

# Audit Results for the September 10, 2019 Election

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## *Voter History Audit*

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**Audit Description:** When voters check in at polling places, they fill out authorization to vote (ATV) forms or one-stop applications during early voting. This results in a voter history record for each individual. When ballots are run through tabulators, tabulation software provides election return data that identifies the number of ballots cast. This audit compares the number of ATV forms and one-stop applications with the number of physical ballots cast. These two numbers should generally match, but may be *slightly* off for valid reasons, such as if a voter checks in 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:** Currently, the absolute value of all variances statewide is 81, which, on average, is roughly 3 ballots per county, or about 1/50<sup>th</sup> of 1% of all ballots cast. These variances are not large enough to affect any election.

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## *Manual Entry Audit*

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**Audit Description:** County election officials occasionally must enter election results by hand directly into the vote tabulation software. This may occur, for example, due to a media card failure. This audit can catch inadvertent mistakes in transcribing numbers, as well as purposeful manipulation of data.

North Carolina updated its Election Reporting system to include an automated process able to detect transcription errors in real time as results are entered by hand. Several data validation rules are run against manual entries which effectively eliminate transcription errors, within an error rate of a fraction of one percent.

**Findings:** All manual Entries entered into our Election Reporting system have been tested for transcription errors.

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## *Sample Audit*

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**Audit Description:** A post-election sample audit that checks the accuracy of the equipment is required by statute (§163A-1166). State officials select a statistically significant number of precincts or absentee/early voting groupings (usually 2) for county officials who conduct a hand-eye-count of all ballots in those precincts or voting methods. These results are compared to the tabulated results and any variances are noted. Permitted variances

include the following situations: (1) The write-in oval was not filled in but a candidate's name was written in, or (2) the machine did not count a choice that was represented by checkmarks, x's, or that was poorly shaded.

Findings: A variance of 1 was found. On election day one provisional ballot was placed in the tabulator. Since the ballot was identified by precinct number and folded, it was easy to identify. The board members unanimously agreed that they would not count the ballot.

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### ***Deeper Audits for Close Contests***

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The last audit that is executed compares the margin of victory in any particular contest to the sum of the aforementioned variances. If the margin of victory is less than this summation, then further audits are run to check issues related to (1) the aforementioned variances, (2) any relevant unapproved absentees, and (3) any applicable provisional ballots. 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, an incomplete queue that catalogs registration attempts that were deemed incomplete and 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. Additionally, if needed, audit results are sent to county boards of elections, which analyze them and, where appropriate, amend their canvasses to reflect any changes.

Findings: **This “Close Contest Audit” revealed no issues that could jeopardize election outcomes.**