



MEMORANDUM ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT

September 20, 2021

To: Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors
From: Brad R. Nelson, Pima County Elections Director
Subject: September 21 Establishment of election precincts for 2022

Background

Per ARS 16-411, the Board of Supervisors are to establish a convenient number of election precincts by no later than October 1 of the year preceding a general election. Previously the Board has reduced the number of existing precincts from a high of 417 precincts in 2008 to the current 249 precincts. Those past reductions in the number of precincts were largely due to the number of voters who had placed themselves on the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL). Currently over seventy-two percent of voters are on the PEVL. Additionally, during the recent 2020 general election, over eighty percent of the ballots cast were cast via the early ballot (mail and walk-in) process.

History of precinct reductions in Pima County

<u>Election year(s)</u>	<u>Number of precincts</u>
2008	417
2010*	417
2012	288
2014	248
2016-2020	249

*election law did not allow for precinct line changes in advance of the 2010 census

Given the history of Pima County voters casting ballots via the early ballot process and the lack of lines of voters queuing at the polls on Election Day over the last decade, the Election Department began reviewing possible precinct boundaries for 2022. Of particular note during the review is the lack criteria in the statute (ARS 16-411) to determine what a "convenient" number of precincts is. The criteria developed by the

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Elections Department was the number of voters a precinct polling place could accommodate, without lines, over the thirteen hours that the polls were open on Election Day. Based on that experience, the number of voters that can be accommodated without undue delay is 500 voters.

Applying the Criteria

Prior to applying the "500 voter" criteria, the Election Department staff gathered the following data for each of the existing 249 precincts:

- a. Current number of registered voters
- b. The number of voters on the PEVL
- c. The number of early ballots cast at the 2020 general election.

With this information, the following formula was used to estimate the number of voters that could be accommodated at the precinct polling place on Election Day 2022:

Number of active registered voters in the precinct in 2020, minus twenty percent (to reflect an eighty percent turnout), minus the number of early ballots (mail-in and walk-in) cast during the 2020 general election.

If the formula produced relatively low turnout (100 to 200 voters) at the polls on Election Day, a search began to find a possible adjacent precinct, with low turnout at the polls, to combine with in 2022. The backup material reflects the precincts, listed by Supervisor District, which we propose to combine. If approved by the Board, the number of precincts for 2022 will be reduced from 249 precincts to 207 precincts.

As is emphasized in the material, the locations of the polls used in 2020 are provided for geographical reference only. The Board is NOT establishing polling places at this time. Polling places will be established in the Spring of 2022.

Outreach to stakeholders

The backup material that the Board received in advance of the September 21 meeting is the same material that was sent to the following stakeholders: The Chairs of the Pima County Republican Party, Democratic Party, Green Party and the Libertarian Party, the Tucson City Clerk, the Pima County Election Integrity Commissioners and the civic organization Chicanos Por La Causa for their review and comment.

Input from stakeholders

The Chairs of the Republican and Democratic parties expressed differing concerns about the proposed changes. However, the gist of their concerns was that the proposed changes were too extreme given some uncertainties relating to topics such as statewide redistricting and the application of SB 1485. (SB 1485 would begin the process of removing voters from the early voting list if the

voter did not cast their early ballot). Both Chairs also commented on how Precinct Committeemen would have a more difficult time in conducting a Get Out The Vote efforts if the precincts became larger.

The Chairs of the Republican and Democratic Parties were the only stakeholders to object to the proposed changes. The Green Party Chair approved of the changes. The other stakeholders did not respond.

Response to stakeholders concerns

SB1485 – This law will not affect voters until the 2024 election cycle. It is a non-issue for 2022.

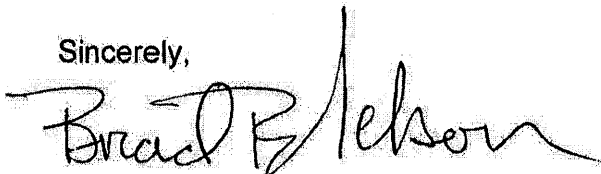
Redistricting – Per ARS 16-411, the Board must act now. We cannot wait until statewide redistricting is complete to establish precincts.

Precinct Committeeman / Get Out the Vote campaigns – Currently the Republican Party has 954 unfilled precinct committeemen positions out of 1595 positions allotted. The Democratic Party has 1392 vacant precinct committeemen positions out of 2020 allotted positions. This is a party manpower issue, not a reason that should impact election precinct lines.

Recommendation

I recommend that the Board establish 207 election precincts for the 2022 election cycle as proposed by the Election Department. At a minimum, the Board should make the minor precinct line adjustments that are currently splitting developed parcels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad R. Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brad" and last name "Nelson" clearly legible.

Brad R. Nelson
Elections Director

c: C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator
Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator