driver licenses every two to four years (renewal frequency depends on a driver's record)—and 90 percent of the qualified electors in the state have driver licenses—90 percent of the qualified electors in the state are kept in regular contact with the Branch Office Voter Registration Program through driver license renewals alone. A large number of the remaining voters in the state also come in contact with the registration program as Secretary of State Branch Offices issue identification cards to Michigan residents who do not have a driver license or do not wish to use a driver license for identification purposes.

As a result of the program's ability to reach nearly 100 percent of Michigan's eligible electors, there has been a significant increase in the number of registered voters in the state. At the present time, over 80 percent of Michigan's 6.5 million eligible electors are registered to vote—far above the national average.

An analysis of the effect the registration program has had on voter registration and election turnout levels in Michigan is included later in this booklet.

An Administrative Tool for Election Officials

In Michigan, voter registrations are cut off 30 days before each election; unregistered electors who fail to meet the 30-day registration deadline are ineligible to vote in the ensuing election. As a result of this provision—and before the advent of the Branch Office Voter Registration Program—voter registration activity in the state traditionally peaked 30 days before each election as unregistered electors rushed to beat the applicable registration deadline. To meet a registration rush, Michigan's city and township clerks had to work long hours—at times facing lines of electors that stretched beyond their office doors. Having to process a large batch of new registrations after a registration deadline elapsed took even more time out of the clerks' busy pre-election schedules.



Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan

Today—thanks to the Branch Office Voter Registration Program—the last minute registration rush has disappeared. The reasons for its disappearance are simple: First, since the program maintains the state's voter registration base at a high level, fewer electors remain unregistered before each election. Secondly, since Michigan residents apply for driver licenses, renew driver licenses, file address changes and complete other types of transactions at Secretary of State Branch Offices year-round—voter registration transactions which are completed in Branch Offices are evenly staggered throughout the year.

Due in large measure to the Branch Office Voter Registration Program, Michigan maintains a higher voter registration base than any other industrial state in the nation. As a result, the need for registration drives like the one pictured above (circa 1972) has been eliminated. This has permitted political parties and politically involved private organizations to shift the resources which they formerly used for registration drives to voter education programs and "get-out-the-vote" activities.

The Secretary of State Branch Office Voter Registration Program has turned the registration of Michigan voters into a year-round process that clerks find easy to manage. Here, an employee working in the Lansing City Clerk's office processes a batch of voter registration applications and updates forwarded from Branch Offices throughout the state.



Reduced Workload for Poll Workers; A Safeguard for Voters

In Michigan, voter registrations are permanent. However, Michigan voters who move to a different city or township within the state are required to complete a new voter registration; voter registrations are not transferred between communities.

As soon as a voter who has moved to a new community completes a new registration, an authorization to cancel the voter's previous registration is forwarded to the clerk of the city or township where the elector previously resided.

Michigan voters who move within the same city or township in the state are required to update their voter registrations; a new registration, in this instance, is not required.

A registered voter in Michigan who moves from one city or township in the state to another who fails to re-register in his or her new city or township of residence may vote one additional time in his or her old precinct if the move was made within 60 days prior to the election. A registered voter who moves from one election precinct to another within the same city or township who fails to update his or her voter registration may vote one additional time in his or her old precinct regardless of when the move was made.

As past experiences have shown, many inconveniences and frustrations can result as a consequence of the above provisions: voters arrive at the polls only to learn that they must travel to another polling place in order to vote—or worse, discover that they are ineligible to vote because they failed to re-register after moving; the extra processing steps which are involved delay the other voters waiting to be processed; the special paperwork which must be completed must be secured by the poll workers and forwarded to the clerk for further processing. . . . In short, it is to everyone's advantage if voters re-register or update their registrations as needed immediately after they move. The problem: it is a task that is easily overlooked.

Again, the Branch Office Voter Registration Program provided an answer. Because driver licenses are frequently used for identification purposes, drivers have a compelling reason to have their driver licenses updated immediately after they move as required by law. Since the necessary re-registration or registration update can be conveniently completed when a driver/voter visits a Secretary of State Branch Office to update his or her driver license, a large portion of the transactions on voter registrations which would have formerly taken place in polling places are now handled in Branch Offices long before the election. Of course, of even greater importance is the safeguard against disfranchisement which this "net" provides.

