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## — News From The States —

# EVENING WRAP



By [Kate Queram](#)

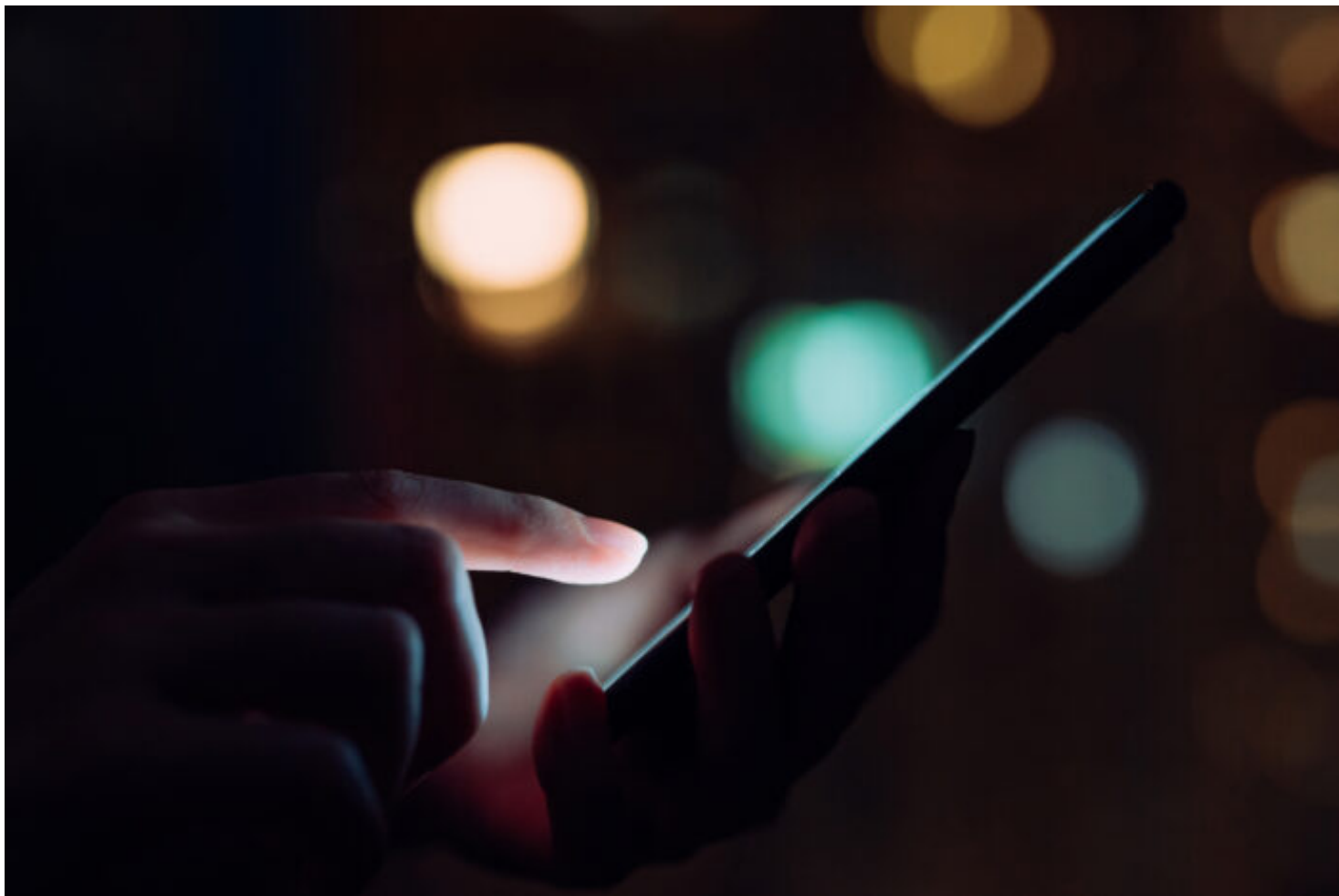
I just spent a long time searching through my own archives for the last thing I wrote about the Electronic Registration Information Center, which does not want to be found even though I gave it life and am, basically, a nice person. I know this copy exists, because *I wrote it*, but I *cannot find it*, even when I search with a *very detailed* string of keywords and quotation marks. In my world, this is borderline infuriating. (I KNOW YOU ARE IN THERE SOMEWHERE.) In certain right-wing circles, it'd be more than enough to fuel a full-fledged conspiracy theory.



