



2012 Recall Election Debriefing for the Madison Election Advisory Committee

Overview

The City of Madison had a voter turnout of 73 percent on June 5, 2012. There were 120,739 votes cast. Election Officials registered approximately 19,052 voters at the polls. Two hundred thirty-nine eligible voters were not able to register on Election Day under the new registration requirements, and had to leave the polling place without voting.

Election Official Recruitment

Of the 1,279 individuals who worked at the polls, 4 were ages 16-17 (0.3%), 104 were ages 18-25 (8.2%), 118 were ages 26-40 (9.2%), 408 were ages 41-60 (32%), 383 were ages 61-70 (30%), and 259 were ages 71 or older (20.3%). 861 Election Officials were female and 415 were male. For comparison, 9.6 percent of Madison residents are age 65 or older.

Of our 1,276 Election Officials, 21 reported that they were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (1.6%), 15 were Asian (1.2%), and 103 were African-American (8.1%). For comparison, 6.8% of City of Madison residents are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 7.4% are Asian, and 7.3% are African-American.

Training

The City Clerk's Office offered 60 training sessions for Election Officials from May 22 through June 4. Training took place at the City-County Building, the Village on Park, Madison Police East District, Madison Water Utility, Oakwood Village West, Warner Park, Olbrich Gardens, Sequoya Branch Library, and Lakeview Branch Library.

Absentee Ballots

The City Clerk's Office issued 17,004 absentee ballots for this election. There were 9,151 absentee ballots issued to voters at the counter (53.8 percent of absentees issued were issued to voters at the counter). 15,385 absentees (90.5 percent) were returned to be counted.

Forty-eight absentee ballots were rejected at the polls: 20 had no voter signature, 14 had no witness signature, 5 absentee envelopes were not sealed, 4 absentee voters moved without registering at their new address, one absentee voter died after casting his absentee ballot, and 4 voters had voted at the polls (these have been referred to the District Attorney). Of the ballots sent to the polls to be counted, 0.3 percent were rejected.

Five hundred three absentee ballots arrived in the mail after Election Day but by 4 p.m. the Friday of election week. The Board of Canvassers counted 500 of these absentee ballots and rejected three absentees (one lacked a witness signature, one was in an unsealed envelope, and a federal write-in ballot was submitted by a voter who did not request a ballot).

Challenges

Due to the state's late certification of the May 8 primary results, clerk's offices were prohibited from receiving ballots until two weeks before the election. However, the state mandated that absentee ballots be mailed to everyone who had requested one no later than the day ballots were received. This meant that the City of Madison was required to get 6,025 absentee ballots in the mail the same day absentee voting began at the counter and tabulator testing began at the Village on Park. Faced with this great challenge and the GAB instruction, "Do not disenfranchise voters because you don't have printed ballots," the Clerk's Office asked the League of Women Voters of Dane County for assistance. Twenty-five members of the League of Women Voters volunteered their time, took an oath of office, and got 6,025 absentee ballots in the mail immediately.

With the significant voter participation in this election and its timing at the peak of our license renewal cycle, it has been impossible to meet the state deadlines for entering data into the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS). Our top priority is to get everyone on the August poll books. The Clerk's Office has finished processing 35 percent of the June 5 Election Day Registrations.