Low Operational Cost

Finally, the Branch Office Voter Registration Program is acclaimed because its operational cost—approximately \$100,000 per year—is surprisingly low given the program's size and benefits.

It should be noted that the bulk of the program's yearly \$100,000 appropriation is used to cover postage and the printing of the Branch Office Voter Registration Form; the annual appropriation does not include the salaries of the personnel who administer the program, computer expenses, or the cost of maintaining the Secretary of State Branch Offices throughout the state. While these costs could be factored in, it would result in an inaccurate picture of the program's actual "add-on" cost to the state as the personnel, facilities and computer equipment needed to administer the program were already in place when the program was introduced.

To emphasize: states that are contemplating the adoption of a comparable registration program can expect the cost of the program to be considerably more than \$100,000 a year if the facilities, equipment and personnel needed to administer the program are not already available. Further costs would be incurred if the state's involvement in the registration process exceeds Michigan's involvement in voter registration. (As explained earlier, voter registration in Michigan is the responsibility of the city and township clerks in the state. Consequently, the Branch Office Voter Registration Program is used to forward *applications* to register to the city and township clerks throughout the state. If voters were actually registering to vote under the program, the transactions would take longer to complete in the Branch Offices and hence, personnel costs would be greater.)

SECTION II



A NEW APPROACH TO MAINTAINING VOTER REGISTRATION FILES

In 1972, the Michigan Supreme Court declared the provisions which governed voter registration “purges” in the state unconstitutional. Under these provisions, local election officials in Michigan were required to initiate cancellation proceedings at the end of each year against the voter registrations of electors who had not voted during the previous two years. In an injunctive order which preceded the ruling, the Michigan Supreme Court ordered Michigan election officials to immediately reinstate the voter registrations of electors who had been cancelled under the “purge” provisions since December 1970. In effect, this meant that voters who had last voted in 1968—and who were subsequently cancelled for not voting—were returned to the state’s voter registration rolls in early 1972.

Due to the voter registration reinstatements which were mandated by the injunctive order—and the absence of an operative registration “purge” provision under Michigan election law—Michigan election officials were finding it increasingly difficult to manage their registration files after 1972. This, in turn, was making election planning more and more difficult throughout the state.

In answer to these problems, the Secretary of State proposed two measures which ultimately became a part of the legislation which established the Branch Office Voter Registration Program in 1975. As one of the measures directly affects the way in which community registration totals are compiled in the state and the other is closely tied to the Branch Office Voter Registration Program—both merit some mention here.

The "Inactive" Voter Registration File

Under the first measure, Michigan election officials are required to establish and maintain an "inactive" voter registration file. An inactive file is used to hold the registrations of voters who have not voted or recorded a change of address for four consecutive years; voters whose registrations are placed in an inactive file are *not* barred from voting. If an elector whose registration is moved into the inactive file does not vote, record a change of address or apply to have his or her registration returned to the "active" voter registration file for six *additional* years, the election official is required to notify the voter that his or her registration is subject to cancellation. If the voter fails to respond to the cancellation notice within 30 days—or if, in a response, authorizes the cancellation—the voter's registration is moved into the cancellation file. On the other hand, if the voter indicates in a response to a cancellation notice that he or she wishes to "continue registration," the registration is moved back into the active file (assuming, of course, that the voter is still qualified to vote in the community).

As local election officials do not advise the Secretary of State of the number of voter registrations in their inactive files, the statewide registration totals compiled for 1976, 1978, 1980 and 1982 reflect "active" registrations only. In 1976 the inactive files contained most of the registrations which were reinstated in March 1972 and the registrations of electors who were "inactive" from 1970 to 1974.