### The Big Takeaway

Let's start with a quick primer on the [Electronic Registration Information Center](#), both because it is pretty wonky and because I cannot refer to my own previous explanation so I, too, need a refresher. The group, known as ERIC, is a nonprofit organization that was launched in 2012 by election officials from seven states — red and blue — with the goal of improving the accuracy of voter registration rolls, improving outreach, and reducing the likelihood of illegal voting. Broadly, the program works by comparing a state's voter registration records and motor vehicle data to death records and change of address databases, then compiling a report with any overlaps. It's effective, and historically popular — at its peak, the group counted 31 states as members.

But then the far right came calling.



*SEND IT TO SPAM*

*(Photo by Getty Images)*

The pushback started in January 2022 via a post on a right-wing conspiracy website alleging that ERIC was part of a left-wing conspiracy to elect Democrats, all secretly funded by billionaire George Soros. None of this was true — for starters, if it were, Democrats would probably be [faring better](#) — but who even cares? Truth is subjective in the post-2020 world, and the *mere allegation* of left-wing impropriety was enough proof for election deniers, who [promptly waged war](#) against a system designed to eliminate the voter fraud they purport to abhor.

**It worked.** Within a week of that initial post, Louisiana had pulled out of the group, citing concerns from “citizens, government watchdog organizations and media reports.” By July, [seven Republican-led states](#) had followed suit, with [a ninth](#) — Texas — expected to exit next month. In each state, officials defended the exodus by parroting right-wing talking points; a few of them also [openly balked](#) at ERIC’s policy of encouraging eligible voters to register.

Officials in some of those states have since announced plans to craft their own interstate data-sharing compacts, but details are vague. In Virginia, for example, [officials vowed](#) to “pursue other information arrangements” and find ways to “partner with states in an apolitical fashion,” but

declined to answer additional questions. The final deal — a data-sharing agreement [announced Monday](#) between Virginia, West Virginia, Florida and Ohio — offered similarly few specifics beyond [a generic guarantee](#) that each state would establish “state-specific data sharing and security protocols to allow for the secure exchange of voter information.”

**Alabama Secretary of State Wes Allen announced a similar plan Monday**, saying the state would keep tabs on its voter rolls via a newly created database that’s basically identical to ERIC, if ERIC were based in Alabama and did not work particularly well, [the Alabama Reflector reported](#). The Alabama Voter Integrity Database, or AVID, will be an “Alabama-based system” that cannot be accessed by “some private nonprofit third-party vendor out of state” but will be made available to a handful of neighboring states, Allen said.



*Alabama Secretary of State Wes Allen didn't like ERIC so he made his own version of ERIC called AVID, which is like ERIC except worse.*

*(Photo by Stew Milne/Alabama Reflector)*

“It is going to be something that we control, that we have access to at all times,” he said. “This will be an incredible tool in detecting voter fraud and protecting our elections.”

**He said this with confidence, probably because he’s aware that his methods have been well vetted.** The database will use motor vehicle records, change of address forms, Social Security Death Index records and voter registration data from other states to identify Alabama voters who have died or moved — the same data sources culled by ERIC. Allen’s project is also spearheaded by state officials — just like ERIC. If you didn’t know better, you might think Allen is just creating a notably inferior copy of the same system he pilloried as corrupt.

“The thing that struck me was that he is trying to recreate the ERIC system,” said Kathy Jones, president of the League of Women Voters of Alabama. “There is nothing unique about the system he is creating, except for the fact that he has got only five states and it is now just being created.”

