Every Vote Counts

A Look at Our County Elections Department

Summary

How does the county ensure that every vote is counted fairly and accurately? Is our countywide election system vulnerable to manipulation? What protections are in place to ensure the integrity of the voting process? These were the questions the 2016–2017 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury sought to answer with this investigation. With the marked increase in claims of voter fraud leading up to the 2016 presidential election, this look at how the County of Santa Cruz Elections Department conducts its business seemed timely and appropriate. We determined that, while some minor improvements could be made, the systems that are in place and the staff who execute those systems can give the public trust and confidence in the integrity and reliability of our elections.

Background

From the dawn of our democracy there have been efforts to tamper with the electoral process. Throughout the 1800s violence and intimidation at the polls were common.[1] In the mid-1800s vote buying was conducted openly.[2] In one election in New York City in 1844, the results could only have been achieved had 135% of the eligible population turned out to vote.[3] Statutory disenfranchisement of entire classes of citizens existed even after racial- and gender-based rights were guaranteed by the 15th Amendment in 1870, and the 19th Amendment in 1920, respectively. Despite these constitutional changes, the democratic promise of free and fair elections in the United States continues to be challenged by barriers in various forms.[4]

Some types of disenfranchisement that our citizens face today, such as intimidation and interference with voter registration, mirror those that have existed since the beginning of our democracy. Modern technology brings new threats, such as computer hacking and electronic unreliability, that may disenfranchise voters in ways our founding fathers could not possibly have imagined.

The advent of electronic voting systems in the mid-1970s[5] opened up a new frontier of ways to manipulate the electoral process. While in the past interference required direct action and physical access to voters, polling places, or the machinery of voting, modern technology creates opportunities for remote actors to engage in electoral interference in a variety of ways. The FBI and CIA concluded that the Russian government participated in hacking of email systems that, while not directly impacting vote tallies, sought to influence the outcome of the 2016 presidential election.[6] On a large scale, however, while technology provides opportunities for interference, the decentralized structure of our elections nationwide protects against widespread tampering with the actual vote.[7]

Throughout the country voting is done in a variety of ways, from paper ballots only, to mail-in ballots only, to all Direct Recording Electronic ("DRE" or "touchscreen") voting machines, and to some combination of these methods.[8] Experts have stated that such decentralization makes far-reaching interference nearly impossible.[9] In Santa Cruz County, all voting is done entirely offline and any tampering with the outcome would most likely be through physical access to facilities and equipment, which is highly unlikely given the multitude of protections that are in place.

Santa Cruz County has approximately 155,000 registered voters, with increasingly significant numbers voting by mail (see Fig. 1). Currently, over 90,000 voters are designated as permanent vote-by-mail, where ballots are received by mail and may be returned either by mail, at one of the county's six drop boxes, at the County Elections Department (at 701 Ocean Street, Suite 210, Santa Cruz), or at polling places on Election Day. Everyone who casts their vote at polling places on Election Day is given the option of voting either with a paper ballot or on an Edge electronic touchscreen machine. Paper ballots are scanned at the polling places by an offline Insight optical electronic scanner, with the paper ballots retained for recounts or audits. Each touchscreen machine has a printed tape, known as a voter-verified paper trail, that records every vote cast on it. All mail-in ballots are counted at the Elections Department

