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No fraud in voter forms found in trash, TBI investigators declare

By *Brian Lazenby* Staff Writer

Officials with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation determined that three voter registration forms found in the trash last month were thrown away by mistake, officials said.

Hamilton County District Attorney Bill Cox had asked the TBI to investigate whether the three forms, which were found June 7 in trash along Webb Road, were part of a voter fraud scheme.

"It looks like it was just a mistake," Mr. Cox said. "There was nothing criminal about it."

Election commission attorney Jerry Summers said he is satisfied with the investigation. "They felt there was nothing to constitute voter fraud," he said. "I'll report it to the election commission, and that's all there is to it."

Mr. Cox said an employee with the Department of Human Services, where the forms were obtained, had taken some work home and thrown the forms away by mistake. TBI officials contacted two of the three people whose forms were found, and they acknowledged that they had filled out the forms. The third person has not been located, Mr. Cox said.

Fran Dzik, election commission administrator, said the commission does not control forms distributed through other state facilities. Those facilities get forms directly from state officials and turn them in to the election commission to be processed, she said.

Mr. Summers said he will make recommendations to the election commission in hopes of avoiding similar situations.

"I will recommend to the election commission to request to the different agencies to reevaluate their procedures to try to make sure none of these forms are inadvertently misplaced," he said.

Brook Thompson, state election coordinator, said there should be strict rules regarding the handling of voter registration forms.

"I don't think there is any reason they should go anywhere but from the Department of Human Services to the election commission," he said. "I feel very confident that is the policy of the Department of Human Services." E-mail Brian Lazenby at blazenby@timesfreepress.com



Bill Cox