**Officials in Pennsylvania opted for more substantive election policy,** including automatic registration for eligible voters who renew their driver’s licenses or ID cards, [the Pennsylvania Capital-Star reported](#). Gov. Josh Shapiro said Tuesday that combining the processes was a “commonsense” measure, because they each require the same information from residents: Proof of identity, residency, age and citizenship.



*DO NOT WORRY HENRY YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REGISTER ANYONE*

*(Photo by George Frey/Getty Images)*

“When running for governor, I made a commitment to bring automatic voter registration to Pennsylvania,” Shapiro said [in a statement](#). “It makes good sense to streamline that process with voter registration. My administration will keep taking innovative actions like this one to make government work better and more efficiently for all Pennsylvanians.”

Residents have been able to register to vote at PennDOT facilities [since 1993](#), but were required to opt in to the process, Shapiro said. Tuesday’s change flips that policy, allowing residents to opt out if they’re not interested. [Twenty-three states](#) have similar policies in place.

The move was a win for [Democrats and advocacy groups](#) and a big ol’ buzzkill for Republicans, who released predictably whiny statements about how registering more people to vote would be detrimental to the vote-based system of democracy. To begin with, the change should have been implemented through *legislation*, not executive action, according to House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler, who would definitely not vote in favor of that legislation and would also like to know why Shapiro is fine with linking voter registration to ID renewal but is *not* fine with *requiring that same ID to vote*.



*“I can just print a sign right here on my computer.” — Pennsylvania State Rep. Bryan Cutler, probably  
(Photo by Jeff Swensen/Getty Images)*

“Just because someone is eligible for a state-issued identification card does not mean they are eligible to vote,” he said [in a statement](#), adding that voters were likely to side-eye the decision to take “unilateral action on the eve of what is likely to be a hotly contested and close election,” an apparent reference to a statewide contest [on Nov. 7](#), nearly two months (or one very long evening) from now.

It will, Cutler continued dramatically, “cause many Pennsylvania voters to continue to question the security and results of our system.” He did not explain how automatically registering eligible voters might compromise election security or affect the outcome of any specific election, but added that the “burden of determining eligibility” — something the DOT system has done since 1993 — could “further stress an executive branch that continues to fall short of Pennsylvania’s expectation of top-notch customer service.”

“It is remaining questions like these that underscore the need to have major policy changes like this” — again, we’re talking about having residents opt out of something instead of opting in — “vetted through the legislative process instead of hasty unilateral executive action,” he concluded.

But that seems unnecessary, both because it’s a minor tweak of an existing system and because Cutler’s statement makes it clear how that legislative process would have gone: Slowly, idiotically, and in a manner not up to anyone’s standards of customer (or public) service.

**Next, please:** [Tuberville opponents plant hundreds of signs outside U.S. Capitol in protest of blockade](#) ... [Florida Dem leader: Loss in GOP primary could weaken Gov. DeSantis with Legislature](#) ... [Will 20 more years have to pass until another woman leads the Florida Legislature?](#) ... [Lawyer says ex-DOJ official acted within scope of duties](#) ... [Bingham County GOP sues Idaho Republican Party](#) ... [‘A hard person not to like.’ Kentuckians remember Gov. Brereton Jones](#) ... [Brandon Presley campaign will air new ad on Mississippi’s Black radio stations](#) ... [New Hampshire governor’s race 2024: Here’s where the four candidates stand on the issues](#) ... [New Jersey lawmakers added \\$1.5 billion to budget, but few funds went to competitive districts](#) ... [Vice President Kamala Harris to North Carolina students: ‘When you vote, it scares some folks.’](#) ... [Democratic lawmaker seeks to reform Oklahoma’s initiative petition process](#) ... [Oregon Attorney General Rosenblum won’t run for fourth term](#) ... [Election map: 2023 Nashville mayor race looks like 2020 Presidential election](#) ... [Ken Paxton verdict heightens political tension ahead of education special session](#)

 **Also Trending**

Law enforcement officers in New Mexico said they're aware of an uptick in threats against New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in the wake of a Sept. 8 order that temporarily banned firearms in the Albuquerque metro area. But they haven't made any arrests, [per Source New Mexico](#).