A Crosscheck Provided by the Secretary of State

Under the second measure, the Secretary of State is required to advise Michigan's local election officials of Michigan residents who have died and individuals who have surrendered a Michigan driver license to obtain a driver license elsewhere in the country. Michigan's local election officials are then permitted to use the information to purge their registration files. (The registrations of Michigan residents who have died are immediately cancelled; voters who have obtained driver licenses in other states are notified that their registrations are subject to cancellation and given an opportunity to respond as discussed earlier.)

Michigan's local election officials receive the information from the Secretary of State on lists compiled by the Department's computer four times a year. In a typical year, the lists contain over 160,000 entries (60,000 deaths; 100,000 surrendered Michigan driver licenses). The Secretary of State receives information on the deaths in the state from the Michigan Department of Public Health; the names of individuals who have surrendered Michigan driver licenses are obtained through reciprocal agreements with other states.

It should be noted that Michigan's local election officials are also advised of deaths in the state by Michigan's county and city governments. Information on electors who have moved from Michigan is, of course, available through other sources as well.



The Michigan Department of State uses its computer to prepare approximately 30,000 Driver License Renewal/Voter Registration Applications a week. The computer is also used to compile information on the deaths in the state and the persons who have surrendered a Michigan driver license in another state. The lists are used by Michigan's local election officials to update their registration files.



THE MECHANICS OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE BRANCH OFFICE VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAM

Prepared Registration Forms: An Added Convenience

Forty-five days before a Michigan resident's driver license expires, a Driver License Renewal Application is prepared for the driver by the Department of State's computer. A Voter Registration Application (an attachment to the driver license renewal form) is also prepared for the driver at the same time (figure A). The forms are then sent to the driver through the mail. Approximately 30,000 Driver License Renewal/Voter Registration Applications are mailed by the Department each week.

A Michigan driver is permitted to use a prepared form to renew his or her driver license by mail if, during the previous four years, he or she has not been involved in an accident or received a ticket for a moving violation. (After renewing a driver license by mail, the driver must complete the next renewal in person.) A Michigan resident may *not* use a prepared Voter Registration Application to apply for voter registration by mail; under Michigan election law, voter registrations must be completed *in person* unless the voter is disabled or temporarily absent from his or her community of residence.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MICHIGAN RENEWAL TEMPORARY DRIVER PERMIT
EXPIRES 60 DAYS AFTER DATE ISSUED

Michigan Driver License No. _____ Date _____
 Sex _____ Hair _____ Eyes _____
 Race _____ Color _____

TOTAL FEE

P0000000

MICHIGAN VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION
For New Registration, Change of Address, Re-Registration, Appear in Person

Sex _____ Birth _____ Date of Birth _____
 I live in the City or Township of _____
 Phone No. _____ School District of _____
 Birth Place (State or Country) _____
 I wish to apply for Voter Registration at my home address listed above. I am registered, or was last registered at: (if not registered, write "NONE") _____

TOTAL FEE

Address _____
 City or Township of _____ County _____ State _____

Under name of _____

STREET NUMBER AND NAME	CITY	COUNTY	ZIP CODE

MICHIGAN DRIVER LICENSE NUMBER	ISSUED	EXPIRES
NAME		
<input type="checkbox"/> CORN LENS	STREET	
<input type="checkbox"/> SEE BACK	CITY	
	DATE OF BIRTH	SEX
	IF YOU MOVE YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS AT A DRIVER LICENSE OFFICE.	
SIGNATURE		
P0000000	TYPE (RENEWAL)	EXPIRES (CLASS)

My signature on this application certifies that all statements contained hereon are true, that within the last 4 years I have not experienced any disease, accident or disability that would affect my ability to exercise reasonable and ordinary control in operating a motor vehicle and that I have surrendered all other licenses issued to me by any other state.

Figure A.

Prepared Driver License Renewal/Voter Registration Application form.

