

ARIZONA

Report makes big claims about suspicious voting in Maricopa County but provides no proof

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Election conspiracy theorists hailed the arrival of a report this week on a voter-canvassing effort trying to help the Arizona Senate's audit of the 2020 election.

But the report failed to include any way to verify its dubious findings, and the only two specific examples it provided of alleged ballot problems were swiftly debunked.

The woman behind the canvassing effort, Liz Harris, refused to release data by which her claims in the Sept. 8 report could be checked. The new report also claims that the canvass team "can make sworn affidavits supporting these findings readily available," but Harris refused to release those, either, or comment about the report to The Arizona Republic.

The Maricopa County Recorder's and Assessor's offices ripped the report in a joint statement Friday, but noted that officials would investigate the findings — if they could.

"While we investigate any and all allegations of wrongdoing made, we cannot do so without credible evidence being provided," the joint statement says. "To date, Ms. Harris has refused to provide the Recorder's Office or the Assessor's Office

with the kind of information we can use to conduct a full and thorough investigation into the claims made in her report."

Harris has organized teams of election deniers since December to knock on doors across the state and talk to voters about their voting methods. Harris and others wanted the effort to be part of the audit process from the beginning, and Cyber Ninjas, the lead contractor hired by the Arizona Senate to conduct the audit, mentioned in its original statement of work that canvassing was an important part of the process. But after the U.S. Department of Justice warned the effort could constitute voter intimidation, Senate President Karen Fann canceled the official door-knocking plan.

Harris, however, continued and later ramped up the project, consulting with out-of-state Trump supporters including Seth Keshel and Bobby Piton. The Republic made the rounds with Harris' group last month in Queen Creek, observing as a canvasser and trainee talked with people at five homes out of 12 contacted. No strange voter registration activity or discrepancies emerged.

Inside effort to canvass Maricopa County voters: Organizers deny audit ties as questions remain

What the report claims to find

The new report focuses on the group's canvassing efforts in four of Maricopa County's 748 voting precincts. Volunteers were said to have knocked on the doors of every registered voter in the west Valley's Warner district, and they also conducted a partial canvass of districts including Dunbar in central Phoenix, Waggoner in Tempe, and Rittenhouse in Queen Creek, reaching a total of 4,570 voters.

Of the voters they reached, the report states that 964 were registered to vote but did not do so in November. But the report claims that a full third of those 964

people told the volunteers that they had, in fact, voted. Harris calls these "lost votes." Yet the group released no details about any of these voters, meaning the claim could not be checked.

The report also claims that 164 registered voters didn't actually live at the addresses they were registered to, and in some cases were totally unknown to the current occupants. Harris calls these "ghost votes" and claims that "somehow another person or group of people has been able to fraudulently submit mail-in votes using [a] former renter's information in multiple elections."

Doing multiplication, the report declares that these 164 people represent nearly 100,000 "ghost votes" in the county.

The Republic can't check this claim because Harris won't release the voters' names or addresses.

Two examples fizzle under scrutiny

The need for verification is seen in the only two examples of ballot problems released, which were part of the report's cover sheet.

An initial cover sheet displayed a photograph of a vacant lot, listed an address on Beverly Road in Goodyear, and stated that two mail-in votes were cast from the property. Yet as Google maps shows, the address isn't a vacant lot; a house sits on it.

After Garrett Archer, an ABC15 reporter and former elections official, noted that on social media, Harris re-published the report with a new cover sheet. She did not explain what went wrong. The updated cover featured a dirt lot under development, along with text claiming the photo showed a vacant lot at 2058 E. Wildermuth Ave. in Tempe "that cast a mail-in vote."

But a simple Google Maps search again tossed cold water on Harris' theory that a "ghost voter" registered to a vacant lot had cast a ballot. Inputting the address

returns a satellite photo that shows several mobile homes on the property. Next to the map, the Google page shows the current, street-level view of the property, which is now a vacant lot.

According to the county, at least one voter lived at the address until 2020. The voter registered to vote in 2016 and had asked the county to mail a 2020 ballot to a temporary address. While the post office is not permitted to forward mail-in ballots, voters can request to have ballots sent to temporary addresses legally, officials said.

"She offered 2 examples," Maricopa County Recorder Stephen Richer posted on Twitter on Thursday. "Just 2. That's it. And she screwed up on both of them."

Both Harris and Senator Fann maintain that the canvassing effort is not an official part of the audit. Yet Jovan Pulitzer, a prominent audit supporter from Texas that Harris has called "a man of his word" alleged in a recent video that the effort was "taking funds" from and is "part of the audit."

While that detail isn't confirmed, the canvassing project has helped raise money for the audit by promoting several of its fundraisers, such as Voices & Votes, a group founded by One America News Network host Christina Bobb.

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