on centralized offline counting machines called the Optech 400C, which are also used to count ballots that could not be counted at the polling places and provisional ballots after Election Day.
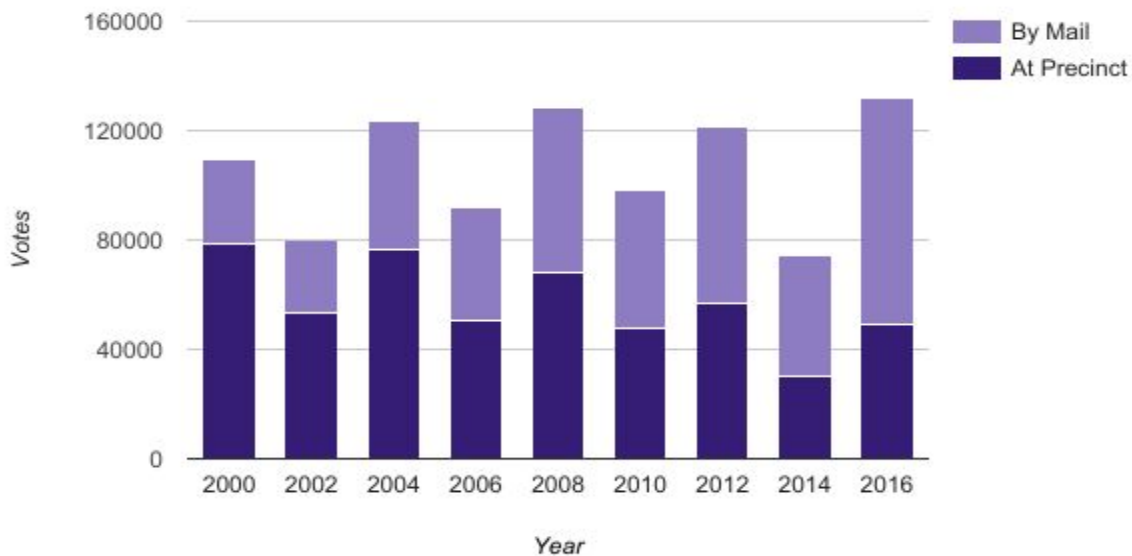

Fig. 1 **Voting Methods** (Source: votescount.com[10])

Scope

The scope of this investigation was to follow the process of conducting a full presidential election from its inception through its certification. Because of the timing of the Grand Jury cycle and the length of time required to prepare for a particular election, we were not able to witness the earliest steps in the process. When we began our investigation in September 2016, most of the early groundwork, such as definition of the election, creation of the ballots, and assignment of precincts had been completed. Members of the Grand Jury were able to witness the following steps in the execution of the 2016 presidential election:

- Programming and testing of polling place scanners, electronic touchscreens, and the 400C ballot counting machines
- Cataloguing, serializing, and RFID tagging of equipment
- Polling place kit assembly and equipment tagging for precinct assignment
- Training of inspectors and poll workers
- Specialist lab training for volunteers charged with operating the electronic equipment
- Precinct sorting of mail-in ballots
- Pre-scanning of mail-in ballots for problems requiring manual processing

- Signature verification on mail-in ballots
- Processing of overseas ballots
- Pick up of ballots and equipment by trained inspectors
- Election Day activities at multiple polling places throughout the county
- Delivery and receipt of counted ballots and memory cards to Elections Department on election night
- Election Day hotline operations
- Counting of the votes
- Online posting of votes and updates to votescount.com
- Random selection of precincts for statistical verification of the votes
- Investigation of provisional ballots

Investigation

The Grand Jury sought to better understand the process of running an election and the protections that ensure its integrity. We witnessed almost every aspect of the election process starting mid-October. We conducted formal interviews with staff members and had extensive conversations with those working at each stage of the process we observed. Our investigation included numerous site visits, poll worker training sessions, and extensive research on voting, voting systems, and voter fraud.

We observed or investigated these major issues and events in this election cycle:
- Staffing and Training
- Preparing for the Election
  - Programming, Cataloging, and Securing the Equipment
  - Testing of the Equipment
  - Investigating Concerns about the Equipment
- Voter Registration
- Vote-by-Mail
- The Election
  - Voting
  - Tabulating and Certification of the Election
- Post-Election Activities
  - Preparing for the Next Election
- Votescount.com: The County Elections Department Website
- The Future of Voting

Throughout our investigation the Elections Department provided us with unfettered access. They were cooperative, informative, and patient with our inquiries at all times.