MICHIGAN VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION (Please print in full)

FOR: New Registrations • Changes of Addresses • Re-Registrations

Name: First _____ Middle _____ Last _____ P.O. Box _____
 Address: Street Number and RR if any _____ Apt. No. _____
 City _____ Mich. Zip _____

SEX M Birth _____ / _____ / _____ I live in the City _____ or County of _____
 F Date _____ / _____ / _____
 I live in the City _____ or Township _____ of _____

Phone No. _____ School District (if known) _____
 Birth Place (State or Foreign Country) _____

I have applied for voter registration at my home address listed above and authorize cancellation of any previous registration. I am or was previously registered at: (if never registered, write NONE) Today's date _____ / _____ / _____

Address _____ Zip _____
 City or Township of _____ County _____ State _____

Under name of _____

VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION RECEIPT
Not Valid Unless Stamped

NAME _____
 Address _____ P.O. Box # _____
 Apt. No. _____
 City _____ Street No. and R.R. if any _____ Zip _____

WARNING: You applied for registration for the City or _____
 It is not valid until accepted by that Clerk. If no voter ID card is received within 3 weeks, contact the clerk.
 62-74 (1/83)

AFFIDAVIT: I certify that I am a citizen of the United States, a resident of the State of Michigan, that I live in the community for which application is made and that I am or will be at least 18 years of age on the effective date of this application. I understand that this application is not valid until processed by the local clerk. If qualified, I may vote at elections occurring at least 30 days after the date of completing this application. I authorize the cancellation of any previous registration in another community.

Signed on _____ DATE _____ X _____ Signature of Applicant
 _____ Signature of Agent

AFFIDAVIT: I certify that I am a citizen of the United States, a resident of the State of Michigan, that I live in the community for which application is made and that I am or will be at least 18 years of age on the effective date of this application. I understand that this application is not valid until processed by the local clerk. If qualified, I may vote at elections occurring at least 30 days after the date of completing this application. I authorize the cancellation of any previous registration in another community.

Signed on _____ DATE _____ X _____ Signature of Applicant
 _____ Signature of Agent

AFFIDAVIT: I certify that I am a citizen of the United States, a resident of the State of Michigan, that I live in the community for which application is made and that I am or will be at least 18 years of age on the effective date of this application. I understand that this application is not valid until processed by the local clerk. If qualified, I may vote at elections occurring at least 30 days after the date of completing this application. I authorize the cancellation of any previous registration in another community.

Signed on _____ DATE _____ X _____ Signature of Applicant
 _____ Signature of Agent

Figure B.

Branch Office Voter Registration Application form.



The Initial Contact

Every person who appears to be over 18 years of age who walks into a Secretary of State Branch Office is asked one of two questions relating to voter registration:

If the person is seeking the issuance of an original Michigan driver license, he or she is asked, "Would you like to *register* to vote in Michigan?"

If the the person wishes to renew a Michigan driver license or record a change of address, he or she is asked, "Would you like to *update* your voter registration?"

If the person wishes to complete a transaction which is unrelated to his or her driver license (e.g. purchase license plates, transfer a title, register a snowmobile, etc.), he or she is asked either voter registration question as appears appropriate given the transaction at hand.

Of course, a Michigan resident is always free to visit a Secretary of State Branch Office to apply for or update a voter registration even if he or she does not have any other types of transactions to complete.

The Transaction

When a Michigan resident indicates that he or she would like to apply for a new voter registration or update an existing voter registration under the registration program, the Department of State agent who is handling the transaction gives the voter a Branch Office Voter Registration Application form (figure B). The procedures outlined below are then followed:

(1) If a prepared voter registration application form is presented by the voter, it is attached to the upper left-hand corner of the Branch Office form.

(2) The voter fills in the information requested on the left-hand side of the Branch Office form and signs the three certificates on the right-hand side of the form. The agent signs each certificate as a witness.

(3) The agent stamps each section of the completed Branch Office form with a dated validation stamp.

(4) The agent detaches the validated receipt from the Branch Office form and gives it to the applicant.

Forwarding

On every Tuesday of the month, the Secretary of State Branch Offices forward the voter registration applications and updates taken during the previous week to the clerks of the cities and townships where the applicants reside. The applications are forwarded to the local clerks through three channels:

If the applicant lives in a neighboring community, the application is sent directly to the clerk of the community.

If the applicant lives in a neighboring county, the application is sent to the clerk of the applicant's county of residence. The county clerk, in turn, forwards the application to the appropriate local clerk.

