



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER-ASSESSOR-REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Registrar of Voters Division
435 Fiscal Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

p: (707) 565-6800
f: (707) 565-6843

Deva Marie Proto
Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-
Registrar of Voters


Wendy Hudson
Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters

07/25/2024

The Honorable Shelly Averill, Presiding Judge
Sonoma County Superior Court
Hall of Justice
600 Administration Drive Courtroom 15
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

FILED

Jul 25 2024
Sonoma County Clerk

BY: 
Amanda S. King, Deputy Clerk

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report: Election Integrity in Sonoma County

The Sonoma County Registrar of Voters respectfully submits the attached Response to Grand Jury Report Forms regarding recommendations and findings R1, R3a, R3b, R3c, and R4 in regard to the 2024 Grand Jury Report investigation titled "Election Integrity in Sonoma County." I would like to thank the Grand Jury for the time and dedication, as well as the cooperation and respect they showed our office during their investigation. We agree with their findings and will work to implement their recommendations.

On behalf of our office, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for proactively initiating their investigation into the practices of the Registrar of Voters Office. We appreciate the validation of the incredible work done by the people in our office who ensure that elections are conducted with the utmost integrity and diligence. We are lucky to have a phenomenal staff of dedicated, passionate individuals, and we are gratified that the Grand Jury recognized their work.

Sincerely,



Deva Marie Proto
Sonoma County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-Registrar of Voters

cc: The Board of Supervisors
County Administrator's Office
The Grand Jury Foreperson Rob Hunter
The County Clerk

DEPARTMENT GRAND JURY REPORT RESPONSES

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Election Integrity in Sonoma County

Report Date: May 13, 2024

Response by: Deva Marie Proto Title: Registrar of Voters

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Registrar of Voters

FINDINGS:

- F1. There are no material flaws or uncorrected defects (e.g., machine errors, fraudulent ballots being cast, or miscounting votes) that impair the overall integrity of the election process. The Grand Jury also finds that while ROV executes all procedures effectively, there are nonetheless documentation gaps that lead to situations where institutional knowledge is not entirely committed to paper.
- F2. ROV executes prescribed election procedures with proper management controls in place to ensure full compliance with all applicable requirements.
- F3. ROV ensures that the technology systems and services, including information security and cybersecurity measures, used in an election are properly installed, maintained, and validated for accuracy before all elections.
- F4. ROV employees and Vote Center poll workers have been subjected to abusive behavior and to direct and implied threats of physical violence in the past and may be exposed to similar threats in the future. ROV's threat mitigation profile would be enhanced (and operational efficiency would be streamlined) if ROV was moved to a larger and more defensible space.
- F5. The citizen poll workers who contribute many hours of service during an election are an indispensable ROV resource whose continued support is essential.
- F6. The current state of election integrity found in Sonoma County did not occur by accident, but rather by the continued interest and active engagement of a majority of Sonoma County citizens who register and vote.
- F7. ROV promotes transparency through community outreach and communication with the public leading up to and after an election.
- F8. While ROV carefully preserves the results of all elections, it has neither historical data collection nor reporting capability that would enable comprehensive analysis of past election results.

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8.

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. By September 1, 2024, ROV develop and begin execution of an ongoing process designed to ensure that internal procedural documentation is created and kept current.
- R2. By June 30, 2025, the Board of Supervisors develop and approve a long-term plan to provide ROV with a facility that better accommodates space and physical security requirements.
- R3a. By August 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors and ROV develop and implement a plan for enhancing existing ROV security measures and developing new security measures based on recurring threat assessments and recommendations by qualified authorities.
- R3b. By July 31, 2024, ROV create and maintain a record of all incidents of abusive or threatening behavior to support future risk and threat assessment analysis.
- R3c. By July 31, 2024, ROV evaluate all recommendations that resulted from its meeting with the Emergency Management Department and establish an implementation schedule for the recommendations it adopts.
- R4. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors allocate resources for a project to create a publicly accessible Sonoma County elections database to enable ready access to, and analysis of, past election results.

- Recommendation numbered: R3b has been implemented.
See attachment
- Recommendations numbered: R1, R2, R3a, and R3c, R4 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
See attachment

Date: JUL 25 2024 Signed: Deva Proto

Number of pages attached: 2

Response to 2023-24 Grand Jury Report: Election Integrity in Sonoma County

Following are the Registrar of Voters' required responses to recommendations R1, R3a, R3b, R3c, and R4 in regard to the 2024 Grand Jury Report investigation titled "Election Integrity in Sonoma County"

R1. By September 1, 2024, ROV develop and begin execution of an ongoing process designed to ensure that internal procedural documentation is created and kept current.

Registrar of Voters Response: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented with estimated completion by September 1, 2024. The Registrar of Voters is working on a formal policy for documenting internal procedures and training multiple staff members, as well as updating, reviewing, and utilizing existing training manuals.

R2. By June 30, 2025, the Board of Supervisors develop and approve a long-term plan to provide ROV with a facility that better accommodates space and physical security requirements.

Registrar of Voters Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The Registrar of Voters will work with the Board of Supervisors and the Sonoma Public Infrastructure Department to identify a solution for a more suitable facility. The funding and authority will need to come from the Board of Supervisors.

R3a. By August 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors and ROV develop and implement a plan for enhancing existing ROV security measures and developing new security measures based on recurring threat assessments and recommendations by qualified authorities.

Registrar of Voters Response: This recommendation is in the process of implementation. The Registrar of Voters has been improving and enhancing security measures based on assessments and recommendations since receiving them and will continue to do so as funding and capacity allows. There have been security cameras added to more areas of the office. Security notification units and alarm buttons have been added to all rooms in the office to communicate about, and be notified of, issues. Physical security has been enhanced by removing the driveway and associated drive-thru ballot drop box, and relocating the box to a location that allows the building to be more secure. During the March election, bollards were brought in to protect staff working outside. ROV has been working closer with the Department of Emergency Management and local law enforcement to increase communication and planning for elections. Numerous other additional security recommendations would only be able to be implemented with a new building that provides the space and physical security as recommended.

R3b. By July 31, 2024, ROV create and maintain a record of all incidents of abusive or threatening behavior to support future risk and threat assessment analysis.

Registrar of Voters Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The Registrar of Voters has created a tracking spreadsheet for staff and extra-help employees to log any instances of abusive or threatening behavior. There will be a reporting sheet at each vote center for poll workers to report inappropriate behavior, which will also be logged on the same spreadsheet and provided to the appropriate authorities.

R3c. By July 31, 2024, ROV evaluate all recommendations that resulted from its meeting with the Emergency Management Department and establish an implementation schedule for the recommendations it adopts.

Registrar of Voters Response: **This recommendation is in the process of implementation.** The Registrar of Voters has been working to evaluate recommendations and questions that arose from the table-top exercise and implement feasible solutions. The ROV will continue that process and develop a timeline for implementation of recommendations by the end of July.

R4. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors allocate resources for a project to create a publicly accessible Sonoma County elections database to enable ready access to, and analysis of, past election results.

Registrar of Voters Response: **This recommendation is in process and will continue to be implemented as funding is made available.** The Registrar of Voters entered into a contract with a vendor (Civera) on December 15, 2023, of which funding has been allocated for the next fiscal year, to take old election records and convert them into a searchable database for the public. The current contract covers the time period from 1980 to 2022 and will be done in stages. The first phase, covering years 2013 to 2020, should be accomplished early in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Future work on this database will be accomplished as funding is allocated by the Board of Supervisors in the annual budget.