May 13, 2024

Voter Services Director’s Report
General Primary - April 23, 2024

### Leading up to the Election
The Department of Voter Services is constantly improving processes and provides continued training to staff and poll workers. The safety and security of the election is a high priority as well as the voter experience. Some of the highlights; internal CISA training for Voter Services Staff, new poll worker training team and materials, literature display kit for polling places, inter-departmental election night return effort, EOC enhancements, central scan space review, security badge system, additional areas under live surveillance and new security detail for election operations.

The Department increased staffing levels in the beginning of 2024 to be able to process applications timely and provide enhanced customer services. At no point was there a backlog in the voter registration / application process.

In preparation for in-person voting, we were able to train more than 1,200 poll workers. In addition, we saw an increase in participation in the student poll worker program. We are thankful for the Chester County School Districts that are participating in this program and are encouraged to see students being interested in becoming poll workers.

There were challenges with approaching deadlines and court cases. Despite those challenges, the department was able to stay on task to make sure all voters were able to get their ballot in time without compromising testing and quality assurance milestones.

Voter Services conducted Logic and Accuracy testing for all voting equipment including the Central Scan tabulators. One DS450 Central Scan Tabulator was traded in for a DS950. The County also purchased additional in-person voting tabulators (DS200) to be able to increase processing and enhance line mitigation in polling places with larger voter registration numbers. The L&A Certification was filed with the Department of State.

### Notice to Cure
Voter Services flagged approximately 700 declaration envelopes through the Initial Intake Review Process.
- Close to 200 were CURED in the weeks leading up to the election in our ballot services office.
- Over 200 were determined to have an incomplete (not incorrect) date during the legal review process.
- Over 80 voters went to the polling place to vote via provisional ballot. Nearly 50 of those votes were counted.

From the approximately 700 voters, close to 465 were cured/approved in various processes (including legal review) which is 66%.

### Communication with DOS
- During this election cycle, I had several conversations with both the Democratic and Republican party members. There were questions and ideas which some are unfortunately out of my control as they relate to the SURE system. Voter Services has submitted emails to the Department of State relating to the length of names in poll books so long names don’t get cut off, and possible identifiers for voters who had a cancel/reissue ballot.

### 2% Statistical Recount
Voter Services conducted the 2% statistical recount, a statutorily required review that counties must perform after each primary and general election. For that review, county officials are required to conduct a statistical recount of a random sample of at least 2% of all ballots cast – or 2,000 ballots, whichever is fewer.
Voter Services participated in the Pennsylvania pre-certification Risk Limiting Audit commonly referred to as RLA. National experts consider RLAs the highest standard of comprehensive election audits. RLAs are a form of post-election audit that provides a statistical level of confidence that the outcome of an election is correct. RLAs are conducted by selecting a specific number of ballots or batches, manually reviewing the voter’s selections, and tallying the results for a particular contest(s). The data was entered into the RLA software defined by the Department of State. The tally of results will be compared to the reported outcome of the contest to confirm with a high degree of confidence that the reported outcome is correct. The contest selected for the RLA was democratic State Treasurer. Chester County was selected for the following batch, precinct 345 – London Grove South, in-person voting.

Write-in Management
Chester County has posted the write-in snippets (16,000+) on the County website for the public to see all write-ins cast per contest and by precinct. During the review of our unofficial results, we assigned write-ins. First, we assigned them to individuals that submitted a letter of accumulation. Second, we reviewed all the snippets to see if there were other registered voters of the precinct that had enough votes to potentially win the contest. During this process we identified 140 individuals in 39 races that were part of the tiebreaker event which took place on Friday, May 10th at noon. Our official results reflect the tiebreaker winner(s). For full clarification, there are unassigned write-ins still visible on our website which are scattered.

DA Referrals
During this election cycle, Voter Services made several referrals to the District Attorney’s Office, those referrals are related to individuals that potentially dropped a ballot in a drop box that was not their own and did not have a designated agent form. As a reminder, if staffers at the drop box identify a voter who tries to deposit multiple ballots without a designated agent form, the staffer communicates to the voter that they may only deposit their own ballot. If the voter insists on depositing multiple ballots, the staffer places an identifying mark on the outer envelope of the ballot that is not the voters before it is placed in the drop box, immediately notifies the Department, and completes an incident report form. Four (4) referrals to the District Attorney’s Office were situations like this.

If the staffer is unable to place the identifying mark on the ballot, the incident is immediately reported to the Department, an incident report form is completed, and the box is shut down. The staffer will use a segregation bag until the ballots in the drop box can be segregated. Only designated County staff or deputized temporary personnel will be authorized to empty the Drop Box by placing it in a segregation bin and securely transporting it back to 313 W. Market Street, 5th floor with a Body Camera. Three (3) referrals to the District Attorney’s Office were situations like this.

There was one (1) additional referral made regarding a mail-in ballot application.

Background to Certification
On the agenda we have Resolution BOE-06-24 to certify the results of the April 23, 2024 Primary Election.

- There were 381,352 registered voters this election.
  - 159,185 – Democratic
  - 152,019 – Republican
- Total Ballots Cast – 87,918
- Voters participating by voting in-person – 54,336 (more than 61% of the votes cast)
- 33,319 voters had their absentee or mail-in ballot successfully tabulated.
- 263 voters had their provisional ballot tabulated.

Voter Services received 33,759 absentee and mail-in ballots back into its custody, 440 ballots could not be tabulated due to legal deficiencies.

- 202 declaration envelope issues; no date or date out of range
- 102 declaration envelopes issues; mismatch name, no signature or no signature/no date.
- 74 secrecy envelope issues; no secrecy envelope, empty secrecy envelope or identifying writing on secrecy envelope.
- 25 ballots that cannot be tabulated; deceased voters, 2023 general ballots, ballots from other counties, voters who moved out of county, voters whose ballot were cancelled due to reissue & voters who voted a provisional ballot.
- 31 ID not verified since time of application.
- The balance would include damaged envelopes, items inserted other than ballots, and envelopes where voters inserted the party sample ballot instead.