If the applicant lives beyond the counties which surround the Branch Office, the application is sent to the Department's Elections Division in Lansing. The Elections Division, in turn, forwards the application to the appropriate local clerk.

Immediately preceding the "close of registration" before a state primary or general election, the Branch Offices forward the applications and updates every day.

Processing

The registration applications and updates are processed as soon as they are received by the local clerks. The processing steps are briefly outlined below:

If the applicant is qualified to register in the community, the clerk prepares registration cards for the elector using the information provided on the application. Additional registration cards are prepared if the elector lives in a village or a school district which maintains its own registration files. After the information on the Branch Office application has been transferred to the registration cards, the signed certificates are detached from the Branch Office application and affixed to the cards. (The certificates are self-adhesive.) The clerk then sends the elector a Voter Identification Card which designates the elector's voting precinct in the community, forwards any additional registration cards which have been prepared, and sends a Cancellation Notice (if necessary) to the clerk of the community where the applicant was previously registered.

If the application shows a new address for an elector already registered in the community, the clerk updates the elector's registration cards, forwards the new address to the village and school district (if necessary), and sends the elector a new Voter Identification Card.

If the application shows a new name for an elector already registered in the community, the clerk either (1) follows the first procedures described above or (2) corrects the elector's original registration cards to show the new name.

Bugs

Are there bugs in the Branch Office Registration Program? Yes—but fewer than you might expect with a program of this size. The problems—and how we are attempting to remedy them—are discussed on this page.

“Where Did It Go?”

We admit it—a few of the roughly ½ million voter registration applications and updates which are taken in the Branch Offices each year get lost in the shuffle. As a remedy, a voter whose registration cannot be found on election day is permitted to vote if he or she can produce a validated Branch Office Registration Application receipt.

“You Mean I Can’t Register to Vote by Mail?”

Despite the instructions on the prepared Voter Registration Application that you must *appear in person* to handle voter registration transactions, approximately 20,000 Michigan residents mail the forms to the Department of State each year thinking that they can register to vote by mail. In answer, the forms are returned to the voters along with a gentle reminder that voter registrations must be completed in person.

“Who Gets It?”

Since many voters have postal addresses that do not correspond to the names of their communities, they sometimes fail to list their city or township of residence on the Branch Office Voter Registration Application form. This, of course, makes the forwarding of the form difficult—and at times, impossible. When the Branch Offices encounter this problem, they forward the forms to the Department’s Elections Division in Lansing where every effort is made to correct the matter (including calling the voter). The same procedure is also followed if a local clerk is unable to determine where a “cancellation notice” should be sent.

“We’ve Already Got One!”

Since Michigan election law prohibits the state from keeping a statewide registration list, Department employees working in the Branch Offices have no way of telling whether a person who wishes to register to vote is already registered. As a result, the local clerks sometimes receive duplicate registrations through the registration program. While this does not affect the voters in any way, the local clerks are burdened with the unnecessary processing which is involved.

SECTION IV



TRENDS AND STATISTICS

VOTER REGISTRATION TRANSACTIONS COMPLETED IN SECRETARY OF STATE BRANCH OFFICES 1975-1984

	<u>New Registrations^a</u>	<u>Changes of Address^b</u>	<u>Total Number of Transactions</u>
1975 ^c	63,065	65,568	128,633
1976	319,715	342,021	661,736
1977	179,431	274,415	453,846
1978	208,055	358,606	566,661
1979	169,582	334,474	504,056
1980	277,530	429,281	706,811
1981	151,979	272,070	424,049
1982	237,326	403,664	640,990
1983	212,384	405,669	618,053
1984	<u>266,273</u>	<u>505,888</u>	<u>772,161</u>
	2,085,340	3,391,656	5,476,996

a. A voter registration transaction is categorized as a "new registration" if the applicant does not list a current or former community of registration located in Michigan on the Branch Office Voter Registration Application form.

b. A voter registration transaction is categorized as a "change of address" if the applicant lists a current or former community of registration located in Michigan on the Branch Office Voter Registration Application form.

c. Covers October 1 through December 31, 1975.

