

WHAT DOES RETURNING YOUR CENSUS HAVE TO DO WITH ELECTIONS/VOTING??

Your voter status is determined by returning your census!

The TOWN Census is used to confirm your residency AND keep your voter registration status up to date. **Have you ever been surprised to find that your voter status is inactive (INA) when you go to the polls to vote?** For example, you **just** voted at the last election; how could your voter status possibly be inactive?! Failure to respond to the local census **will** change your voter registration status to INACTIVE (INA) each calendar year.

So what does this mean for you? If your voter status has changed from ACTIVE to INACTIVE (INA) for failure to respond to the Annual Town Census, this does **not** stop you from voting, but will require that you stand in another line to show identification at the polls and to sign an affidavit of current and continuous residency prior to voting. Once you do this, your voter status will be updated to ACTIVE and you will then be allowed to vote. If your census is not received the following year, your voter status becomes INACTIVE (INA) **again**.

Seems like a crazy cycle, right? Here's why: State law requires that this office change all census non-respondents' voter status from ACTIVE to INACTIVE. If a voter does not respond to confirmation mailings, and their voter status remains INACTIVE for FOUR consecutive years, the voter is *THEN* eligible to be deleted from the voter list in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 51 Sec. 4 (c)

Shorter version: **It's the law.** The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requires that any voter who does not respond to the annual street listing by the first Monday in June must have their status changed to inactive. If you do not return the census each and every year, this office is **required** to change your voter status to INACTIVE.

As always, please feel free to contact this office at (978) 453-0951 or visit the Town of Dracut's website at www.dracutma.gov (Departments, Town Clerk) for additional information. **And be sure to return your census!!**

Jayne Boissonneault, Town Clerk