

FBI concerns shut down parts of secretary of state's elections site



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Security concerns prompt the Arizona Secretary of State's Office to shut down parts of its website that affect candidates running with public financing and voter registration.



UPDATE: *The FBI found a potential threat to the state's voter-registration system, which is why the Arizona Secretary of State's Office still has parts of its system shut down. The problem apparently stems from a "compromised" credential that someone using a Gila County computer used to log in to the state's Voter Registration System, the state Department of Administration said in a statement. A secretary of state investigation found the affected computer had malicious software on it, DOA said. DOA's cyber response team said it is working with the FBI and the Secretary of State's Office to fix the system and get it back online. Parts of the Arizona secretary of state's website are down for unspecified security-related maintenance, angering some candidate campaigns that received belated notice.*

The portion of the site dealing with online contributions to the public campaign-finance system was shut down Tuesday evening, said Matt Roberts, a spokesman for Secretary of State Michele Reagan.

But it was only Wednesday morning that the office sent a notice to the Clean Elections candidates using the site's online service for gathering the \$5 contributions necessary to qualify for public financing.

"Why wouldn't you notify the candidates first?" asked Chad Campbell, a consultant for the campaign of Corporation Commission candidates Tom Chabin and Bill Mundell.

The two Democrats launched a digital campaign late Tuesday afternoon, seeking the \$5 donations. But apparently, any would-be donors could not contribute due to the site's shutdown, something Campbell said the campaign only learned when a donor contacted them.

A formal notice from the Secretary of State's Office to the 53 affected candidates went out just before 10 a.m. Wednesday, soon after Campbell started complaining about it on Twitter.

Constantin Querard, who runs campaigns for a number of Republican candidates who use the public campaign-finance system, said he had not heard any complaints from his clients.

Portions of the website were shut down late Tuesday when the state Department of Administration, which oversees the state's computer and technology systems, shared security-related information with her office, Reagan wrote in a blog on her website. The site hopefully will be restored by the weekend, she wrote.

Her office would not provide any further detail on the nature of the security concern.

Although the voter-registration system is down, Roberts said anyone who registers to vote in the coming days will have their information electronically queued, and it will be recorded when the system is restored. Likewise, any registrations filed via paper will be added to the system when is back up and running.

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