

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS



From the desk of... Mark Mossman, Director of Election Information
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To: Daniel W. White, Executive Director
Re: February 2, 2010 General Primary Election and Significant Dates
Date: February 5, 2010

The volume of calls received by staff was the lowest for any election, the majority of calls being of the mundane and typical variety. The high number of calls anticipated concerning P.A. 95-699 (notification when an under-vote for a statewide constitutional office occurs) didn't materialize.

Most of these complaints about the under-vote process centered on how election judges administered this aspect of voting and the misinformation judges provided. For example, some judges instructed voters to vote for each office or their ballot wouldn't be counted. In other instances, judges verbally announced which office the voter didn't cast a vote for, thus violating the voter's ability to secretly cast their ballot. Some complained the news media (newspaper and TV) misinformed voters and instilled fear in some voters that if they didn't vote for each constitutional office their ballot wouldn't be counted. A few voters that called complained this law is a violation of their constitutional rights and interferes with their most basic and fundamental right in a democratic society to cast their ballot in secret. I have received a few hostile calls from voters since Election Day complaining that their constitutional rights are being violated by this law and they will no longer continue to participate in elections when statewide constitutional offices are on the ballot.

As one would expect, since this was a primary election, several complaints were received about having to declare party affiliation and not having the opportunity to "cross-over" and vote for other party candidates.

SBE staff were assigned (per election authority request) to Alexander County, Pulaski County (3 precincts) and the central count centers for St. Clair County and East St. Louis Board of Election Commissioners. Jeff Berry was assigned to Alexander County and was complimentary of the County Clerk, Frances Lee, and what he observed on Election Day.

Most notably, this General Primary may be remembered for the number of extremely close races on the statewide level, the low percentage of voter turnout (expected to be 20% or less as reported by the news media), and attention given to the office of Lt. Governor.

For comparison sake, the lowest percentage of voter turnout for a General Primary Election since 1960 was 25% in 1978 and 2006. The average percentage of voter turnout for all General Primary Elections since 1960 is 34.04% with a high of 44% in both 1980 and 1992.