

# Report of Election Day Activities

*2008 General Election*

November 4, 2008



**DELBERT HOSEMANN**  
Mississippi Secretary of State

# REPORT OF ELECTION ACTIVITIES

## GENERAL ELECTION

November 4, 2008

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## OVERVIEW

On November 4, 2008, Mississippians cast ballots to select electors for the President and Vice-President of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Mississippians had the opportunity to cast votes in each of Mississippi's United States Senate races and the four United States Congressional races.<sup>2</sup> Supreme Court seats in each of the three districts as well as Court of Appeals seats in three of five districts were decided. Other races on the ballot at the county level included county election commissioner, county school board member, school board trustee, levee commissioner, judicial races and special elections.

According to results certified to the Secretary of State, 1,289,865 voters cast ballots in the General Election. This voter turnout reflects the highest level of voter participation in the history of our State. (See Appendix 1).

Conducting the general election is the responsibility of each county's election commission and circuit clerk. County election commissioners and circuit clerks each have statutory responsibilities with regard to preparing for and conducting general elections.

## SECRETARY OF STATE ACTIVITIES

### *PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY*

Prior to Election Day, the Secretary of State coordinated database building and other technical support for those counties who utilize the Diebold Touch-Screen voting equipment. Over 7,000 voting machines were deployed throughout the State. Diebold voting machines were used in precincts in seventy-seven (77) counties.

Five counties use some other form or hybrid form of voting technology. In those counties the following voting systems were used: DeSoto, Lee and Yalobusha Counties use the

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<sup>1</sup> The following six (6) Presidential Electors received the highest number of votes on Election Day: Jim Barksdale, Barry Bridgforth, Fred Carl, Bobby Chain, Charles Doty and Victor Mavar.

<sup>2</sup> A Writ of Election issued by Governor Haley Barbour called for a special election to fill the unexpired term of the United States Senate seat vacated by Senator Trent Lott.



Election Systems & Software (ES & S) M100 Optical Mark Reader and the Auto Mark; Rankin County uses the ES & S iVotronic DRE; Hinds County uses the Advance Voting Solutions WINvote DRE; and Harrison County uses a combination of the Premier Election Solutions TSx DRE and the ES&S M100 Optical Mark Reader Precinct Scanner.

Circuit clerks reported high numbers of voter registrations. Data taken from the Statewide Election Management System (SEMS) revealed that approximately 193,734 voter registrations occurred between January 1, 2008 and October 4, 2008. (See Appendix 2 for further information). Registrations were completed in person at the circuit clerk's offices, by mail-in application and by voter registration drive. Many voter registration applications completed by registration drives were mailed or delivered over the counter to circuit clerks' and the Secretary of State's offices on Friday, October 3, and Saturday, October 4, immediately preceding the deadline for voter registration. This created a backlog for circuit clerks. By statute, circuit clerks are responsible for entering and processing voter registrations into the Statewide Election Management System. This includes registrations in person, by mail and those received by the Department of Public Safety. They also have the duty of timely sending voter registration cards containing voter precinct information.

Given the unprecedented number of newly registered voters, the Secretary of State's office anticipated high voter turnout. In an effort to assist the counties with preparation, the Secretary of State's office prepared additional affidavit ballot envelopes and distributed the envelopes to each county in order to supplement the counties' already existing inventories.

Election Day preparation concluded with the implementation of a system for the public to report alleged incidents of voter fraud. The reporting system is available on the Secretary of State's website, and a toll free telephone number for reporting has been established for individuals who do not have access to the internet. The system became operational one week prior to the election. The Secretary of State's office received approximately sixty-six (66) reports of alleged instances of voter fraud on Election Day.

## **SECRETARY OF STATE ACTIVITIES** *ELECTION DAY*

On Election Day, November 4, 2008, the Secretary of State's Office executed a support plan consisting of two types of coverage. First, the Elections Division maintained a support function through the Elections Division in the office in Jackson, Mississippi. Second, personnel from the Secretary of State's Office were deployed throughout the State to observe the election process, by visiting polling locations and courthouses.

In addition to the full Elections Division staff, Secretary of State personnel from other agency divisions were brought in to assist on Election Day. The Election's Division received approximately 1,271 calls from elections officials and the public on Election Day.

The Secretary of State's office deployed forty-one (41) Secretary of State personnel into thirty (30) counties on election day to observe election day activities. (See Appendix 3). The counties were selected to create a uniform geographical distribution while also responding where

local election officials requested our presence. Observers from the Secretary of State were received well by both election officials and the public.

Observers were asked to select randomly the precinct polling locations to visit within their assigned counties. Observers noted the progress of voting at each individual polling location. Observers were also asked to take note of any procedure that appeared to contravene current federal or state election law. Additionally, observers were provided a questionnaire as an informal survey and to guide conversation with poll workers at the individual polling locations. (See Appendix 4).

In addition to observers from the Secretary of State's office, federal election observers representing the U.S. Department of Justice were present in eleven (11) counties. Federal observers were deployed to Bolivar, Jefferson Davis, Kemper, Leake, Madison, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Washington, Winston and Wilkinson counties. (See Appendix 5).

By Friday, November 14, 2008, the Secretary of State's Office had received certified election results from election commissions in fifty-two (52) counties. The remaining thirty (30) county election commissions submitted certified election results by December 4, 2008. The Secretary of State certified election results on December 4, 2008. The meeting of Presidential Electors was conducted on December 15, 2008.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

### *Polling Locations*

Generally, our observers felt that a significant number of polling locations were not compliant with federal laws regarding access for the disabled community. Many polling locations lacked suitable means for entering and exiting the polling locations. A number of parking areas at polling locations were reported to be unpaved, making access for the disabled difficult. Observers noted that several polling locations were too small or overcrowded resulting in less privacy in the voting process. This problem also presented itself at precincts located in schools. At many precincts, long lines were reported during the early morning hours however, the delays had subsided at most precincts by mid-morning.

