



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Requested Board Meeting Date: 3/19/2024

*= Mandatory, information must be provided

Click or tap the boxes to enter text. If not applicable, indicate "N/A".

***Title:**

Election Integrity Commission 2023 Annual Report

***Introduction/Background:**

On July 1, 2008, the Board of Supervisors established the Election Integrity Commission for the purpose of providing independent oversight of the county elections process. Nine members are appointed; one for each of five County Supervisors, one for the County Administrator, and one for each of three political parties recognized in Pima County. The Commission currently serves as the only Commission of its kind across the State of Arizona.

***Discussion:**

As required by their bylaws, the Election Integrity Commission produces an annual report to present to the Board of Supervisors detailing the activities and accomplishments of the EIC. Together with the help of the Communications and Elections department, the EIC has completed the 2023 annual report. The report covers the work of the EIC over the year, and a recap of the Elections Department progress towards the priorities that were made for 2023. The EIC unanimously accepted the annual report at the February 23rd Election Integrity Commission meeting.

***Conclusion:**

The Election Integrity Commission would like to submit the 2023 annual report to the Board of Supervisors.

***Recommendation:**

The Elections Integrity Commission recommends the Board of Supervisors accept the 2023 annual report.

***Fiscal Impact:**

None.

***Board of Supervisor District:**

1 2 3 4 5 All

Department: Elections

Telephone: 724-6830

Contact: Vanessa Figueroa

Telephone: 724-6891

Department Director Signature:  Date: 2/23/24

Deputy County Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

County Administrator Signature:  Date: 2/26/24



PIMA COUNTY
ELECTIONS OFFICE

Elections Integrity Commission

2023 | Annual Report

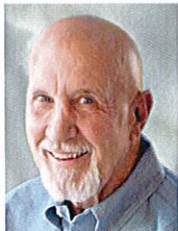
Chair Grijalva, honorable members of the Board of Supervisors, Administrator Lesher,

This Elections Integrity Commission Annual Report meets the requirements of the Commission's bylaws and is duly submitted to you for your information and consideration. Though the bylaws direct the Chair to submit this annual report, it has been reviewed by the full EIC and includes requested additions and revisions.

During 2023, the Elections Department conducted a consolidated all-mail election for the City of Tucson and multiple school districts. The department also conducted an incorporation election for the Town of Vail. The elections conducted by the department all ran smoothly with no major issues. Throughout the year, the Elections Department continued to revise and update procedures to better serve the voters of Pima County, as well as prepare for the three major elections coming in 2024.

The small issues that did come up in 2023 were effectively and smartly resolved by Elections, with the EIC making several recommendations for process and oversight improvements. The success of the 2023 elections and the strength of the EIC and the Elections Department should give the Board and the public strong confidence in the conduct of Elections in Pima.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian Bickel