Staffing and Training

It takes many hands to conduct a presidential election. There are 13 full-time, permanent staff in the Elections Department, including the County Clerk, the Assistant County Clerk, and the Systems Analyst. In addition, approximately 45 temporary employees were hired to help carry out the November election. Those employees work alongside hundreds of volunteers to prepare for the election, staff the polling places, and assist with processing and counting the ballots. Nearly all of the volunteers and temporary employees participate in a two-hour poll worker training, followed by an optional additional one-hour hands-on lab to ensure that they are qualified to do the job to which they are assigned. This training is conducted by the County Clerk and emphasizes maintaining the integrity of the vote and the voting process, and careful monitoring of the vote to prevent fraud.

In addition to the training, each poll worker receives a 24-page manual that covers how to handle the vast majority of issues they may face throughout the election process. Separate, specialized training is also provided to the volunteers tasked with running the scanners and touchscreen machines at each precinct, again with an emphasis on security procedures and prevention of tampering. On Election Day, a hotline is available for staff and volunteers to resolve last-minute issues.

Many employees of county departments other than the Elections Department also assist the Department on Election Day, either by working at polling places or helping staff the office. On multiple occasions, the Elections Department employees mentioned their tremendous appreciation for the support and assistance they receive from the community and other county departments.

Preparing for the Election

Every election begins many months before Election Day (see Fig. 2). The first step, known as defining the election, involves identifying each contest and ballot measure that will be decided on a particular date. This happens 180 days prior to the date of the election, or "E minus 180" (E–180) in Elections Department parlance. Next is the opening of candidate filings and the related completion of candidate paperwork. Once the contests have been defined and the candidates identified, the ballots are created, a complex process ensuring every voter receives the appropriate ballot. The ballot must include all contests in every district (e.g. congressional and special districts such as school and water) in which a particular voter resides. After this step is completed, the Elections Department determines the number of registered voters in each precinct. Precincts with fewer than 250 registered voters are designated mail-in-ballot-only precincts; in the November 2016 election there were 121 of these. The remaining precincts, 145 this past November, are assigned polling places. This part of the process, from definition of the election through consolidation and assignment of polling places, must be completed 88 days before the election (E–88).
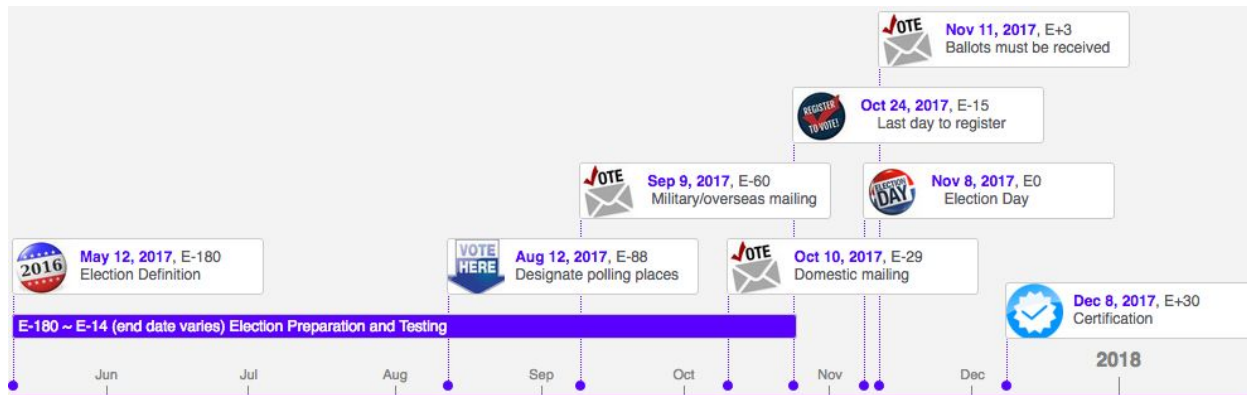
Fig. 2 **2016 Presidential Election Timeline**
(Source: Santa Cruz County Elections Department data)

After these steps have been completed, ballots are printed; the November 2016 election required 85 different ballot types representing 61 different contests and ballot measures. After printing, ballots are reviewed and inventoried before being delivered to the Elections Department Operations Center for use in testing and for secure storage until the day before Election Day. Meanwhile, at the Operations Center, polling place kits, including all supplies that will be needed on Election Day, are being prepared.

