

GOP denies Web report on vote blocking

'We have no plans to do anything,' county Republican chair says

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Macomb County Republican Party Chairman Jim Carabelli

on Wednesday disavowed a Web site report that claimed the Macomb GOP is plotting to prevent homeowners hit with foreclosures from voting in November.

The Michigan Messenger site reported that Carabelli and other Michigan Republican operatives planned to challenge votes cast at the polls by those who are losing their homes to

foreclosure. The attempt would question whether voters still live at the address on their voter registration card.

Carabelli said the Internet report misquoted him and that no plans are in the works to target foreclosure victims. He said the reporter misinterpreted his comments about GOP attempts to safeguard against election fraud.

"It's a non-story. We were just having a conversation," said Carabelli of Shelby Township, a candidate for the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. "We have no plans to do any-

thing."

Carabelli said that, even if such a plan existed, it would be difficult to determine which of those voters are still living in their homes and which are not.

The Michigan Messenger is a left-leaning Web site created earlier this year. In a press release promoting their story, the site said that up to 62,000 Michigan voters facing home foreclosure could be disenfranchised and "left out in the cold" on Election Day.

But Macomb County election officials say that homeowners hit by foreclosure should have no trouble casting a ballot.

Those who are in default on their mortgage but still living in their home on Election Day can vote without facing any restrictions. In most cases, those who

were forced out of their homes within 60 days of the election — in this case, Sept. 5 — can cast a ballot from their "last known address" with no questions asked.

Those evicted from their homes prior to Sept. 5 are responsible for changing their address. If they change the address on their driver license at a Secretary of State Office, their voter registration will be automatically shifted to their new living quarters.

When changing an address, a temporary address will suffice. Under Michigan law, even homeless people are allowed to vote as long as they are registered.

If a GOP poll challenger questioned a foreclosure victim's right to vote on Election Day, the voter could still cast a provisional ballot. In that instance, election officials would later determine if the voter had the right to cast a vote in that particular precinct.

Officials at the Macomb County Register of Deeds said they had seen no evidence that Republican Party officials were collecting detailed information on foreclosures.