Chair, Pima County Elections
Integrity Commission

And



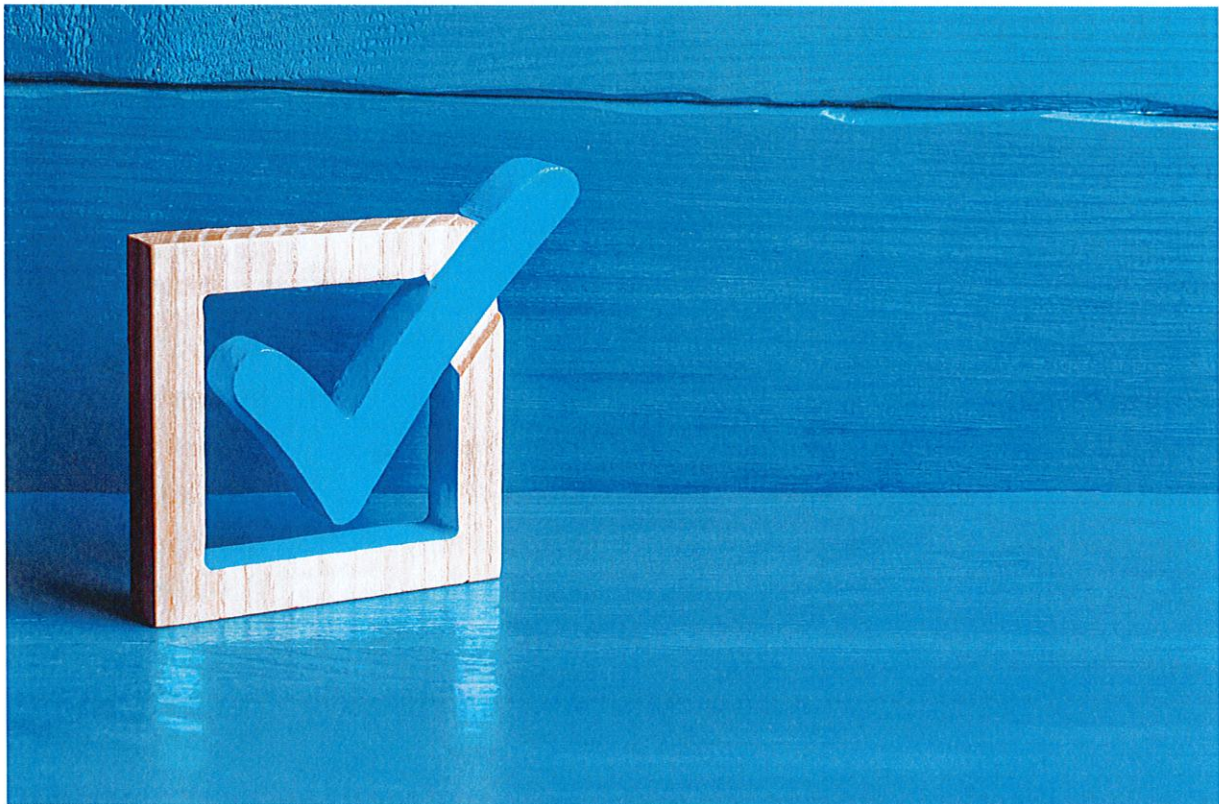
Constance Hargrove

Director, Pima County
Elections Department

Ex-Officio Member, Elections
Integrity Commission

ELECTION INTEGRITY COMMISSION MISSION STATEMENT

To provide independent oversight of the Pima County election process and to review and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding election information technology systems as well as technical and procedural matters.



I. INTRODUCTION

The Pima County Election Integrity Commission (EIC) was created on July 1, 2008, by Board of Supervisors' direction. The nine voting members are appointed in the following manner: one member appointed by each of the five sitting Supervisors for a total of five; one member appointed by the County Administrator; one member appointed by each political party with party recognition in Pima County for a total of three. In addition to the nine voting members, one non-voting ex officio staff member is appointed by Pima County.

The Election Integrity Commission posts schedules, agendas and minutes for all meetings on its website: <https://www.pima.gov/2801/Election-Integrity-Commission-Agendas-Mi>

The Election Integrity Commission Annual Report is a publication filed at the close of the calendar year. It is intended to keep Commission stakeholders, County executives/officials, and representatives apprised of important activities, election updates and other relevant information for those unable to attend monthly EIC meetings. The Annual Report will be distributed to the Board of Supervisors and Political Party officials via email and posted on the EIC website.

II. EIC Commissioners

Commissioners are appointed to a term of two years from the date ratified by the Board of Supervisors.

| Name | Office | District/Jurisdiction | Term Expiration |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Misty Atkins | | 1 | April 19, 2025 |
| Connie Delarge | | 2 | May 2, 2024 |
| Ryan Maese | | 3 | July 5, 2025 |
| Cheryl Caswell | | 4 | January 23, 2025 |
| Barbara Tellman | | 5 | September 30, 2024 |
| Toni Hellon | Vice Chair | County Administrator | September 5, 2024 |
| Brian Bickel | Chair | Democratic Party | May 7, 2025 |
| Arthur Kerschen | | Libertarian Party | February 5, 2024 |
| Thomas J. Berezny | | Republican Party | February 14, 2025 |
| Constance Hargrove | | Ex-Officio – Elections Department | |

Per the EIC Bylaws, officers were elected at the January meeting, resulting in the election of Commissioner Brian Bickel as Chairman. Commissioner Toni Hellon was later elected as Vice Chair at the March meeting following the resignation of Commission member Levoy Hurley.

Diana Durazo, Senior Advisor, remained the EIC liaison to the County Administrator.