Programming and Securing the Equipment

Once the ballots have been printed, all machines that will be used on Election Day are programmed and then undergo a rigorous testing process designed to ensure that they are in working order.

The machinery used in our local election, all of which was manufactured by Sequoia Voting Systems (now Dominion Voting Systems) includes:

1. Insight electronic scanners: used to read and tally the votes cast on paper ballots at the polls
2. Edge touchscreen voting machines: DRE machines used for electronic voting at the polls
3. Optech 400C tabulation machines: used to count all mail-in and provisional ballots, and ballots that cannot be counted at polling places due to scanning issues
4. WinEDS system: centralized processing system for ballot preparation, voting machine configuration, and vote counting
5. Related memory, printing devices, software, and firmware

When not in use, the Insight and Edge machines are kept in a locked warehouse facility. The Grand Jury had access to this facility to observe the testing of the machines. We observed multiple layers of security in the form of locks and restricted access to certain areas, as well as motion detection and video surveillance. The balance of the machinery and software is housed in the Elections Department itself, in the office of the Systems Analyst. This office has restricted access and is locked after hours. During election

cycles, the office is secured at all times that designated staff members are not present. Ultimately, in all cases, security still relies on the integrity of key individuals and strict adherence to procedures.

Testing the Equipment

The Logic and Accuracy Board, comprised of experienced volunteers appointed by the County Clerk, oversees the testing of all scanners and touchscreen machines to ensure it is objective and comprehensive. The testing follows a Secretary of State approved script specific to each machine. The testing process is rigorous, involving six stages with 26 steps for the Insight Scanner and ten stages with 56 steps for the Edge touchscreen machine.[11] Once an individual machine is tested, there is a specific, detailed process, involving serial numbers, coded stickers, zip-tie seals, RFID tags, and written records of all information pertaining to that machine, to ensure it remains secure until Election Day. The same process secures the memory cards for the touchscreen voting machines. In addition, there is a clear chain of custody for every element of the voting system, and every step of the process requires at least two people.

The 400C vote counting machines, which are housed in the Elections Department, also undergoes a testing process, also reviewed by the Logic and Accuracy Board.

Investigating Concerns About the Equipment

While the electronic equipment is carefully maintained, tested, and secured when not in use, it is all over ten years old and discontinued. Dominion can provide technical support and certain replacement parts, but they no longer produce new equipment of this generation. When machines malfunction the Elections Department must either cannibalize their back-up machines to make repairs or call on nearby counties to determine if they have machines they can loan or share.

While the need for updated equipment is clear, the certification process is lengthy and the only new equipment that has been certified does not meet all of the county's standards for accessibility and translation capabilities. Other new systems, including one that could meet the county's needs, await certification. Although the Elections Department would like to purchase new equipment when a suitable system is certified, it is not clear when the funds needed might be available.

Beyond concerns about the age and reliability of the machines, studies have shown that despite the fact that they are not connected to the internet, these machines are vulnerable to other types of interference.[12] In 2007, the inherent flaws and deficiencies in these systems led Secretary of State Debra Bowen to decertify all of the machines and to conditionally re-approve them following an extensive top-to-bottom review of the electronic voting process.[13]

In the decertification the Insight scanners, Edge touchscreens, 400C vote tabulation system, and related equipment used by Santa Cruz County were found to be "defective or unacceptable" in a number of significant ways. Many of these problems relate to four broad categories: data integrity, cryptography, access control, and software

engineering, which were identified in the technical report *Source Code Review of the Sequoia Voting System*,[14] completed as part of the State's top-to-bottom review.

Secretary of State Bowen had 39 conditions for recertification and re-approval.[13] These conditions were designed to contain, mitigate, or correct the discovered flaws. Many of these remediations focus on the physical security of the machines and expanded auditing. The Elections Department's policies and procedures meet California state security standards and sufficiently address these issues to render remaining vulnerabilities in the systems manageable.

