

PFAF

October 2022 County Election Official Survey Report [Interim]



OVERVIEW

The PA For America First Election Integrity team spent some time reaching out to County Level Election Officials statewide to set up interviews with the intent to complete pre-drafted questionnaires designed to establish certain basic information on county-level election systems and procedures. This is an interim report.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Most counties report regular maintenance of their voter rolls, involving daily, weekly or yearly cleanings, change of address information, and **coordination with the Election Registration Information Center (ERIC)**. Several counties reported being unsure if they had ever cleaned their voter files,

while others report only cleaning the files every two years (biennially).

Analysis and Recommendations -

Pennsylvania should consider following the example of other states, and withdraw from ERIC, which is a non-governmental organization funded by the far-left Open Society Foundation, which is itself funded by the anti-democracy extremist billionaire, George Soros. Pennsylvania's association with this private and secretive organization damages public confidence in the integrity of our elections. To improve the accuracy of its voter roll, Pennsylvania should first conduct a comprehensive voter registration audit to accurately assess the quality of our voter list, and determine if there are areas that need improvement. Issuance of clear procedural guidance from the state to the counties will help standardize processes across counties, and increase accuracy of the voter roll. Finally, consider enhancing transparency and enabling more effective oversight by publishing the voter list online. This is considered [international best practice](#) for election data and transparency.

VOTING SYSTEMS

Pennsylvania counties use a combination of pre-printed, hand-marked paper ballots, as well as the more modern "hybrid" style voting systems. These hybrid voting systems use PVRs and BMDs, while retaining pre-printed, hand-marked ballots for BBMs only. **ES&S, Dominion** and **Clear Ballot** are the most commonly reported Voting System manufacturers used in the twenty-one counties interviewed.

Most county election officials report absolutely **no issues** with their electronic voting systems and very few concerns over upcoming elections. **Snyder County** reports possibly needing funding for upcoming elections. The process for certification of voting systems has not been well relayed, and is likely not well understood, at the county level. There is also a serious lack of understanding over how machines are calibrated, with most counties reporting ignorance on the topic. Updates are performed as needed by voting system manufacturers (rather than county staff) who manually install firmware at the county level.

L&A tests are performed often with elections staff present, bipartisan observers are invited, and one county reported holding public voting system tests. More than half of county election officials surveyed did not support a manual voting process, and the rest were unsure if they would support it in future elections.

Analysis and Recommendations -

Many Americans (possibly most) distrust voting machines, and this distrust is also common among the senior

leadership of America's political parties (although few Democrats have spoken on this issue recently, many are on record—including the current Vice President and the Speaker of the House—expressing distrust of voting machines prior to the disputed 2020 presidential elections). Pennsylvanians also distrust voting machines, and perhaps for good reason. Vulnerabilities, which can be found easily through a simple web search, have been discovered in all of the machines used in our state.

Voting machine processes are opaque, both because of their complexity, and because their manufacturers will not allow examination of their code. They cannot be effectively observed and verified by citizens, or poll watchers, or even election officers, so those who lose elections will always have doubts about the fairness of the process. The primary objective of election administrators must be the conduct of an election process that voters view as accurate and fair, which results in the election of representatives that voters are confident have democratic legitimacy.

We believe that the only way we can truly restore trust in Pennsylvania's elections is to revert to an open and transparent manual polling process, that poll watchers, election officers, and ordinary voters can see, understand and verify; and recommend that in 2023 the Secretary of State prepare draft processes for reversion to transparent manual processes for consideration by the legislature.

FUNDING

Few counties reported receiving in-kind or private contributions, with the only reported donors being from the state, PPE grants, and money from the Center for Tech and Civic Life. According to officials, the funds were used for staffing and voting system equipment.

Analysis and Recommendations – During the 2020 elections, contributions from CTCL were disbursed in a seemingly partisan way, with 95% going to counties previously won by Democrat candidates in 2016. Private or partisan funding for election activities diminishes voter confidence in the fairness of election administration, and such contributions should be banned in Pennsylvania, as they already have been in 12 other states.

OBSERVERS

Almost every county provides reports that they offer guidance documents for poll watchers and

observers. Twenty counties did not respond to the question of whether they would distribute guidance documents prepared by PFEI, with one responding blatantly with a “No” to the question.

When asked if they would approve international observers - most replies were negative, with a few officials agreeing, if the observer was a registered voter.

ADJUDICATION OF BALLOTS

A question on the percentage of ballots rejected by the tabulator in their county provided some positive insight, with the highest percentage reported by the eleven counties who responded to this question being 4% of absentee/ mail ballots. Ten counties did not have the data to offer, and this may require follow-up requests for the production of this percentage. Multiple counties reported adjudication being a bi-partisan process.