MICHIGAN VOTER REGISTRATION AND VOTER TURNOUT STATISTICS 1970 – 1984

	Voting Age Population (VAP)	Number of Registered Voters (RV)	Registration Rate (% of VAP)	Voter Turnout (TO)	Turnout Rate (% of VAP)
* 1970	5,148,000	3,969,807	77.1%	2,656,162 ^a	51.6%
+ 1972	5,868,000 ^b	4,762,764 ^c	81.2%	3,490,325 ^a	59.5%
* 1974	6,037,000	4,785,689	79.3%	2,657,017 ^a	44.0%
+ 1976	6,268,000	5,202,379 ^d	83.0%	3,722,384	59.4%
* 1978	6,405,000	5,230,345	81.7%	2,984,829	46.6%
+ 1980	6,510,000	5,725,713	87.9%	3,978,647	61.1%
* 1982	6,554,000	5,624,573	85.8%	3,135,978	47.8%
+ 1984	6,530,000	5,888,808	90.2%	3,884,854	59.5%

* Gubernatorial election year.

+ Presidential election year.

a. As a "poll book total" was not kept prior to 1976, the turnout figures for 1970, 1972 and 1974 are based on the greatest number of votes cast for an office in the respective elections.

b. The large increase in the state's voting age population from 1970 to 1972 was the result of Amendment XXVI to the U.S. Constitution which lowered the minimum voting age from 21 to 18.

c. The large increase in the number of registered voters in the state from 1970 to 1972 was the result of a March 1972 Michigan Supreme Court ruling which declared that it was unconstitutional to purge the registration of a voter who had not voted over a period of two years as Michigan law then required. In effect, this compelled clerks to reinstate the registrations of "non-voters" who had been purged from the registration rolls since 1968.

d. Two events occurred in 1975 which affected the 1976 registration total: (1) the Branch Office Voter Registration Program was put into effect in October and (2) provisions allowing for the creation of "inactive" voter registration files were put into effect. Registration totals listed for 1976-1984 reflect only those registrations held in 4-year "active" files.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND POPULATION TRENDS BY COUNTY 1974 - 1984

	<u>1974</u> <u>Registration</u>	<u>1984</u> <u>Registration</u>	<u>Registration</u> <u>Change</u> <u>1974-1984</u> <u>(%)</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>Population</u> <u>Change 1974-</u> <u>1983*(%)</u>
STATE	4,785,689	5,888,808	+23.1	+ 0.5
Alcona	5,061	7,776	+53.7	+15.9
Alger	5,002	6,389	+27.7	+ 2.1
Allegan	33,424	48,628	+45.5	+14.6
Alpena	14,961	21,132	+41.3	- 0.1
Antrim	8,171	12,141	+48.6	+ 8.5
Arenac	5,677	9,966	+75.6	+17.6
Baraga	4,537	5,565	+22.7	+ 5.6
Barry	20,572	28,121	+36.7	+11.4
Bay	60,670	74,506	+22.8	- 2.5
Benzie	5,341	8,561	+60.3	+12.5
Berrien	83,230	109,365	+31.4	- 3.6
Branch	18,435	25,104	+36.2	- 1.6
Calhoun	73,397	86,801	+18.3	- 2.1
Cass	21,940	30,136	+37.4	+ 1.2
Charlevoix	10,090	14,832	+47.0	+10.1
Cheboygan	10,147	15,274	+50.5	+10.9
Chippewa	15,096	19,365	+28.3	-19.5
Clare	9,614	17,081	+77.7	+21.5
Clinton	24,548	34,466	+40.4	+ 5.7
Crawford	4,100	8,891	+116.9	+22.2
Delta	20,580	24,365	+18.4	+ 4.7
Dickinson	15,361	18,700	+21.7	+ 5.8
Eaton	38,309	57,928	+51.2	+14.9
Emmet	10,830	16,371	+51.2	+12.7
Genesee	230,531	305,809	+32.7	- 1.5
Gladwin	7,613	13,282	+74.5	+28.8
Gogebic	13,167	12,531	- 4.8	- 7.4
Grand Traverse	22,745	40,038	+76.0	+22.9
Gratiot	17,669	23,354	+32.2	- 1.0
Hillsdale	16,987	23,827	+40.3	+ 4.0
Houghton	18,808	23,720	+26.1	+ 3.7
Huron	17,856	21,599	+21.0	+ 0.0
Ingham	161,854	183,089	+13.1	+ 1.9
Ionia	22,358	29,849	+33.5	+ 9.5
Iosco	12,617	17,522	+38.9	+10.6
Iron	9,149	9,905	+ 8.3	- 0.0
Isabella	23,975	32,080	+33.8	+ 7.2
Jackson	74,036	93,561	+26.4	+ 0.8
Kalamazoo	107,424	147,360	+37.2	+ 7.4
Kalkaska	4,215	7,772	+84.4	+64.4