Voter Registration

Voter registration is conducted continuously until 15 days prior to a given election. Citizens may register online using the county's website,[15] which also enables voters to check registration status and voting history. Citizens may also register in person by filling out a registration card available at the Elections Department and many other public locations, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, US Post Offices, and public libraries. Registration cards may also be requested by phoning the Elections Department.

Vote-by-Mail

At E–60, ballots are mailed to overseas and military voters. At E–29, ballots are mailed to permanent vote-by-mail voters. Processing of overseas and vote-by-mail ballots, including a multi-step signature verification process, occurs as ballots are returned to the Elections Department. Given the large number of vote-by-mail ballots that are cast in every election, verifying and counting the mail-in ballots takes much of the Elections Department's time in the days and weeks leading up to Election Day. This has become increasingly cumbersome as the number of mail-in ballots has steadily grown through the years, comprising almost two-thirds of the ballots cast in the most recent election.
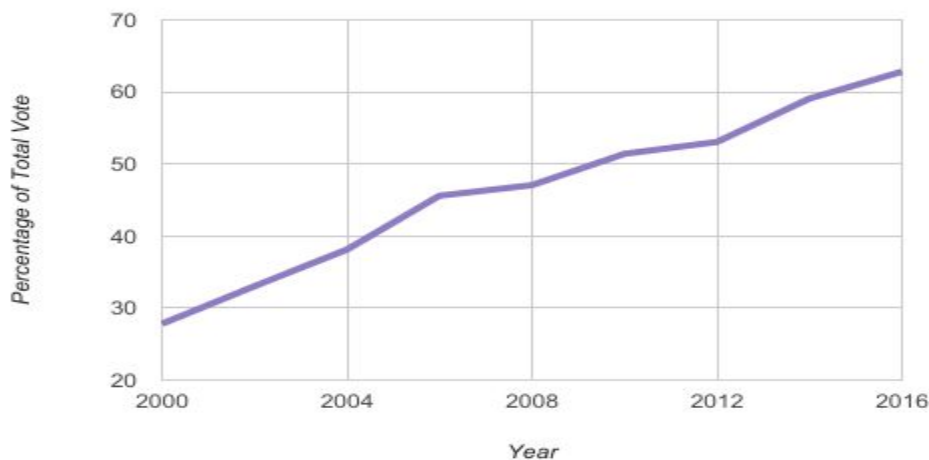

Fig. 3 **Percentage of Vote By Mail Since 2000 (**Source: votescount.com[10])

This increase in the popularity of vote-by-mail, shown in Fig. 3, brings with it advantages and disadvantages, for both the individual voter and the county. Votes can be cast, and counted, weeks before Election Day, but early voting precludes consideration of information and events that happen late in the election cycle. Vote-by-mail makes it easier for those with limited time or ability to get to a polling place, and reduces the need for Election Day precinct workers and volunteers, although it is possible that ballots can be delayed or get lost in the mail. While voters requiring assistance with completing their ballot benefit from vote-by-mail, the integrity of a secret ballot is harder to guarantee, increasing the risk of voter intimidation or vote selling.

The Election

The day before the election, ballots, voting machines, and related supplies and equipment are moved from the Operations Center to four distribution sites, where they are carefully inventoried and staged for pick-up. These items are distributed to inspectors, who are the trained and experienced poll workers responsible for overseeing activity at each polling place on Election Day. Inspectors must show proper identification to pick up election supplies. For each precinct pick-up, three people – two distribution clerks and the inspector – follow a clearly articulated script that involves verifying the number and types of ballots, the serial numbers and integrity of the equipment seals, and the presence of all necessary supplies before the inspector is permitted to leave the distribution location. After pick-up of the ballots, machines, and supplies, each inspector is required to maintain all of these items in a secure location overnight for delivery to the polling place the following morning. At the polling place, two poll workers, not including the inspector, are responsible for verifying the integrity of all seals and other security measures before setting the equipment up for voting.

