



2010 November General Election Debriefing for the Madison Election Advisory Committee

Overview

The City of Madison had a voter turnout of 67 percent on November 2, 2010. There were 109,671 votes cast. Election Officials registered 26,358 voters at the polls. Twenty-four percent of voters registered on Election Day.

For comparison, the City of Madison had a voter turnout of 65 percent in November 2006, with 105,513 votes cast. Election Officials registered 29,739 voters at the polls in November 2006.

For another comparison, Election Officials registered 25,000 voters at the polls in November 2008.

Election Official Recruitment

Of the 1,151 individuals who worked at the polls, we had 43 high school student Election Officials (3.7%), 71 Election Officials ages 18-25 (6.2%), 109 Election Officials ages 26-40 (9.5%), 312 Election Officials ages 41-60 (27.1%), 328 Election Officials ages 61-70 (28.5%), and 288 Election Officials ages 71 or older (25%). 740 Election Officials were female and 411 were male.

Of our 1,151 Election Officials, 11 were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (1%), 10 were Asian (0.9%), and 65 were African-American (5.6%). For comparison, 6.5% of City of Madison residents are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 7.5% are Asian, and 5.9% are African-American.

Training

The City Clerk's Office offered 37 training sessions for Election Officials. Training took place at the City-County Building, Villager Mall, Attic Angels, The Jefferson, Warner Park, and Olbrich Gardens. For future elections, we would like to offer more evening training sessions throughout Madison.

Absentee Ballots

The City Clerk's Office issued 12,121 absentee ballots for this election. There were 5,550 absentee ballots issued to voters at the counter (46 percent of absentees issued were issued to voters at the counter). 11,377 absentees (94 percent) were returned to be counted.

This was the first large election we have had where all absentee ballot requests were processed on the same day they were received. The absentee process at the front counter was expedited by dual computer screens and functional Dymo printers at each work station. At a point when most absentee voters were also registering to vote, the office was issuing two absentee ballots every minute.

Sixty-eight absentee ballots were rejected at the polls: 14 had no voter signature, 7 had no witness signature, 6 were not registered at their current address, 30 had already voted (primarily military and overseas voters who had returned multiple types of ballots), 8 certificate envelopes were unsealed, 1 voter did not submit an original, signed absentee request, and 2 voters were deceased. Of the ballots returned to be counted, 0.6 percent were rejected.

For comparison, the City Clerk's Office issued 10,905 absentee ballots for the November 2006 General Election. Eighty-nine percent of absentees were returned to be counted in November 2006, including 3,287 absentees issued to voters at the counter.

Election Day

City employees from other agencies ran an Election Day phone bank in the Clerk's Office conference room. This allowed full-time Clerk's Office employees to devote their time to troubleshooting for Election Officials.

Within the Clerk's Office wards 1-35 called one phone line, wards 36-63 called another phone line, and wards 64-99 called a third line. All three lines had voice mail, and we had no problem clearing out and responding to the voice mail messages throughout the day. Election Officials reported at the end of the night that they did not have any problems getting through to the Clerk's Office, unlike the November 2008 General Election.

Post-Election Tasks

The Government Accountability Board requires municipalities to close out an election within 30 days. The City Clerk's Office met that deadline only for the completion of 300 pages of ward-by-ward statistics, which required thousands of data queries in the Statewide Voter Registration System. The office is still working on scanning the barcodes of every pre-registered voter who cast a ballot on November 2, and has only been able to process 35 percent of the Election Day Registrations. Prior to the implementation of the Statewide Voter Registration System, the City Clerk's Office outsourced the processing of Election Day Registrations. The State no longer allows such outsourcing, for security reasons, and the Clerk's Office has struggled to meet the 30 day deadline since that change was mandated.

Overall

This was the smoothest Election Day that personnel in the Clerk's Office can recall. The six weeks leading up to Election Day required a lot of overtime and resulted in incredibly high stress levels, but Election Day itself went well from the perspective of the City Clerk's Office.