Analysis and Recommendations – Abnormal or high rates of rejected ballots requiring human adjudication is an indication of a problem with tabulator calibration. All machines are tested before the election, and certified to be functioning correctly, so malfunctioning machines (if any) should be distributed evenly across the state. An unusual concentration of malfunctioning tabulators in an area may be an indication of fraud; as tabulator sensitivity can be adjusted manually to send a high percentage of ballots for human adjudication, where corrupt individuals can “interpret” the vote as for their favored candidate. To prevent this form of fraud, the Secretary of State should issue instructions for a mandatory manual recount in any county or precinct reporting an unusually high rate of human ballot adjudication.

COMPILED RESPONSES

(Q 1,2) What is your biggest concern about the upcoming election?

- 19 of the 21 counties interviewed replied that they have NO CONCERNS about the upcoming elections.
- 1 of the 21 counties identified potential SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES.
- 1 of the 21 counties identified 3RD PARTY INTERFERENCE as a potential issue.

(Q 3) Do you feel like you have the resources, equipment, personnel, and training needed to run an effective election in November?

- 20 of the 21 counties interviewed stated that they DO have all necessary resources.

- 1 of the 21 counties interviewed reported potential FUNDING CONCERNS.

(Q 4) Who serves on your county Election Board?

- 19 of the 21 counties interviewed provided NO RESPONSE to this question.
- 2 of the 21 counties described having TWO DEMOCRATS and ONE REPUBLICAN as part of their county election board.

(Q 5) What about precinct staff? Are you able to have equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans?

- 12 of the 21 counties reported YES, they DO HAVE EQUAL NUMBERS of Ds and Rs at POLLING LOCATIONS..
- 5 of the 21 counties reported that NO, they DO NOT HAVE EQUAL NUMBERS of Ds and Rs at POLLING LOCATIONS.
- 4 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE of the political distribution of staffers at polling locations.

(Q 6) How do you recruit Poll Workers?

- 4 of the 21 counties interviewed reported PLACING ADS in various mediums.
- 6 of the 21 counties reported using WORD OF MOUTH.
- 6 of the 21 counties reported using ONLINE OUTREACH via SOCIAL MEDIA and COUNTY WEBSITE LINKS.
- 4 of the 21 counties reported using POLL JUDGES and PARTY HELP to recruit more staff.
- 6 of the 21 counties reported using sign-up sheets on location.

(Q 7) When was the last time the voter file in your county was scrubbed or cleaned?

- 4 of the 21 counties interviewed reported DAILY cleaning of voter rolls.
- 10 of the 21 counties reported YEARLY cleaning of voter rolls.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported BIENNIAL cleaning of the voter rolls.
- 5 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE.

(Q 8) When was the last time you had access to the National Change of Address (NCoA) List or any other change of address list?

- 6 of the 21 counties interviewed reported YEARLY comparisons with the NCoA.
- 4 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE.

- 2 of the 21 counties reported DAILY comparisons.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported WEEKLY comparisons.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported MONTHLY comparisons..

(Q 9) Are you confident that the voter file is accurate and up to date?

- Each of the 21 counties interviewed reported YES, they ARE CONFIDENT in the accuracy of their registrations.

(Q 10) Can you tell me which machines your county uses?

- 14 of the 21 counties interviewed reported using ES&S Voting Systems.
- 5 of the 21 counties reported using DOMINION Voting Systems.
- 2 of the 21 counties reported using CLEAR BALLOT Voting Systems.

(Q 11) How is the voting system used in your county certified, by whom and when?

- 1 of the 21 counties interviewed reported believing a Judge or Election Board position provides certification for the voting systems.
- 7 of the 21 counties reported State and Federal entities provide certification for voting systems.
- 12 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE of certification process.
- 1 county reported having them certified this year.
- 1 reported the most recent certification is from last year.

(Q 12) Who updates and calibrates the voting machines?

- 9 of the 21 counties reported updates and calibration performed by VOTING SYSTEM VENDORS.
- 7 of the 21 counties reported updates being performed IN-HOUSE.
- 1 of the counties reported a 3RD PARTY updates the machines.
- 1 county reported being UNSURE of who updates and calibrates machines.
- 1 county reported that the Election Board updates machines.
- 2 counties reported having L&A tests only and not being aware of updates.

(Q13) How are voting machines updated and calibrated?