*MOST RECENT FIGURES AVAILABLE.

VOTER REGISTRATION (cont.)

	1974 <u>Registration</u>	1984 <u>Registration</u>	Registration Change 1974-1984 (%)	Estimated Population Change 1974- 1983* (%)
Kent	233,466	308,966	+32.3	+ 9.5
Keweenaw	1,357	1,603	+18.1	+ 0.0
Lake	4,209	6,126	+45.6	+25.4
Lapeer	24,468	43,392	+77.3	+14.4
Leelanau	7,294	10,766	+47.6	+14.8
Lenawee	40,564	51,708	+27.5	+ 1.0
Livingston	34,674	65,938	+90.2	+31.3
Luce	3,261	4,139	+26.9	-14.1
Mackinac	6,422	8,376	+30.4	- 2.5
Macomb	312,892	443,403	+41.7	+ 4.9
Manistee	11,393	15,375	+35.0	+ 3.8
Marquette	32,894	42,794	+30.1	+ 3.6
Mason	13,627	17,500	+28.4	+ 7.2
Mecosta	13,636	21,326	+56.4	+ 8.2
Menominee	13,139	16,155	+23.0	+ 2.9
Midland	32,210	47,566	+47.7	+10.5
Missaukee	4,678	7,500	+60.3	+25.6
Monroe	57,287	82,062	+42.3	+ 3.0
Montcalm	19,666	29,520	+50.1	+14.5
Montmorency	3,913	6,625	+69.3	+17.7
Muskegon	78,709	101,151	+28.5	+ 0.0
Newaygo	15,654	22,580	+44.2	+16.4
Oakland	506,476	673,039	+32.9	+ 5.8
Oceana	9,945	13,939	+40.2	+ 7.9
Ogemaw	7,030	11,935	+69.8	+16.9
Ontonagon	6,617	6,536	- 1.2	- 8.3
Osceola	8,096	12,004	+48.3	+15.1
Oscoda	3,035	5,702	+87.9	+19.2
Otsego	5,931	11,022	+85.8	+17.6
Ottawa	69,225	105,987	+53.1	+16.4
Presque Isle	7,452	9,262	+24.3	+ 0.6
Roscommon	8,882	14,044	+58.1	+32.6
Saginaw	107,842	138,309	+28.2	- 2.2
St. Clair	61,063	84,586	+38.5	+ 5.7
St. Joseph	23,547	32,617	+38.5	+ 9.4
Sanilac	18,298	25,454	+39.1	+ 2.0
Schoolcraft	4,904	6,468	+31.9	+ 1.1
Shiawassee	32,366	46,890	+44.9	+ 0.7
Tuscola	22,228	30,750	+38.3	+ 4.1
Van Buren	29,821	41,242	+38.3	+ 8.5
Washtenaw	152,187	187,927	+23.5	+ 5.0
Wayne	1,444,479	1,373,671	- 4.9	-11.7
Wexford	10,755	16,091	+49.6	+17.1

*MOST RECENT FIGURES AVAILABLE.

VOTER REGISTRATION RATES OF INDUSTRIAL STATES 1978 — 1984

The following chart shows the registration rates reported for the major U.S. industrial states in 1978, 1980, 1982 and 1984 by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. All of the percentages are based on each state's civilian noninstitutional voting age population.