Voting

Finally, after all the preparation, training, and testing, Election Day arrives. The polls open at 7 a.m., staffed and ready for voters. Each voter enters his or her name and address in the voter roll book. Voters attempting to vote at a precinct where their name does not appear on the voter roll will either be redirected to the proper precinct or allowed to vote using a provisional ballot. A policy of the Santa Cruz County Elections Department is that no voter is turned away on Election Day. While a particular person's vote may ultimately not be counted due to lack of registration, lack of residency, or other irregularities, the presumption at the poll is always in favor of allowing a voter to complete a ballot. At 8 p.m., the poll workers, most of whom have been working the entire day, close the polls. Any voters waiting in line at the close of the polls are allowed to cast their votes.

Members of the Grand Jury observed multiple polling places on Election Day to witness how well the process was being carried out. We had access to the log of all registered complaints, made directly at the polls and through the hotline, relating to problems at the polls. For the most part, any equipment issues, such as printers running out of paper, scanners not accepting ballots, paper jams, and frozen screens, were minor and were addressed on site or by replacement of faulty equipment. Issues relating to voters,

such as missing names, registration irregularities, or designated mail-in voters showing up to vote at the precinct, were also largely addressed at the polls, frequently by the inspectors and often through the use of provisional ballots. The Elections Department staff were available to address issues that the inspectors were unable to resolve.

Tabulation and Certification of the Election

For most of us, Election Day is the culmination of a very long election season. For the Elections Department, the intensity of the work continues. Once the polls have closed, each precinct completes an audit worksheet which itemizes the status of all ballots that were delivered to that precinct and reconciles that number with the number of voters who showed up to cast their votes. The inspector and a clerk from the same precinct deliver this worksheet to the County building, along with all voted ballots in a sealed box, all unvoted ballots in a separate sealed box, and the data transport bag holding the sealed and secured memory cards from the touchscreen and scanner. They surrender these materials to a checker, who completes an audit log. This well-organized, secure, and streamlined system is overseen by Logic and Accuracy Board members. The ballots and memory cards, still in their secure data transport bags, are then delivered to the Elections Department where the seals are broken by employees so that the data can be processed.

Memory cards from the optical scanners and touchscreen systems are read in on an offline vote tabulation system; this system is kept in a locked room with very limited access. On election night preliminary counts are transferred to a county system by hand using a USB drive, and then uploaded to a public web site.[16] This update happens several times as the count progresses, and each time the same USB drive is reused. This reuse is a potential avenue for transferring viruses between the County system and the offline vote tabulation systems.

Results are separately transmitted to the California Secretary of State over a dedicated private line by manually re-typing them into a separate secure system, with verification of entries conducted over the phone. In this case, there is no direct electronic transfer of information from the county offline tabulation system.

Post Election Activities

There is still much work to be done in the days following the election. Votes that have been cast by mail-in ballot but not yet received continue to be counted as long as they are postmarked by Election Day and received within three business days after the election. Provisional ballots are reviewed by an employee of the Elections Department, who takes all the steps necessary to determine whether the voter was eligible to vote. In cases where there remains a question about eligibility, the provisional ballot is transmitted to the County Clerk or Assistant County Clerk for further review and final determination. Ballots unreadable by machine are reviewed to determine the voter's intent.

Two audits are conducted: a state mandated random audit of at least 1% of the precincts in every contest of the election, and an audit of 10% of the votes cast on the

Edge touchscreen machines. The department must certify the results by 30 days after Election Day.

Certification of the election, however, does not mean that the department's work is done. Individuals have five days after certification to request a recount, something that occasionally happens in Santa Cruz County. The department usually completes its own voluntary recount in close contests. A person requesting a recount is required to pay its cost, typically $1,000 to $1,800 a day. If the recount changes the outcome of that contest, the requester's money is refunded.

Preparing for the Next Election

Once the certification is complete and the recount period has passed, the election cycle is over but there is typically another one already in the works. The department usually conducts multiple elections each year, ranging from simple, single-issue bond measures to a full presidential election like the one that was just completed.