- 14 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE of calibration process.
- 2 of the 21 counties reported FIRMWARE installations being part of the process.
- 2 of the 21 counties reported VOTING SYSTEM VENDORS manually installing firmware.

(Q 14) Are you present when the machines are updated and calibrated, or is that process supervised by someone else? If some else, what is their position?

- 18 of the 21 counties interviewed reported that YES, the top election official IS PRESENT during updates and calibration.
- 3 of the 21 counties reported NO RESPONSE.
- 3 counties reported having either other staff members or CAMERAS present during updates.

(Q 15) Do you invite party representatives to witness the update and calibration?

- 12 of the 21 counties interviewed reported YES, Party Observers are invited.
- 4 of the 21 counties reported that NO, Party Observers are NOT INVITED
- 1 of the 21 counties reported having updates OPEN TO PUBLIC.
- 1 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE.

(Q 16) Are voting machines ever connected to the internet?

- 20 of the 21 counties reported NO INTERNET CONNECTIONS.
- 1 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE.

(Q 17) Concerns were raised across the country about the accuracy and integrity of voting machines in the 2020 elections, and there are now calls to get rid of the machines, and use a manual process like that used in France. Do you think it is a good idea to go back to a manual voting process?

- 19 of the 21 counties DO NOT SUPPORT a manual voting process. The few explanations provided consisted of too much work, human error and a "bad Idea" generally.
- 2 of the counties reported being UNSURE if they would support a manual voting process in the future.

(Q 18) Can you tell us what it costs per voter to implement an election in this country?

- Each of the 18 counties interviewed reported that TESTING IS DONE IN-HOUSE.

(Q 18) Are your electronic voting systems ever connected to the internet?

- NONE of the 21 counties were able to provide this information.

(Q 19) In 2020 there were many allegations that poll watchers were prevented from effectively observing the counting process. Have changes in procedures been made, or directions provided, so that you are confident poll watchers will be able to effectively observe all parts of the counting process in 2022, including adjudication during early voting and on election day?

- 17 of the 21 counties reported that YES, Poll Watchers MAY OBSERVE EFFECTIVELY.
- 4 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE if changes were made or if Watchers may observe effectively.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported that NO changes have been made in this regard.

(Q 20) We know that in some areas machines had difficulty reading many mail-in ballots, and those had to be sent for manual adjudication. Can you describe briefly how ballots are adjudicated here? Percent of adjudicated ballots?

- 8 of the 21 counties interviewed reported NO ISSUES with ADJUDICATION.
- 3 of the 21 counties reported adjudication being a BI-PARTISAN event.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported adjudication being open to the public.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported only adjudications being for damaged ballots.
- 10 of the 21 counties reported not having data on percent of adjudicated ballots.
- The highest reported adjudication rate was 4% and the lowest was 0%, or NO ADJUDICATIONS.

(Q 21) Concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of procedures for documenting chain-of-custody during the election period. Are you confident that procedures for documenting chain-of-custody in this county are adequate to strengthen public confidence in the integrity of the election?

- 18 of the 21 counties reported YES, they ARE CONFIDENT in CHAIN OF CUSTODY procedures.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported NO, they ARE NOT CONFIDENT in CHAIN OF CUSTODY PROCEDURES.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE of CHAIN OF CUSTODY procedures.

(Q 22) As an election professional, do you think the changes made in the election process in Pennsylvania in response to COVID have weakened election integrity, strengthened election integrity, or made no change in election integrity?

- 18 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE if COVID protocols have weakened, strengthened, or made no change in election security.
- 3 of the counties offered no response to this question.

(Q 23) Did you receive any funding or in-kind contributions for training, staff, voter education or equipment, or any other purpose from outside the state of Pennsylvania?

- 13 of the 21 counties reported NO IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.
- 3 of the 21 counties reported YES, they DID RECEIVE IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.
- 3 of the 21 counties reported being UNSURE if they received in-kind contributions.
- 2 of the 21 counties offered no response to this question.
- Contributions received were from State Grants, CTCL, and PPE Grants and were used for both PAYROLL and VOTING SYSTEM EQUIPMENT.
- 15 of the 21 counties DO NOT EXPECT MORE IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.
- 5 of the 21 counties are UNSURE if more IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS will come.
- 1 of the counties had NO RESPONSE to the question of possible future contributions.

(Q 24) How are ballots returned to voter services election night? Who else accompanies them?

- 18 of the 21 counties reported POLL STAFF/ JUDGES are who return ballots to Voter Services.
- 8 of the 21 counties reported MINORITY INSPECTORS accompanying the staff for transport of ballots.

