

November 6, 2018 General Election Audit Summary



Snohomish County Elections
A Division of the Auditor's Office

November 27, 2018

Introduction

Revised Code of Washington requires counties to conduct an audit of duplicated ballots and an audit using one of the following methods: an electronic voting machine audit, a random precinct or batch audit, or a risk limiting audit. The Snohomish County Canvassing Board had established in its canvassing board administrative rules a random batch audit as its second audit method. This report summarizes the conduct and findings of both the duplicated ballot audit and the random batch audit performed by Snohomish County Elections for the November 6, 2018 General Election.

Duplicated Ballot Audit

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) has established standards for the duplicated ballot audit for all counties to follow. RCW 29A.60.125 defines a duplicated ballot as one that is unreadable or uncountable by the tabulating system. An example of an uncountable ballot would be a MyBallot printed off the internet. The standards established by the OSOS require that all duplicated ballots must be audited, meaning that a team of two must duplicate an unreadable/uncountable ballot and another team of two must review each duplicated ballot.

Duplication and Audit Process

Snohomish County Elections uses the ClearBallot vote-counting system. This system allows for electronic duplication of ballots by recording the marks on the paper directly into the vote-counting system. The vote-counting system identifies and allows us to filter out ballots that have been duplicated. It also records which team performed the original duplication.

Armed with this information, the ballot processing specialist assigns and confirms that a different team of two people review each duplicated ballot.

Audit Results

3,805 unreadable/uncountable ballots were duplicated in the vote-counting system for the November 6, 2018 General Election. During the audit of these duplications, 119 ballots were identified as needing adjustment or correction to meet the Statewide Standards for What is a Vote.

The errors identified during the audit that needed adjustment or correction included

- Team selected the wrong precinct to which to duplicate votes (8)
- Team failed to record a mark for a candidate, leaving the particular race undervoted (46)
- Team recorded a mark for the incorrect candidate in a race (52)
- Team misapplied the Statewide Standards for What is a Vote (13)

Upon identification of an error by a duplication team, the processing center specialist shared the error with the original team and performed retraining to ensure the team understood how to properly register votes in the vote-counting system and/or how to properly apply the Statewide Standards for What is a Vote. Because 100% of all duplicated ballots are reviewed for the audit, expansion of the audit is not a possibility.

Following the 2018 General Election, Snohomish County Elections will revisit the method of processing unreadable/uncountable ballots and determine if other methods of duplicating (i.e. duplicating to paper) will provide more reliable first-time results.

Random Batch Audit

Identification of Race and Batches

On Monday, November 5 at 10 a.m. Chair Hillary Moralez of the Snohomish County Democrats and Georgene Faries of the Snohomish County Republicans met at the Election Processing Center, 1818 Pacific Ave, in Everett. Working with Processing Center Specialist Torie Waters, Chair Moralez and Ms. Faries selected the 44th Legislative District State Representative Position 2 race for recount during the random batch audit. They also identified six batches in which to conduct the audit – batch numbers 15036, 15046, 15089, 15105, 15121, and 15121.

Audit

On Wednesday, November 7 at 10 a.m. three teams of two people were used to hand count the 44th Legislative District State Representative Position 2 race within the six batches identified by the parties. Each batch was counted by a team of two people using the method outlined in state law and administrative code for conducting a hand recount.

Results

The results of the hand count of the six chosen batches showed no difference from the count produced by the vote counting equipment. As a result, no expansion of the audited was warranted.