



NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Post-Election Audit Report for the November 8, 2022 General Election

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Overview

The North Carolina State Board of Elections (NCSBE) is the state agency that oversees all primary and general elections in North Carolina. NCSBE works closely with the 100 county boards of elections to ensure accessible, safe, secure, and accurate elections for more than 7.4 million registered voters.

To help meet these objectives, after every election, the county boards of elections and NCSBE conduct a series of audits designed to ensure vote counts are accurate and that voters can be confident in the results.

The 2022 general election was held on November 8. More than 3,790,000 North Carolina voters cast ballots, or a turnout of about 51 percent of registered voters.

With post-election audits now complete, NCSBE staff presents the information below to the State Board members, who will vote on whether to certify the results at a meeting on November 29, 2022. Each section includes a description of the audit and a summary of the audit's findings.

Voter History Audit

Audit Description: When voters check in at polling places, they fill out authorization to vote (ATV) forms on Election Day or one-stop applications during early voting. Voters who vote absentee by mail complete an application as part of the ballot return envelope. These documents result in a voter history record for each voter. When ballots are run through tabulators, tabulation software provides election return data that identifies the number of ballots cast. The Voter

History Audit compares the number of ATV forms, one-stop applications, and absentee-by-mail applications with the number of physical ballots cast. These two numbers should generally match, but they may be slightly off for various reasons (e.g., poll worker error, or a voter checks in at a voting site and then decides not to vote).

This audit is designed to identify certain problems or fraud, such as ballot stuffing, fraudulent manual entries, tampering with media cards, or certain ballot coding issues.

Findings: At the time of this report, all 100 counties had substantially processed their voter histories, with a couple counties still completing the process. The vast majority of counties had only slight differences between ballots cast and voter history, or no difference at all.

The absolute value of all variances for these counties is, on average, 4.99 ballots per county, or about 0.01% of total ballots cast. In all, 87 counties had differences of 10 ballots or fewer between ballots cast and voter history. Many counties have provided explanations to account for the differences.

In other words, this audit identified no evidence that vote totals or ballots cast were manipulated in any way. Except for the differences noted above, the physical ballots cast generally matched the number of voters who checked in at Election Day polling places or early voting sites or returned an absentee ballot.

Sample Audit

Audit Description: A post-election sample audit that checks the accuracy of the voting equipment across the state is required by statute. [N.C.G.S. § 163-182.1\(b\)\(1\)](#). State elections officials randomly select a statistically significant number of precincts or absentee/early voting groupings, usually two, for each county board of elections. The county boards conduct a hand-eye count of all ballots in those precincts or groupings. These results are compared to the machine counts, and any variances are noted. Variances most often result from the following situations: (1) human error in the audit count itself; (2) the write-in oval or square was not filled in, but a name was written in the write-in line; and (3) the machine did not count a choice that the voter made by a checkmark or “x,” or that was circled or poorly shaded on the ballot.

Findings: Across North Carolina, teams of election workers hand-counted the U.S. Senate results in 158 Election Day precincts and 28 early voting sites. And 14 counties hand-counted all absentee-by-mail ballots they accepted. Of these 200 groups of ballots, very small differences between machine counts and human hand-eye counts were found in 19 samples. The average ballot count difference within these counties was 2.3. Most of these minor discrepancies can be attributed to human errors during the hand-eye audit itself, or to voters who did not fill in the bubbles completely.

Aside from the differences noted above for 19 samples, in the other 181 samples, the machine count and hand-eye count matched exactly.

The county-by-county results of these audits, conducted at public meetings, show once again that the certified election machines used to count ballots do so with great accuracy.

Provisional Audit Reports

Audit Description: Voters cast provisional ballots when questions arise about their qualifications or eligibility to vote in certain contests. Those ballots are held aside pending research by county boards of elections as to whether they should be counted. When further auditing of provisional data is necessary, analysts process data from several data sources, including the DMV database, and an incomplete queue that catalogs registration attempts that were deemed incomplete in the current registration database as of Election Day. Data analysts execute matching algorithms to determine whether provisional voters were eligible to vote in the counties where they presented to vote.

Findings: Since the analysis by State Board staff cannot unilaterally determine whether a provisional ballot will count since it is based strictly on data and not a review of individual circumstances, audit results are sent to county boards of elections. Counties then analyze the data and, where appropriate, amend their canvasses to reflect any changes.