

November 13, 2019 – REVISED FOR ACCURACY

Pima County Election Integrity Commission

Brian Bickel, Chairman

Via email Michael Dale, EIC Coordinator, Michael.Dale@pima.gov

Dear Brian and other Commissioners:

I wanted to give you a brief report on the recent Tucson City election where I was the Republican Political Party observer, and shared this task with Barbara Tellman for the Democrats and Richard Fridena for the Green Party, both of whom are also EIC members and will make their own reports respectively to the Commission.

Despite rumors and public interviews to the contrary, there were no missing “unaccounted for” ballots and the ballots balanced from received to tabulated with 102,454 ballots. There was one affidavit returned with an instruction sheet inside instead of a ballot early on, and the City Clerk’s office tried to contact that person without success.

What I found most interesting was this being the first election using the new change this year in Title 16 statute that now requires voters to present identification when they request a ballot at an early voting location §16-246 – See here

<https://www.azleg.gov/search/oop/qfullhit.asp?CiWebHitsFile=/ars/16/00246.htm&CiRestriction=identification>

During the Tucson General Election the City Clerk established Voting Locations and there were seven open on election day and one (12th Street) where ballots are processed, that stayed open throughout the election cycle. See here

https://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/files/clerks/Voting_Locations_for_web.pdf

These locations served three purposes as follows:

“Registered Voters may visit any one of the voting locations and perform any of the following:

- Drop off your ‘voted’ vote-by-mail ballot, or
- Bring your vote-by-mail ballot, cast the ballot in person and drop it in the ballot box, or
- Receive and vote a vote-by-mail replacement ballot.”

This created some significant changes to the normal early voting process. As voters who did not receive a ballot but went to the Voting Location were still voting an early ballot and not at a polling location, as this is an all mail-in election. Only since they were showing identification, these ballots did not need the additional step to be sent to the Recorder’s office for signature verification. Verification for these ballots was done at the 12th Street Facility.

This may have confused the ballot trackers and adds some new challenges to the parties tracking ballot numbers. Since these are normally tracked as being sent from the City to Pima County or being returned to the City. Missing this step were 2,189 ballots that needed to be reconciled at the end of the election for outside ballot trackers.

In summary the final ballot reconciliation included:

- Pima County returned to City - 100,176
- Ballots Cast at Voting Locations (Nov 5th)- 2,189
- Ballots Cast at Voter Services (12th Street) - 86
- Team Voting - 3

Total Ballots cast and tabulated: 102,454

Since the statute left it open, or something of a grey area for interpretation at least, as to how these “voter ID early ballots” were to be treated, this is how the City interpreted the change. In any event, under the newly revised §16-246 a voter shows the necessary identification, a ballot is issued, if they are registered to vote or a provisional ballot is issued if they are not registered.

There were 104 provisional ballots cast on Nov 5th at the Voting Locations; 67 of these were invalid with voters who didn’t live in Tucson. Even though it is not expressly stated in the Statute or the Election Procedures Manual, 2014 version or 2019 draft. The process makes sense and was successful in catching voters who had tried to vote twice,

Otherwise, the election went smoothly as usual at the City. With 39% participation, there remains a question of whether or not this will be the last off year election for the City or a possible return to court with the State Legislature on §16-204.01

<https://www.azleg.gov/viewdocument/?docName=https://www.azleg.gov/ars/16/00204-01.htm>

That concludes my election report.

On a personal note let me add, after watching your September meeting online with the discussion regarding the Republican Party memo that had gone to the County Administrator with nonspecific, broadly based accusations regarding early voting. Mr. Cote stated at that meeting that I was somehow “consulted” regarding that memo. This is completely false and I wanted to clarify that for the record. I was never consulted or involved in any way with that memo. In fact, I first saw it and downloaded it off the County Administrator’s website once I heard about it.

If I had been consulted, I would have told them that I do not agree with anything in their analysis or recommendations as was presented therein and shows a lack of knowledge on the elections processes. I also would have suggested the Commissioners put aside any divisive partisanship to work on specific issues, instead of the shotgun approach that was used, just as I have always known the EIC members to do when I was there..

Thank you and with Best Wishes to all,

Karen Schutte

2019 Tucson Election Observer
and Former member of the EIC