During the less active parts of the year, the department is engaged in ongoing voter registration, clean up of the voter rolls, file and system maintenance, and mandated reporting to the state and federal governments. Additionally, it studies and prepares for new federal and state legislation affecting elections.

Votescount.com: The County Elections Department Website

Voters unfamiliar with the county's voter website, votescount.com (see Fig. 4) are missing out.

Fig. 4 **Home page of votescount.com**

The site, maintained by the County Clerk, provides in-depth information on current and approaching elections, registration and detailed voter information, voter history, laws and guidebooks, links to other resources, a tool to track mailed-in ballots, and myriad other features. The site is well maintained with regular improvements and prompt updates.

Votescount.com is an example of the outstanding and comprehensive efforts by the Elections Department to make the voting process transparent and accessible to all residents of our county.

The Future of Voting

There are significant changes on the horizon for voting in California. Senate Bill 450,[17] which was signed by Governor Brown in September 2016, gives California counties the option of changing to a structure that utilizes "vote centers" rather than traditional precinct-based polling places. Fourteen of California's 58 counties will be able to opt in to this model in 2018; the remaining counties, including Santa Cruz County, may start using this system in 2020. Under the new vote center model, all registered voters will automatically be mailed a ballot 28 days prior to the election. Voters may then return this ballot by mail, by depositing it in a secure drop box (one will be required for every 15,000 registered voters), or by taking it to a vote center. Ten days before the election one vote center will be opened for voting for every 50,000 registered voters. The Saturday prior to the election through Election Day, this will increase to one vote center for every 10,000 voters. The vote centers, staffed by paid employees, will give voters the ability to cast their ballots, return completed ballots, do same-day registration, receive a replacement ballot, use accessible voting machines, and access language assistance and translated materials.

The intent of this bill is to make voting easier and to engage more participation in the electoral process. It opens up the window for casting ballots in person ten days prior to the election, although this change does not necessarily provide voters a longer voting period. It has been a long-standing practice in Santa Cruz County to allow voters to obtain and cast a vote-by-mail ballot at the Elections Department during business hours 29 days prior to Election Day.

SB 450 also enables same-day registration which will, presumably, result in more people being able to vote. It should ease some of the burdens of the voting process that are frequently experienced by the disabled and non-English speakers, and it gives people flexibility in where and when they cast their vote. However, for those that choose to vote in person it may mean increased travel time to, or crowds at, their polling place. For some elections departments, such as our own, the logistics of the initial set-up of this system are daunting.

A more significant change would be a shift to internet-based voting. Currently 32 states, not including California, allow some form of internet voting.[18] Most of these states use internet voting for military and voters living overseas. Alaska allows it for all absentee voters; however, they are informed their internet vote is neither anonymous nor secure.[19] While widespread internet voting would have some benefits, including saving

money, streamlining logistics, and making it easier for some voters to participate in the electoral process, the inability to ensure the security and anonymity of the vote would be a major concern. Internet voting is not under consideration in Santa Cruz County.

Conclusion

Most of us who have exercised our right to vote have probably never considered the breadth and depth of preparation and effort required to run an election. As we followed along in the process, we were consistently impressed by the layers of protection and redundancy built into the system, and the lengths to which the Elections Department goes to ensure the integrity of the vote. The Department's commitment, dedication and attention to detail shine through at every step. While the broader claims of election fraud show no signs of abating in the near future, all residents of Santa Cruz County should have faith in the integrity of our elections and the reliability and commitment of our Elections Department.

Findings

F1. Elections in Santa Cruz County are run fairly and conscientiously, with numerous procedures and safeguards that minimize the likelihood of fraud or systemic errors. Although minor problems occurred, we consider these inevitable given the number of people and the complexity of the process, and they were detected or reported and remedied expeditiously.

F2. Most equipment used to conduct the election is old, much of it nearing or past its useful life. This includes voting machines and electronic and mechanical vote counting systems. Spare parts are increasingly hard to find.

