

REPUBLICAN

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

VIA Electronic Mail
RA-Elections@PA.gov

September 3, 2024

The Honorable Al Schmidt
Secretary of the Commonwealth
401 North Street
302 North Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3025

Secretary Schmidt,

I write to you on behalf of the Republican National Committee (RNC) to bring to your attention the actions of Vot-ER, an organization weaponizing the healthcare system in Pennsylvania and across the nation for partisan political purposes.

Vot-ER's goal is for healthcare workers to push voter registration materials on their patients via Vot-ER's provided scripts and resources, turning every check-up and doctor's visit into a political lecture. The RNC is and always has been a staunch supporter of voter registration and participation, but this perversion of the doctor-patient relationship raises serious legal concerns given the laws and regulations governing that relationship and voter registration. It is not difficult to imagine how a patient could feel pressured to register to vote or support a certain candidate to receive medical care. The power dynamic between healthcare worker and patient is the very reason politics should stay out of the doctor's office, as suggested by medical oaths such as the Hippocratic Oath and the Declaration of Geneva. But Vot-ER instead sees a doctor's "trusted role" as something to exploit rather than protect.

Additionally, Vot-ER's resources promote dangerous activity threatening to Pennsylvania's election integrity. One notable example is a Vot-ER script for healthcare workers interacting with "undocumented patients," which instructs the worker to provide the patient with voter registration materials and encourage the patient to disseminate the materials among their family and friends.¹ Trusting individuals who violated this nation's immigration laws to only register friends and family who are lawfully able to register to vote is foolish and dangerous, especially when the patients are not legally allowed to register themselves.

A lack of safeguards is par for the course with Vot-ER. For example, the organization conducts voter registration at the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, where almost one-fifth of patients in 2020 had been involuntarily committed and one-fourth had psychotic disorders. Yet, during that same period, there was not a single psychiatric diagnosis that excluded a patient from Vot-ER's voter registration efforts at the Institute.² Targeting our community's

¹ https://vot-er.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Vot-ER_Conversation-Starters.pdf

² <https://freebeacon.com/elections/meet-the-little-known-activist-group-that-has-tens-of-thousands-of-doctors-registering-patients-to-vote/>

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most vulnerable for political purposes during their treatment period is simply beyond the pale.

Even a cursory look behind the curtain reveals the partisan motivations behind Vot-ER's initiatives. It is run by activists aligned with progressive causes and organizations and is funded in no small part by dark money groups managed by the left-wing Arabella Advisors.³ Anyone applying for Vot-ER resources must also answer questions about the demographic make-up of their patients, allowing Vot-ER to ensure deployment of their resources is prioritized in areas most favorable to Democrats.⁴

Vot-ER seeks to fundamentally change the relationship between Americans and their healthcare providers for partisan advantage. Their actions offend not only on a moral level but suggest at the very least indifference to illegal activity related to voter registration. As Pennsylvania's chief election officer, we strongly urge you to monitor Vot-ER's activity in your state to ensure its compliance with state and federal law and to safeguard the integrity of your elections.

Best regards,

Luke Bunting
Election Integrity Counsel
Republican National Committee

³ <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/investigations/2993671/left-wing-dark-money-voter-turnout-patients/>

⁴ <https://vot-er.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-Community-Civic-Engagement-Program-Application.pdf>