"Any credible threats of violence against a public official are investigated, no matter the source," said Department of Public Safety Secretary Jason Bowie. "Individuals engaging in this form of threats or intimidation will be held accountable."



*The response to a request to please not carry guns in public in one city for 30 days because children are literally dying!*

*(Photo by Patrick Lohmann/Source NM)*

Lujan Grisham, a Democrat, issued the emergency health order banning open and concealed carry in Albuquerque for 30 days in response to a spate of gun violence, including the deaths of three children in a six-week period. The move drew criticism from Democrats, Republicans and gun control advocates before it was [paused last week](#) by a federal judge ahead of a hearing scheduled on Oct. 3, two days before the policy is set to expire.

**That ruling had little effect on the vitriol**, which began Sept. 8 and had not abated as of

Tuesday. Attendees at a Sept. 9 rally called for killing the governor, while a woman in the crowd repeatedly chanted, “hang that b\*\*\*\*.” On Sept. 11, a Republican lawmaker [compared](#) Lujan Grisham to the al Qaeda terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center. Another used his website to promote stories [calling for the governor’s impeachment](#) and referring to her as a “tyrant” and “gun-grabbing Gov. MLG.” In the comment section, one user said the governor “needs to be taken out back and beaten senseless,” while another lamented that rat poison “won’t work on a rat of that size.”

“Don’t worry,” another said. “I have a shotgun to back up the Constitution.”

Elsewhere on the internet, [prominent election denier](#) David Clements urged Lujan Grisham to [“come and get”](#) his guns, “and see what happens.” In a chatroom hosted by Clements on the social messaging app Telegram, followers said the governor “needs to be put out force ably [sic]” and predicted “her untimely death” would come soon.

Asked about ... all of that, Clements doubled down, describing the governor as “a domestic terrorist” and a “power-hungry tyrant.” The threats in that chatroom, he added, were probably planted by Source New Mexico “as fodder for the article.” (There is plenty of real fodder, David! There is no need for planted fodder!)

Lujan Grisham, for her part, seems relatively unfazed, if slightly disgusted at the reality of politics in 2023. This happens whenever she talks about gun violence or gun control measures, she said.

“I’ve been compared to Hitler, to al Qaeda, to ISIS, you name it. It’s a slurry of slurs,” Lujan Grisham said. “This is not the kind of discourse I recognize in my state or my community.”

**A well-regulated militia:** [Kansas gun safety advocates urge stronger firearm laws, more safe storage measures](#) ... [Michigan advocates, lawmakers push for firearm restrictions for domestic abusers in statewide day of action](#) ... [North Carolina state Rep. Marcia Morey on the budget saga, casino gambling, gun violence, and election law changes](#) ... [Oregon’s gun control law faces hearings in Harney County court](#) ... [U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar leads push to keep guns from those convicted of hate crimes](#)



## From The Newsrooms

- [Families of young children say state failing to provide special education support](#)
- [‘You think that you’re dumb’: Graduates of Arizona’s English immersion model say it was traumatizing](#)



- [Medicare drug price negotiation can't come soon enough for some Mainers](#)
- [Oklahoma religious private schools look to expand in light of new tax credits](#)
- [Oregon's public defense crisis lands at state Supreme Court](#)

## One Last Thing

Vanna White [extended her contract](#) to co-host Wheel of Fortune for two more seasons, ending a protracted negotiation process that's rumored to have produced a hefty pay raise — her first in nearly two decades. She'll return to the show alongside new host Ryan Seacrest, who told Fortune that he “loves” Vanna, with whom he has “sat in important places.”



*Dunno, but maybe  
(via Giphy)*

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