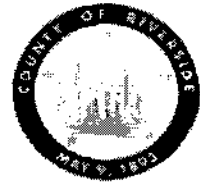


**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Elections Review Committee

SUBMITTAL DATE:
July 11, 2007

SUBJECT: Report on the November 2006 Election

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors receive and file the attached report, and schedule discussion of this and other election issues at a September Board workshop.

BACKGROUND: On December 12, 2006, Chairman Bob Buster directed formation of an ad hoc Blue-Ribbon panel to review issues arising from the November election. Five county residents -- Lynn Baldi, Kay Cenicerros, Marcia McQuern, Rob Taylor and Jim Ward -- were appointed to the panel. They met several times, and issued an interim report to the Board on April 24.

Since that time, the committee has held several study sessions, and consulted with the office of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is currently testing the electronic voting system used in Riverside and is expected to issue an opinion early next month. The attached report recommends that the county "transition away from the current voting system as soon as practical and move to a hybrid voting system..." subject to the Secretary of State's review.

A Board workshop with the Registrar of Voters has been tentatively scheduled for September.

Kathryn Field
Kathryn Field, Principal Management Analyst

FINANCIAL DATA	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$ 0	In Current Year Budget:	n/a
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$ 0	Budget Adjustment:	n/a
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$ 0	For Fiscal Year:	n/a

SOURCE OF FUNDS: n/a	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

BY *Kenneth M. Mohr*
Kenneth M. Mohr

County Executive Office Signature

Dept Recomm.: Policy
Per Exec. Ofc.: Policy
 Consent
 Consent

July 7, 2007

Chairman John Tavaglione
Supervisor Bob Buster
Supervisor Jeff Stone
Supervisor Roy Wilson
Supervisor Marion Ashley

Re: Election Review Committee

Dear Chairman Tavaglione and
Members of the Board,

Our Election Review Committee (ERC) has met fifteen times including an organizational meeting on January 31. Since our formation we have held three noticed formal public hearings (totaling almost nine hours); four meetings with the Registrar of Voters, including a presentation by Sequoia Services; one meeting to update the Board of Supervisors on our progress, and three group study and writing meetings.

Our committee has spent many hours of research into the benefits and problems with electronic voting. Our committee has also researched the experience of several California counties, notably Alameda County, which has created a hybrid system which allows voters to vote using paper ballots using optical scanners to create a record.

It is not possible to accurately assign motives to the public for casting paper ballots at polling places; through absentee votes, or through electronic record. We do know that 40-43% of voters in Riverside County cast paper ballots. The increasingly large minority vote for paper ballots does suggest, however, an ongoing trend. We certainly recognize the influence of long commutes which shorten the opportunity to vote on Election Day, as noted by long lines of voters at some election sites in Riverside County.

The Election Review Committee has also studied the benefits of Riverside County's Sequoia System as a major election tool. Widely used and lauded just a few years ago, concerns with electronic voting, including its 3% error rate, have led to extensive discussion. These issues are of concern to our committee and to county voters, many of whom are concerned.

A summary of recommendations will be readied by July 9 for your packet for the July 17 meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,


Kay Cenicerros, Chairman

Election Review Committee Report
to the
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
July 10, 2007

The Charge

In the wake of complaints about the conduct of the November 2006 elections, the chairman of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors appointed an Election Review Committee to study “problems arising from the recent election.”

Committee members are Lynn Bogh Baldi, board member and former president of the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce and of The Community Foundation; Kay Cenicerros, retired Riverside County Supervisor and retired dean of Mt. San Jacinto College; Marcia McQuern, former editor and publisher of The Press-Enterprise; Robert Gregory Taylor, retired Superior Court judge; James Ward, retired state appellate court justice; Mrs. Cenicerros was selected chairman of the committee.

Their charge was to “broadly review the election” including voting and counting efficiency; security; delays for voters at the polls; problems with voting machines; training and deployment of poll workers; timely mailing of absentee ballots; other factors impeding the count of absentee, paper and provisional ballots; the official posting of results at polling places; and appropriate election observer access.

Executive Summary

The committee concludes that while there were many problems and frustrations with the November 2006 election, Riverside County voters’ intentions were not compromised.

The Registrar of Voters already has addressed many of the security and transparency problems noted during the committee’s review.

The committee unanimously makes the following additional recommendations:

1. Move as quickly as possible to a hybrid voting system whereby able-bodied voters mark their preferences on paper ballots which are then counted by optical scanners. *See explanation below.*
2. Place a prominent sign at every voting site letting voters know they are entitled to cast a paper ballot if they would rather not use an electronic voting machine.
3. Do not provide extraordinary absentee ballot pickup measures for some voters or communities that are not provided for all.
4. Reduce as much as possible the time lag between removal of voting machines from the Registrar of Voters’ warehouse and their Election Day use. Secure voting machines delivered to voting locations behind locked doors until Election Day.
5. Better educate the public on the process for casting absentee ballots, particularly when they must be mailed back and on the permissibility of polling place delivery on Election Day.
6. Implement the Secretary of State’s requirements for an Election Observer Panel in a timely manner. Appointers should be encouraged to rotate members at least biennially to broadly acquaint the public with the election process.

7. Designate at least one private voting booth at every voting site for casting of paper ballots.
8. Severely restrict physical access to the tabulating room, as allowed by Election Code 15204.
9. Provide a more transparent and secure post-election one-percent manual count by making public the process for randomly selecting the precincts to be checked (including perhaps posting on the web), giving proper notice of the selection time and reducing as much as possible the length of time between the selection of precincts for the manual count and the start of the audit.
10. Install video cameras to record activity in all areas of the central tabulating room with displays of each camera's view in a public room.
11. Verify that election results are posted at every voting location.
12. Recruit Election Day workers aggressively and train them well ahead of elections. Public advertisements including in utility bills, fliers, and invitations at senior centers should be considered, as well as public recognition for workers' service.
13. Take advantage of the city clerks' willingness to help find polling places, recruit poll workers and even be trained to change voting machine paper.
14. Consider formal agreements between the county and each city on election services that the county will provide, including how the charges for such services are calculated.
15. Hold quarterly meetings between the Registrar of Voters and city clerks, including a post-mortem meeting after every election.
16. Provide a forum for public input on election issues hosted by the Registrar of Voters at least annually.
17. Consider hiring a consultant to review the Registrar of Voters security procedures.

