

Hundreds of Mail-In Votes Already Set Aside Due to Voter Fraud Claims in Paterson

There have been reports of postal workers leaving stacks of ballots in building lobbies because voting rolls have outdated addresses listed

By [Jonathan Dienst](#) • Published May 12, 2020 • Updated on May 14, 2020 at 12:58 am

More than 800 mail-in votes in one of New Jersey's largest cities have already been set aside, according to a county spokesperson, as an election is [marred by allegations of voter fraud](#).

Those hundreds of votes represent about six percent of all ballots that have been sent in thus far in Paterson's election Tuesday, the county spokesman said, which couldn't be held through traditional in-person methods due to the coronavirus pandemic. There are claims that mass batches of ballots are being sent in after images showed bundles of mail-in votes.

A town over, in Haledon, a post office spokesman confirms a bundle of 300 Paterson city ballots bundled in a mailbox there. A statement from postal inspectors said that their findings were sent to the attorney general's office and the Board of Elections. The mayor of Paterson says the voting problems could be criminal.

"If they are finding bundles of ballots in mailboxes, then the appropriate authorities must take the appropriate action," Mayor Andre Sayegh said.

There have been reports of postal workers leaving stacks of ballots in building lobbies because voting rolls have outdated addresses listed. Two candidates from one ward have been pointing fingers as to who is to blame, while a third said mail-vote fraud is a major problem this election.

There are questions of possible voter fraud in Tuesday's city council election in Paterson, New Jersey. Hundreds of ballots have been found mailed together in mailboxes in Paterson.

"There's people stealing them out of mailboxes. I am getting phone calls from people who say they never received them," Paterson City Council candidate Frank Filipelli said.

In an effort to prevent potential fraud, election officials are comparing signatures to validate authenticity. Some voters are now concerned that their votes may be for nothing.

"That just means our votes are null and void, if you guys are just stuffing ballots. Means our vote doesn't count," said Paterson resident Dion Lattimore.

Others are angry a problem like this could have occurred.

"You guys need to get off your butt and find out exactly what's going on because if you're not doing your job, why should we be paying you?" said William Sapp. "It puts into question about the integrity of the whole voting system."

Late Tuesday, a judge ordered ballot counting halted at 8:30 p.m., and will begin again on Wednesday. The election likely won't be decided for a matter of days.

A spokesperson for the attorney general declined to comment, while the FBI would neither confirm nor deny if an investigation was underway. A spokesperson for the U.S. Postal Service says investigators are looking into the case, while a county spokesperson said any evidence of improper vote bundling will be reported to law enforcement.

In recent years, some local council elections in Paterson have been decided by just dozens of votes. The hundreds of potentially fraudulent ballots have the potential to sway the outcome, especially in some of the more heated races, like in the city's second ward between incumbent Shahin Khaliq and former councilman Mohammed Akhtaruzzaman.

The bundled ballots have not yet been opened so it is unclear if they help one specific candidate.