



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Requested Board Meeting Date: August 5, 2014

ITEM SUMMARY, JUSTIFICATION &/or SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Pima County Election Integrity Commission requests the Pima County Board of Supervisors to consider the Commission's recommendation that the Board direct the Pima County Elections Department to conduct a feasibility experiment during the August 26, 2014 Primary Election, in which early ballots from randomly selected precincts would be removed from their batches and hand audited, per the July 18, 2014 memo from the Election Integrity Commission attached.

CONTRACT NUMBER (If applicable): _____

STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S):

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS: _____

CLERK OF BOARD USE ONLY: BOX M.G. _____

ITEM NO. _____

PIMA COUNTY COST: \$ _____ and/or REVENUE TO PIMA COUNTY: _____

FUNDING SOURCE(S): N/A
(i.e. General Fund, State Grant Fund, Federal Fund, Stadium D. Fund, etc.)

Advertised Public Hearing:

YES NO

Board of Supervisors District:

1 2 3 4 5 All

IMPACT:

IF APPROVED:

IF DENIED:

DEPARTMENT NAME: Elections Department

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Balentine, EIC Coordinator TELEPHONE.: 724-6874

ELECTION INTEGRITY COMMISSION

PIMA COUNTY  ARIZONA



TO: Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Barbara Tellman, Co-Chair
Election Integrity Commission

DATE: July 18, 2014

RE: Recommendation for Early Ballot Sorting by Precinct for
August 26, 2014 Primary Election as a Feasibility Experiment

Pima County conducts hand count audits of a prescribed number of randomly chosen ballots after Election Day. Both early ballots and precinct-cast ballots are hand counted but the early ballot audit has a significant shortcoming. This is easiest to understand if we think of the early ballot counting as consisting of three steps:

- 1) scanning of mixed-precinct ballot batches
- 2) sorting and accumulation of batch tallies in election management software
- 3) reporting results

Currently, the early ballot audit checks only step 1, which ensures that the central count scanners are working correctly. But this audit completely ignores steps 2 and 3 and would completely miss any error due to fraud or software bugs that might occur in such data handling. Both of these steps are dependent on the integrity of the election database, which is arguably the most vulnerable part of the system. The hand count audit of the precinct-cast ballots, on the other hand, has a chance of catching errors in all parts of the system.

The majority of the Commission feels that this discrepancy in the integrity of the audit should be fixed and that early ballots should be audited by precinct and counted in the same manner as precinct-cast ballots. Therefore, the Pima County Election Integrity Commission, by a 5-4 vote, requests that the Pima County Board of Supervisors direct the Elections Department to conduct a pilot study during the August 26, 2014 Primary. In this pilot study, early ballots would be scanned as usual. Only ballots scanned prior to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day would be involved. After scanning and after the random selection of precincts for audit, ballots associated with two audit precincts would be found and removed from boxes. These ballots would be hand counted as part of the post-election hand count, and the count compared with the machine count for those precincts as registered by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.

This pilot study will determine how long it takes to find the required early ballots. The efficiency of the process, as well as maintaining the integrity of the ballots and adherence to Arizona law through the process will be the main factors in determining the feasibility and desirability of sorting early ballots for audit in future elections.

Sincerely,



Barbara Tellman
Co-Chair, Election Integrity Committee