### Computation and Reconciliation

Voter Services has completed computation and reconciled the election according to the Election Code.

The Election Code requires county boards of election to ensure that, in any election district, the total vote returned for any contest does not exceed:
- the number of registered electors in that district,
- the total number of persons who voted, or
- the total number of ballots cast.

The County's Department of Voter Services has created a chain of custody process that goes above and beyond what the Election Code requires.

In the weeks leading up to the election we compare per precinct the following information:
- Total voters who applied for a ballot
- Total ballots mailed (successfully completed the application process)
- Total ballots returned to Voter Services
  - ReliaVote Data
  - Total voter credit recorded in SURE
- We look at the variance, identify and correct any issues to make sure everything balances.
- Leading up to the election, we review the precinct trays multiple times and prepare a Chain of Custody form per precinct per delivery.
- Leading up to the election, we review the specialty trays multiple times and prepare a Chain of Custody form per precinct per delivery.
- We constantly update the data in the ReliaVote to reflect updated SURE data which include deceased voters, cancelled voters, etc. The ReliaVote machine will automatically put them in a rejection tray.

At Central Scan we constantly track the total ballots received, tabulated, removed from the process (legal review), still outstanding and to be duplicated.

When tabulation is near completion, we compare the total ballots mailed, total ballots returned to Voter Services and total ballots tabulated. We look at the data to make sure the numbers are close. There might be a small variance due to ballots being removed from the process.

When tabulation is completed, we compare the total votes cast with the total voter credit recorded in SURE. We look at the variance and make sure everything balances and we record the reason of the variances which mostly stem from the fact that voter credit couldn’t be removed from a ballot that was not counted for technical deficiency or where potentially a declaration envelope was not scanned.

On Election Day, the reconciliation process starts at the polling place. During the day, the Machine Inspector will conduct regular checks to compare the number of votes cast listed on the DS200 tabulator with the combined total of all numbered lists of voters.

At the beginning and end of Election Day, the poll workers will complete the General Return Sheet. The General Return Sheet contains the following information: the number of standard ballots the precinct received from the County, the total standard ballots in the DS200 tabulator, ExpressVote Cards, Provisional Ballots, fleeing voters, spoiled ballots, unused ballots, and surrendered ballots. During a primary election, these numbers are separated per party. The poll workers must explain why there is a variance between the number of ballots cast versus the combined total of all numbered lists of voters. After the entire General Return Sheet is completed, the poll workers will sign the form and seal the black ballot bag. This bag is returned by the Judge of Elections on Election Night to Voter.
Services. The bags are securely transported to the Central Scan location where it will stay in a secured room.

On Friday, the Return Board meets to compute the votes and to begin determinations on provisional ballots. Another duty of the Return Board is to reconcile every precinct. We pull a sealed black ballot bag, of a random precinct, their General Return Sheet, numbered list of voters, DS200 tape, website results and machine inspector’s checklist. We verify that the results posted on the County Website match the DS200 tabulator tape, match the manual count of the ballots in the bag and the combined total of all numbered lists of voters. This election, the Return Board identified a precinct where one ballot was not in the black ballot bag. During full investigation, the poll workers missed removing one ballot from the ballot compartment which was retrieved with a bi-partisan team under camera surveillance and an observer present as a witness. In addition, an incident form was competed, and the precinct was fully reconciled.

Poll books are exported and printed after all civilian absentee and mail-in ballot applications are processed. The poll book contains messages that if the voter was sent a ballot, it has to be appropriately surrendered to be voided before receiving a regular ballot. All voter’s names whose ballots are back in Chester County’s custody are removed from the main books and placed in its own book to make sure they do not sign in at the polling place to receive a regular ballot. After election day the poll books are scanned, and the data is verified with the numbered list of voters. We are unable to remove voter credit for fleeing voters. This will manifest in the voter credit being higher than the total votes cast per precinct. Voter Services staff checks every numbered list of voters against votes cast. Here we make sure that the tabulated votes are close or equal to the voters who were issued a ballot.

Emergency ballots are not tabulated until the poll books are back at Voter Services after election day. We ensure that a voter did not show up at the poll before counting the emergency ballot.

Every provisional ballot receives a thorough investigation. We check for various things to make sure the voter is eligible and did not cast a vote in this election (mail-in or at the poll).

**Recommendation for Certification remarks**

- **Overall:** 87,655 Votes Cast and 87,670 Voter Credit in SURE
  - Overall, there is a variance of 15 more voter credit reported in SURE than ballots cast.
- **Mail-in Ballots:** 33,319 Votes Cast and 33,321 Voter Credit in SURE
  - Variance of 3 more voter credits reported in SURE than ballots cast.
  - There are a few plusses and minuses as we are unable to remove voter credit from a ballot that was not counted for a technical deficiency after the declaration envelope was removed. There are also instances where potentially the declaration envelope was not scanned.
- In person voting: 54,336 Votes Cast and 54,349 Voter Credit in SURE
  - Variance of 13 Fleeing Voters
- **Provisional Ballots:** 263 Votes Cast and 263 Voter Credit in SURE
  - Variance of Zero

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I’m truly proud of the efforts of my Team. Over the years we have made lots of enhancements and continue to look for areas to improve. Many great ideas stem from collaboration within the team but also inter-departmental. I want to thank all County Employees who worked during this election cycle. We can not get the task done without your help. In addition, thank you to the poll workers, student poll workers, roamers, technicians, volunteers, polling places and the residents of Chester County.