III. 2023 MEETINGS SCHEDULE

All meetings were held in person at two set locations during the year. Meetings were held at the Pima County Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 130 W. Congress St., 1st Floor, on the following dates:

- Friday, January 20, 2023
- Friday, February 17, 2023 (Cancelled)
- Friday, March 17, 2023
- Friday, April 21, 2023

Commission meetings were then moved to accommodate construction at the administrative building and to better serve Commission staff. The remainder of the meetings were held at the Abrams Public Health Center, 3950 S Country Club Road, on the following dates:

- Friday, May 19, 2023
- Friday, June 16, 2023
- Friday, July 21, 2023
- Friday, August 16, 2023
- Friday, September 15, 2023 (Cancelled)
- Friday, October 20, 2023
- Friday, November 17, 2023
- Friday, December 15, 2023 (Cancelled)

The Commission established an Ad Hoc Committee in March to define the electoral process. The committee was comprised of four Commission members appointed by Chairman Bickel. The ad hoc committee meetings were held at the Abrams Public Health Center, 3950 S Country Club Road, on the following dates:

- Friday, May 5, 2023
- Friday, June 2, 2023
- Friday, July 7, 2023
- Friday, December 1, 2023



IV. EIC WORK IN 2023

The EIC established an Ad Hoc Committee at the March 17, 2023 meeting. Chair Bickel appointed Vice Chair Hellon, Commissioner Berezny, Commissioner Kerschen, and Commissioner DeLarge to serve on the committee. The goal for the Ad Hoc was to depict the electoral process in Pima County by way of a series of flow charts and high-level graphic. The committee began meeting in May and met monthly, as schedules allowed, to continue their work. The committee worked with staff from both the Pima County Elections Department and Recorder's Office to define steps in the electoral process. They will continue to meet until they have a finalized draft to present to the entire Commission.

The Election Integrity Commission also worked with the Elections Department to present a proposal of new precinct lines to the Board of Supervisors. Elections staff worked to consolidate precincts as a result of the 2022 redistricting which created micro precincts containing few or zero registered voters. Staff presented reprecincting proposals to the EIC for input. Following the feedback, the Elections Department submitted a request to consolidate 13 precincts to the Board of Supervisors at their September 19, 2023 meeting. The Board unanimously approved the proposal. The new precinct lines will go into effect January 1, 2024.

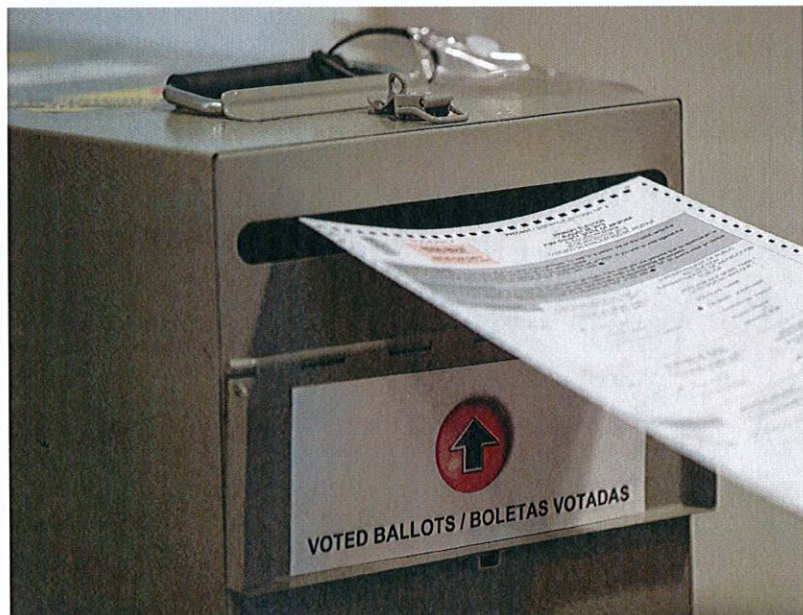
The EIC was kept abreast of the changes to the Arizona Secretary of State's Elections Procedures Manual (EPM) and to elections related legislation affecting the Arizona Revised Statutes. Of note was a briefing presented by the Elections Department on shortfalls that may occur in the vote tabulation and canvass process due to condensed timelines between the August 2024 primary and the general election and between the general election and selection of electors for the Electoral College.

