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March Presidential Primary Election Cuyahoga County Post- Election Audit Summary

Process:

From April 29 through May 2, 2008, the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections participated in a voluntary, public post-election audit of the March 4th Presidential Primary Election as defined by Secretary of State Directive 2008-39.

The audit consisted of a comparison of hand counted ballots to machine counted ballots and to the Official Canvass for the nine Presidential races. Ninety-nine precincts totaling 30,814 ballots, or just over 7% of the total ballots cast, were randomly selected according to the process specified in the Directive.

Bi-Partisan teams, working on one precinct at a time, hand counted each Presidential race by stacking ballots for each individual candidate and recording the count on candidate-specific tally sheets. The ballots were then scanned on the same M650 used for that precinct during the Official Count. Results from the scanners were compared to the tally sheets, and those precincts that did not match were reviewed and correctly reconciled by management teams.

Results:

The comparison of the hand-count portion to the machine-count portion of the audit resulted in an exact match of votes cast for each candidate in every precinct.

The comparison of the audited count to the Official Canvass revealed minor discrepancies in terms of the number of ballots counted, and the number of votes allotted to individual candidates.

Of the 30,814 ballots counted in the selected precincts during the Official Count, 30,763 were counted during the audit indicating an accuracy rate of 99.83%. The finding of fewer ballots is consistent with the Euclid recount, and supports the explanation that during the Official Count a small proportion of ballots were scanned twice as the result of an M650 picking multiple ballots, and the operator inadvertently rescanning one that had been read.

Scanning fewer ballots caused the number of votes assigned to five candidates to be reduced from the Official Canvass. We will be recommending an amendment to the Certification to reflect reductions of 22 votes for Clinton, 14 votes for Obama, 5 votes for Huckabee, 1 vote for McCain, and 2 votes for Paul.