The chart shows that among the U.S. industrial states, Michigan had the highest voter registration rate in 1978 and 1982. Michigan's registration rate was surpassed by one industrial state in 1980 and two industrial states in 1984—both presidential election years. Despite Michigan's different rankings over the four elections covered in the chart, the state's registration rate did not fluctuate more than 2.9% from one election to the next. The figures demonstrate that the Branch Office Voter Registration Program maintains Michigan's registration base at a high level from year to year while eliminating the huge registration surges commonly experienced before presidential elections.

Percent of Voting Age Population Registered

	1978 (%)	1980 (%)	1982 (%)	1984 (%)
California	57.8	60.0	57.6	61.5
New York	57.8	59.5	56.5	63.5
Texas	55.4	60.4	58.4	65.1
Pennsylvania	61.3	62.0	61.0	65.1
Florida	60.6	63.1	63.6	62.6
Illinois	65.8	72.8	70.0	74.7
Ohio	59.5	66.4	58.9	69.6
Michigan	70.1	73.0	72.3	73.8
New Jersey	61.8	66.8	67.2	67.9
Massachusetts	70.0	72.5	67.8	69.6
Missouri	69.4	75.4	71.3	74.9
Maryland	63.3	66.4	65.7	68.3

Registration rates reported for Michigan by the U.S. Bureau of the Census differ from registration rates reported for the state by Michigan's Department of State (p.20) because the two agencies use different methods to gather registration rate data. The U.S. Bureau of the Census obtains its registration rate figures through its monthly Current Population Survey conducted in selected counties, independent cities and minor civil divisions throughout the country. The Michigan Department of State obtains its registration rate figures by compiling the number of registrations held in 4-year "active" files throughout the state as reported by local election officials.

Summary

Since the introduction of the Branch Office Voter Registration Program, more people are registering to vote and more people are voting in Michigan than ever before. As shown below, these increases are keeping pace with or are exceeding the growth rate in the state's voting age population. The figures compare the most recent gubernatorial and presidential elections to the last gubernatorial and presidential elections held before the introduction of the Branch Office Voter Registration Program.

Elections Compared	Increase in No. of Persons Registered	Increase in No. of Persons Voting	Voting Age Population Growth Between Elections
* 1974; 1982	838,884 (17.5%)	478,961 (18.0%)	517,000 (8.6%)
+ 1972; 1984	1,126,044 (23.6%)	394,529 (11.3%)	662,000 (11.3%)

It should be noted that a similar comparison of elections occurring after the introduction of the registration program reveals slight fluctuations in the trends identified above. Overall, however, it is safe to conclude that (1) the steady increase in the number of registered voters in the state has been due, in large part, to the success of the Branch Office Voter Registration Program and (2) the registration program has helped to encourage greater numbers of voters to participate in Michigan elections.

*Gubernatorial elections.

+ Presidential elections.

Looking Ahead

While the Branch Office Voter Registration Program has significantly improved the convenience and efficiency of Michigan's voter registration system, the Michigan Department of State feels that additional steps can and should be taken to further streamline the state's registration process. Briefly outlined below are a number of proposals now under consideration by the Department. Your comments and suggestions are welcome!

- **Jury Selection:** Create jury selection lists with both driver licensing and voter registration records.
- **Voter Registration Assistance:** Establish a program that would enable Department personnel to accept voter registration applications at meetings held by groups and organizations.
- **Mail Registration:** Give drivers who are permitted to renew their driver licenses by mail the opportunity to register to vote by mail.
- **5-Year Registration File:** Notify voters that their voter registrations are subject to cancellation after 5 consecutive years of inactivity on their registrations. (Currently, a cancellation notice is sent out if there has been no activity on a voter's registration for 10 consecutive years.)
- **Cancellation Authorizations:** Have local clerks send cancellation authorizations to county clerks and the Department's Elections Division for distribution to the appropriate communities.
- **Close of Registration:** Now that the Branch Office Voter Registration Program has eliminated the last-minute registration rush, shorten the close of registration to 20 days before each election. This, of course, would extend the period for registering before elections by 10 days.

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