- 2 of the 21 counties reported the SHERIFF/ DEPUTIES accompany the staff for transport of ballots.
- 2 of the 21 counties had no response to this question.

(Q 25) There is a lot of concern in Pennsylvania and across the country about the security and integrity of the ballot drop boxes. What are the chain of custody procedures for ballot drop boxes? Any times when drop boxes were not under video surveillance?

- 7 of the 21 counties reported have NO DROP BOXES IN USE.
- 10 of the 21 counties reported ONLY ONE DROP BOX IN USE.
- 2 of the 21 counties reported REGULAR SCANNING of the drop box THROUGHOUT THE DAY.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported the Sheriff helps monitor the drop box.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported SEALS used to secure the drop box.
- 15 of the 21 counties reported having drop boxes UNDER VIDEO SURVEILLANCE at ALL TIMES.
- 11 of the 21 counties reported times of NO VIDEO SURVEILLANCE while drop boxes are in use.
- 4 of the 21 counties offered NO RESPONSE to the question of gaps in video surveillance.

(Q 27, 28) Who is responsible for reviewing the video? Were party observers present during review of footage? Were party chairs aware that they could send observers to review footage?

- 11 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE to this question.
- 6 of the 21 counties named the SHERIFF as the responsible party.
- 2 of the 21 counties identified "SECURITY" as the responsible party.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported that ANYONE may review the footage upon request.
- 16 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE to the question of bi-partisan footage review.
- 5 of the 21 counties reported that NO, PARTY OBSERVERS WERE NOT PRESENT during any review of footage.
- NONE of the 21 counties reported partisan observers present during any review.
- 13 of the 21 counties reported YES, PARTY CHAIRS ARE AWARE that they MAY SEND OBSERVERS to REVIEW FOOTAGE.

- 1 of the 21 counties reported NO, PARTY CHARIS MAY NOT BE AWARE that they MAY SEND OBSERVERS to REVIEW FOOTAGE.
- 7 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE to the question of whether party chairs were aware that they could send observers to review footage.
- 2 of the 21 counties reported either NO EARLY VOTING AT ALL, NO EARLY VOTING SECURITY FOOTAGE, or NO OBSERVERS ALLOWED AT EARLY VOTING FOOTAGE REVIEW. Unclear response to questions asked.

(Q 29) Did you have both Republican and Democrat poll watchers at every polling location in 2020?

- 2 of the 21 counties reported YES, they DO HAVE BIPARTISAN OBSERVERS at each polling location.
- 7 of the 21 counties reported NO, they DO NOT HAVE BIPARTISAN OBSERVERS at each polling location.
- 12 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE to this question.
- 2 of the 21 counties offered insight that finding even minimal staff can be difficult and that they do the best they can.

(Q 30) If the Legislature through the (state election office) allowed independent non-partisan observers, would you welcome that?

- 10 of the 21 counties reported that YES, they WOULD WELCOME LAWFULLY ORDAINED NON-PARTISAN OBSERVERS.
- 8 of the 21 counties reported NO, they WOULD NOT WELCOME LAWFULLY ORDAINED NON-PARTISAN OBSERVERS.
- 2 of the 21 counties reported NO RESPONSE to this question.
- 1 of the 21 counties offered insight that non-partisan observers would not be accepted for observation of primary elections, only for general elections.

(Q 31) If allowed, would you authorize international non-partisan observers from recognized election monitoring organizations?

- 15 of the 21 counties reported that NO, they WOULD NOT ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL, NON-PARTISAN OBSERVATION, 1 county citing ILLEGALITY of the concept.
- 5 of the 21 counties reported that YES, they WOULD ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL, NON-

PARTISAN OBSERVATION, citing as long as the observers were registered voters.

- 2 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE to this question.

(Q 32) Do you have a publication that you provide to your election officials regarding rights and responsibilities of observers? Would you distribute one we would prepare based on PA law?

- 19 of the 21 counties responded with YES they DO PROVIDE PUBLICATION ABOUT POLL WATCHERS to ELECTION OFFICIALS.
- 2 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE to this question.
- 20 of the 21 counties had NO RESPONSE to the question of distributing a publication we prepare based on PA law.
- 1 of the 21 counties reported that NO, they WOULD NOT distribute a publication we prepare based on PA law.

16 of the 21 counties were reported to have polite and helpful registrars to help complete these surveys, though only one in-person interview was granted.

FOCUS POINTS

COST PER VOTER

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

CALIBRATION PROCESS

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

REGULAR REGISTRATION UPDATES

SECURITY CAMERAS