F3. Santa Cruz County uses a state certified system that meets state standards. Beyond keeping some key systems offline, this equipment does not implement adequate computer security measures.

F4. Santa Cruz County limits physical access to the ballots and the machinery used to process the ballots and conducts comprehensive audits both before and after every election.

F5. Voting equipment that the county would select to replace its aging infrastructure has not yet been certified. When the certified replacement equipment becomes available, it is not clear when funds might be provided.

F6. Re-use of USB drives on the offline vote collection systems, after being attached to an internet-connected system, is a possible avenue to compromise the offline systems.

F7. While currently not being considered in Santa Cruz County, the future possibility of internet voting is a concern due to the inability to ensure the security and anonymity of the vote.

Recommendations

R1. The Elections Department should continue to be proactive in evaluating voting systems that are safe, efficient, and available. (F2–F5, F7)

R2. In order to protect the integrity of the count, once USB drives or other equipment have been connected to the county network, they should never be reattached to the offline vote counting systems. (F6)

R3. The Board of Supervisors should begin the process of identifying and budgeting the requisite funds for replacement of election equipment once it is certified. (F2–F5)

Commendations

C1. The Grand Jury recognizes the diligence, dedication, and hard work of the Elections Department. We had their full cooperation, and observed first-hand the immense number of hours and the effort they put into running an election, while maintaining an impressive level of professionalism.

C2. The Elections Department's website, votescount.com, is a valuable and comprehensive resource.

Required Responses

Respondent	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within/ Respond By
Santa Cruz County Clerk	F1– F7	R1, R2	60 Days July 17, 2017
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	F2–F5	R3	90 Days August 15, 2017

Definitions

- **Definition of Election:** The specification of the candidates and issues that will be included in a particular election.
- **Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) machine:** A machine that presents voting options through an electronic display, processes the vote by means of a computer program, records data on memory devices, and produces a voter-verified paper trail. In Santa Cruz County, DRE machines address accessibility and foreign language requirements.
- **Edge Touchscreen:** A DRE machine produced by Sequoia Voting Systems and used by voters in Santa Cruz County to cast their votes electronically.
- **Insight Optical Scanner:** A vote counting machine produced by Sequoia Voting Systems and used to count paper ballots at polling places in Santa Cruz County.

- **Offline:** Not controlled by or directly connected to a computer network or the internet. Also known as "air-gap" systems.
- **Optech 400C:** A ballot counting machine produced by Sequoia Voting Systems and used in Santa Cruz County to count vote-by-mail and provisional ballots. Also serves as a back-up system to count ballots that could not otherwise be counted at the polls.
- **Polling place kit:** A container with all necessary office supplies and polling place signage.
- **Provisional ballot:** A ballot cast by a voter who experiences some problem or irregularity preventing them from casting a regular ballot.
- **RFID:** *Radio-Frequency IDentification*.
- **USB drive:** A removable storage device that connects to a computer's *Universal Serial Bus* (USB) port. The Elections Department uses the familiar flash-memory thumb drive style.
- **Vote-by-mail:** The process of voting by a ballot that may be cast prior to or on Election Day and returned by mail, at polling places, at the Elections Department, or at the County's drop boxes. Permanent vote-by-mail voters automatically receive their ballots by mail without requesting one each election.

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Site Visits

Santa Cruz County Elections Department, 701 Ocean Street, Rm. 210, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

County Clerk/Elections Operations Center, 2809 Mission St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Distribution Centers:

    131 Kirby, Felton CA (Felton Firehouse)

    326 Evergreen, Santa Cruz CA (Harvey West Scout House)

    979 17th Ave, Santa Cruz CA (Simpkins Swim Center)

    1432 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville CA (UC Coop Extension)

Multiple Precincts throughout the county on Election Day

Poll Worker Training, Scotts Valley Community Center, 360 Kings Village Road, Scotts Valley, California 95066

Specialist Training, County Health Center, 1080 Emeline, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Websites

votescount.com