The EIC also helped the Elections Department oversee an upgrade to the Election Management System and corresponding equipment administered by Election Systems and Software (ES&S). The DS850 Tabulators and ExpressVotes all received firmware updates alongside the Election Management System (EMS) upgrade. EIC Chairman, Brian Bickel, and Vice Chair, Toni Hellon, representing their respective political parties, observed the process as it was performed.

The Pima County Recorder and staff were present at meetings throughout the year and provided meaningful responses to a number of agenda items specific to the Recorder's office. These items included:

- The process the Recorder goes through in processing early, and mail-in ballots
- Actions taken to maintain the voter registration database
- The contract for additional equipment from Runbeck used in sorting mail-in ballots
- Discussion on the contracted database administrator for the voter registration database

The EIC is appreciative of the willingness of the Pima County Recorder and staff to engage with the EIC.



V. ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT GOALS IN 2023

Elections Director Constance Hargrove identified department priorities for the 2023 calendar year. The goal set by the priorities was to improve upon existing processes and procedures while also maintaining transparency and accountability. The priorities were outlined and submitted in quarterly reports to the County Administrator and then distributed to the Board of Supervisors.

Priority One – Evaluation of Vote Centers

The goal of the first priority was to look at cost savings from establishing vote centers as well as the efficiency of running a vote center.

The analysis done during the first quarter highlighted the major cost savings to the Elections Department as future savings in ballot printing costs. Leases for locations and staffing have the potential to decrease over time but would not be realized until the Department has gone through several election cycles and then reevaluates location needs.

Included in the analysis was location, accessibility and popularity of the vote center as it relates to its use by voters and how it aides in efficiency. Voter turnout at each location and the amount of equipment supplied supports the functionality of each location. Findings showed a need for increased locations and supplemental equipment to accommodate areas that were underserved and areas that were overwhelmed by high voter turnout. The 2023-2024 election cycle will include additional locations, with an increased number of ePollbooks, printers, and voting booths to alleviate the pressure and long lines from high turnout locations.

Priority Two – Expansion of Knowledge of Tenex Software

The second quarter included an update on the Departments' progress from the first quarter as well as a concentration on the use of Tenex Software.

Part of the evaluation of Vote Centers from priority one also included a concentration on poll worker assignments and training. Moving into the 2023-2024 election cycle, the Department will work on assigning a diverse group of poll workers to each location to ensure that all political parties have representation.

Additionally, two new vote center locations were approved by the Board of Supervisors at the September 5, 2023 meeting. The Highlands at Dove Mountain to accommodate an underserved area in Districts 1 and 3, and the University of Arizona Hillel to ensure adequate facilities serving the downtown area as well as university students.

Priority two also covered a new poll worker workgroup established by the Department. The workgroup consisted of poll workers who offered input on improving processes and procedures varying from recruitment to Election Day voting. The workgroup had representation from all political parties recognized in the County, and included workers with varying levels of poll worker experience.

The Department also began to develop an online training program for poll workers. Online training is expected to decrease the number of training sites needed per election, resulting in additional cost savings for the County. Online modules will also allow better access to training for all poll workers. The training suite was achieved through the learning management system (LMS) which is a part of the Tenex suite of election solutions.

In addition to training, the County originally purchased 6 modules through Tenex Software Solutions. The Department could not fully implement most modules due to time constraints in 2022. The modules included Precinct Central, Asset Inventory Management (AIM), Precinct and Location (PAL), Election Force,

Election Response, and 10X University. Staff worked through the second quarter to learn and implement the remaining modules with support from Tenex.

During the second quarter the Department also evaluated the need for additional equipment and supplies. New cages were purchased to transport and house Election Day equipment for Vote Centers. All equipment will be contained in a single cage, adding another level of security before and after the election. The cage will also reduce setup time by eliminating the need to find a location on Election Day to set up the ballot-on-demand (BOD) printers and Cradlepoints. Poll workers will only set up the ePollbooks and ExpressVote ballot marking devices on Election Day, greatly reducing the time needed to open the polls. The BOD printers can also be stored and tested in the cage. Less movement will also help decrease potential printing problems on Election Day. The delivery staff will no longer have multiple cages and boxes per location, making the process more secure and efficient.

The Department also purchased new voting booths. The new booths will also accommodate the ExpressVote ballot marking device, eliminating the need to set up one or two separate tables to hold each ExpressVote deployed. The voting booths also prevent the need to isolate voters that use the accessible voting equipment and logistically makes the space more efficient for poll workers.

Priority Three – Poll Worker Education

Elections staff with support from Tenex completed the implementation of the online training modules. The poll worker workgroup, along with poll workers participating in the November 7, 2023 Consolidated Election were the first to take the courses and offer feedback. The Department will make any necessary changes before the 2024 Presidential Preference Election.

Additionally, staff packed and tested the new cages and voting booths. Site simulations were set up in the Elections Department warehouse to assess space, organization, and functionality of the equipment. Staff then began visiting assigned vote center locations for testing of equipment connectivity and efficiency of the cages for delivery and setup. Pictures are being taken to offer the poll workers a guide for setup at each location that they can use for the 2024 elections. Staff will continue this project until all locations have been assessed. The anticipated completion date is June 2024.

Priority Four – 2023 Consolidated Election and Voter Academy

During the fourth quarter the Department's main focus was preparing for and administering the November 7, 2023 Consolidated Election. There were two elections that presented some challenges as there were unique circumstances. The Consolidated Election was an all-mail election servicing the City of Tucson and participating School Districts. The second election was the Vail Incorporation Election which was a full-service in-person election. It is not unique to have a combination of mail and in-person voting. However, having the in-person Vail Incorporation election limited to one specific geographic area is unique. This exception confused voters who thought all vote centers would be open on election day.

During the election, the Department was able to effectively implement new ballot processing procedures. Electronic adjudication and additional ballot tracking were introduced and executed. Electronic adjudication reduces the number of ballots requiring duplication and increases efficiency. The process to adjudicate takes less time per ballot when compared to manual duplication and reduces the amount of paper used. By implementing more detailed tracking of ballots which require duplication and/or adjudication, the Department will be able to provide more precise records.

Despite the unique challenges, the Elections Department administered a successful election. The Department will work to better inform voters if similar circumstances occur in the future. Educating voters on unique circumstances like these and others will be part of the voter academy that is well underway. The Department hopes to begin the first class before the March 19, 2024, Presidential Preference Election.

VI. 2023 ELECTIONS CONDUCTED BY PIMA COUNTY

There were two elections held on November 7, 2023:

- Vail Incorporation
- Consolidated Election

The Consolidated Election consisted of an all-mail City of Tucson General combined with School District Elections for:

- Tucson Unified School District No. 1
- Flowing Wells Unified School District No. 8
- Sunnyside School District No. 12
- Sahuarita School District No. 30
- Altar Valley Elementary School District No. 51

VII. EIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

During the 2023 calendar year the EIC made two recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. On February 21, 2023 the Election Integrity Commission recommended the Board submit an appointment of Brian Bickel, Commission Chair, to serve on the Bipartisan Task Force administered by Governor Katie Hobbs. The task force would include experts across the state to brainstorm election practices and together make recommendations for election reform. The Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to approve the recommendation of Chair Bickel. Ultimately, the Governor's office selected a panel that did not include Mr. Bickel but it did have representation from Pima with Pima County Recorder Gabriella Cázares-Kelly as a serving member. The task force was created in January with executive order 2023-03 and met over the course of the year. The panel made 16 policy recommendations in November, focusing on five categories. The work from the task force resulted in three election related executive orders from the Governor and over \$2 million dollars in funding for elections across the state. Governor Hobbs website lists the following as areas of concentration from the task force.



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- **Election Administration:** poll worker communication platform; incentives to improve poll worker recruitment; annual election officer certification trainings; election fellowship program; comprehensive website for voter information
- **Voter Registration:** requiring provisional ballot forms to serve as voter registration forms; improving cross-county voter registration; voting rights restoration; funding for the statewide voter registration database, the Access Voter Information Database (AVID)
- **Early Voting:** disability resource liaison; changing emergency voting to final weekend voting; preventing ballot return interference
- **Election Day and After:** ensuring timely recounts; reconciliation best practices guidelines
- **Election Equipment and Security:** election security advancements; election worker code of conduct

The EIC also submitted the Commissions' 2022 Annual Report at the July 11, 2023 Board of Supervisors meeting detailing the work from 2022.

VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

The Election Integrity Commission allows members of the public to address the Commission during monthly meetings. There is a designated "Call to the Public" segment that allows presenters to speak. Presentations are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. By law (ARS 38-431.01H) Commission members may not discuss or take action on matters raised during the call to the public but public participation is encouraged.

March 17, 2023

Speaker – Provided commentary on cost savings and poll worker manual
Speaker – Provided commentary on 2022 training manual, poll workers and observers at the polls
Speaker – Provided commentary on being a poll worker, ePollbook operations and training classes
Speaker – Provided commentary on certification of voting machines
Speaker – Provided commentary on vote center model, early voting operations, and Tenex

April 21, 2023

Speaker – Provided commentary on certification of software used for Early Voting and voter rolls

May 19, 2023

Speaker - Provided commentary on certification of software used for early voting
Speaker - Provided commentary on certification of voting equipment
Speaker - Provided commentary on registration verification and corporations involved in elections

June 16, 2023

Speaker – Provided commentary on elections being transparent and verifiable
Speaker – Provided commentary on support for House Bill 1560
Speaker - Provided commentary on Runbeck logistics/equipment and signature verification
Speaker - Provided commentary on certification of voting equipment and Runbeck equipment

July 21, 2023

Speaker - Provided commentary on ethics in Elections and Runbeck contract
Speaker - Provided commentary on Runbeck facility and political party observers
Speaker - Provided commentary on Runbeck and the EIC's role for the Board of Supervisors
Speaker - Provided commentary on EIC website, citation for denial of emergency meeting, Runbeck observers, and vote centers
Speaker - Provided commentary on signature verification and political party observers in Maricopa
Speaker - Provided commentary on Runbeck and testing of equipment
Speaker - Provided commentary on Runbeck and asked how they are integrated in the elections process in Pima
Speaker - Provided commentary on experience as poll worker at the provisional table, equipment issues and chain of custody

August 18, 2023

Speaker - Provided commentary on the draft of Arizona Secretary of State's Elections Procedures Manual
Speaker - Provided commentary on voter rolls and registration updates
Speaker - Provided commentary on equipment certification

October 20, 2023

Speaker - Provided commentary on Elections Department transparency and encouraged tour of Runbeck facility

Speaker - Provided commentary on voter rolls and registration

Speaker - Provided commentary on third party vendor used by Recorder's office and registration data

Speaker - Provided commentary on voter roll maintenance

November 17, 2023

Speaker - Read an excerpt from a remonstrance that was served to the Maricopa Board of Supervisors

Speaker - Provided commentary on signature verification and curing process

Speaker - Provided commentary on the Commission members inability to respond to public comment during meeting and suggested including public comment as part of the meeting minutes

Speaker - Provided commentary on mathematical analysis of vote totals using weighted averages

Speaker - Provided commentary on responses to public comment and requested a regular agenda item be added and titled "Questions from the Public."

Speaker - Provided commentary on Elections Department cooperation when requesting information and related questions.

IX. IN SUMMARY

As we move into the second half of the 2024 Election Cycle, some things remain the same and some consist of significant change. The concern with election security and integrity of the voter registration roles are expected to remain topics of significant discussion.

Also, the Governor's Bipartisan Task Force on Elections has made several recommendations that the Commission will discuss over the next twelve months. Some of the recommendations require legislative action to implement and some can be implemented at the local level. We will make recommendations on items for local implementation and make suggestions based on Commission consensus on those requiring legislative action.

The EIC will also finalize the first version of the Electoral Process flowcharts and these will be made available to the public. These flowcharts will go through a Continuous Improvement Process and be reviewed when the EPM is updated, legislation is changed or internal Pima County processes are revised.

We have three major elections in 2024: the Presidential Preference Election, the Primary Election, and the General Election. Requirements for participation in these elections are different for each election and the challenge will be educating voters on what those requirements are. All of these present the opportunity to learn and grow and make our elections free, fair, and as safe as possible.





PIMA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

Adelita S. Grijalva, *Chair*, District 5
Rex Scott, *Vice Chair*, District 1
Dr. Matt Heinz, District 2
Dr. Sylvia M. Lee, District 3
Steve Christy, District 4

Pima County Administrator

Jan Leshner