

## **Official Canvass Information**

California State law requires an official canvass, which is an internal audit of the election to ensure accuracy of the results. This entails numerous manual processes that verify the accuracy of the computer count, including a hand tally of ballots cast in 1% of the precincts. During the canvass, vote by mail and provisional ballots not counted on election night are researched to verify their eligibility. The eligible ballots are added to the election night tally. When complete, election results are certified to the various jurisdictions, which then declare the winners. California election law allows 28-days following an election for the election official to conduct the official canvass and certify the election results. All aspects of the canvass are open for public inspection. Official Observers are solicited from the County Grand Jury, the League of Women Voters, media and the political parties, city clerks and civic organizations. Following are the major components of the official canvass:

### **Roster Reconciliation**

Following the close of the polls on election night, precinct officers are responsible for reconciliation of their roster by completing the Official Ballot Statement. The statement lists the exact number of voted ballots, unused ballots, spoiled ballots, roster signatures, etc. As part of the official canvass, the number of voted ballots indicated by the inspector is compared to the number of ballots tabulated by the computer tally system.

### **Manual Vote Tally**

All voted ballots from a randomly selected 1% of the total precincts are manually tallied and balanced against the computer counts to verify the accuracy of the election tally system. This process is required by law. The 1% manual vote tally is done in addition to the separate election night testing of the computer counting system, which is known as the Logic and Accuracy Test.

In addition, a manual tally of 10% of randomly selected precincts for any contest where the margin of victory is less than one-half of one percent (0.5%), based on the semifinal official canvass results, must be completed. The 10% manual tally must only be conducted for the contest in question, not the entire ballot.

On August 3, 2007 the Secretary of State issued the decertification of electronic voting except under limited and specified conditions. Use of the electronic voting equipment is permissible for disabled voters and during Early Voting periods with the requirement that 100% of the voter verifiable paper audit trail from electronic machines are manually tallied during the official canvass period.

### **Ballots Added During Official Canvass**

The following ballots are not included on the election night totals. Once eligibility is determined, these ballots are added to the election results. The ballot types added during Official Canvass include:

**Vote by Mail Ballots** returned on Election Day to our office and/or dropped off at polling locations. These ballots do not arrive in sufficient time to be individually signature-verified, opened and prepared for tabulation on election night.

**Damaged Ballots** or those ballots marked in such a way that they are unable to be processed through the election tally system and, therefore, must be manually duplicated prior to tabulation.

**Provisional Ballots and Fail-Safe Ballots** issued at the various polling places on election day must be individually researched to determine their eligibility. Provisional ballots are issued at polling locations when a person's voter registration cannot immediately be verified.

During the canvass period each provisional ballot is researched to determine the voter's eligibility and verify the signature. In a major election there may be as many as 40,000 ballots involved. After the determination is made and if the voter is qualified to vote, their ballots are added to the overall total for the election.

**Write-In Ballots** must be individually reviewed to determine if the write-in vote is for a qualified or unqualified write-in candidate (a "qualified" candidate is one that has met the legal requirements to run for office and has filed a statement of write-in candidacy with the appropriate elections office). Write-in ballots must also be checked to verify whether or not the voter also voted for a candidate listed on the ballot for the same office.