### *Curbside Voting*

Curbside voting was codified by the legislature in 2008 and subsequently precleared by the United States Department of Justice on August 7, 2008. Prior to becoming law, curbside voting was authorized in practice by Attorney General opinion. Curbside voting was noted at a number of precincts. Most pollworkers understood that two individuals would take the necessary documents to the voter outside the physical voting location structure and allow that vote to occur. Observers noted that the curbside voting process caused significant delays in some polling locations. However, the statutory requirements of curbside voting appeared to our observers to be followed in practice at the polls.



### *Voting Technology*

Minor problems with voting machines were reported by our observers. Most problems were resolved quickly by county election officials or county technicians. The most frequent problems were associated with the external printers and encoders. Most of the problems appeared to be related to operator error.

There were sporadic reports of calibration problems. The majority of complaints were determined to be the result of user error. Two machines were taken out of service and one was re-calibrated. Observers reported that when voting machines were unable to be in use for voting, sufficient numbers of other voting machines or paper ballots were available to continue the voting process. Approximately 7000 machines were in use, or available for use, on Election Day in Mississippi.

### *Voter Rolls*

Due to the significant number of new voter registrations, many first time voters were required to show a form of identification approved under federal law. The Help America Vote Act requires all first-time voters who registered by mail to provide a form of approved identification if they did not provide identification with the mail-in voter registration application. If a voter is required to show identification under this provision of federal law, it is noted on the county pollbooks. Our observers found that pollworkers in some precincts did not require voters to show identification under these circumstances.

Some voters arrived at precincts to find their names were not listed on the pollbooks. These instances typically were voter error in that the voter had come to the incorrect precinct. Pollworkers directed these voters to the appropriate precincts. In other instances, these voters believed that they had registered to vote when they obtained or renewed their drivers' licenses with the Department of Public Safety (DPS). In these instances, pollworkers allowed the voters to cast affidavit ballots.

In canvassing the affidavit ballots, county election commissions were tasked with verifying the voter registration status of voters who maintained that they had registered with the Department of Public Safety. To facilitate this process, the Secretary of State's office acted as liaison between the county election commissions and DPS. Counties were instructed to submit names of affidavit ballot voters to the Secretary of State's office. The Secretary of State's office then contacted DPS to request verification of each voter's registration status. DPS subsequently notified the Secretary of State's office of its findings, and the findings were relayed back to the counties.

### *Voter Fraud*

The Secretary of State's office received approximately sixty-six (66) reports of alleged instances of voter fraud on Election Day. Several of these complaints involved voters presenting

to vote in the appropriate precinct only to find that someone else had already voted as that person.

Post-election, the Statewide Election Management System has revealed at least two instances of individuals voting twice on Election Day. Records indicate that the voters were registered in and cast ballots in two counties on Election Day. These instances do not appear to be widespread; however, the occurrence of any voter fraud is unacceptable and damages the integrity of our system.

#### *Voter Assistance*

Observers reported incidents of what appeared to be inappropriate voter assistance in a number of locations throughout the State. Instances of pollworkers and members of the public soliciting voters to offer assistance in casting their ballots were reported in several counties. Observers also noted what appeared to be persons assisting voters actually touching the DRE voting devices and casting ballots for the voter.

Any voter who is blind, disabled, or illiterate may receive assistance. The voter must declare to the pollworkers that he or she requires assistance and the reason why the voter requires assistance. Once the voter makes this declaration, the voter may be given assistance by anyone of the voter's choosing other than the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union. The Help America Vote Act requires that voting systems be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including persons who are blind, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation as for other voters. All voting precincts in Mississippi have voting devices that are accessible for individuals with disabilities; therefore, the need for voter assistance is greatly minimized.

#### *Contingency Response*

All counties had contingency plans in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances or emergencies. In those counties using touch screen electronic voting devices, back up paper ballots were printed in the event a technology failure occurred. Additional touch screen devices were also deployed throughout the counties to be used in case of an emergency. Fortunately, there were no reports of widespread technology failures on Election Day.

#### *Absentee Balloting*

Military and overseas voters casting absentee ballots occurred in much larger numbers than in previous federal elections. Mississippi is one of several states that allows active duty military personnel, their spouses and dependants, living overseas to cast absentee ballots by electronic mail. This facilitates the absentee voting process for those members of the military in remote locations.

## CONCLUSIONS

Administration of the 2008 General Election was a success. Sufficient and adequate resources were available for the Elections Division of the Secretary of State to provide the level of support throughout Election Day and the days following until certification of election results was complete.

Positioning personnel from the Secretary of State's office around the State allowed the Secretary of State to observe the election process in-person. By deploying Secretary of State personnel, we were able to verify that election officials were operating in accordance with the training provided by our Elections Division. It is vital to continue this practice in order for the Secretary of State's office to provide the necessary levels of training and support to elections officials.



**VOTER TURNOUT STATISTICS**  
for the November 4, 2008 General Election

Description	Adams	Alcorn	Amite	Attala	Benton	Bolivar	Calhoun
Total Active Registered Voters	21,949	23,199	10,484	13,229	6,810	29,444	9,534
Total Votes Cast Per County	15,696	15,182	7,650	9,183	4,638	15,381	7,034
Voter Turnout %	72%	65%	73%	69%	68%	52%	74%
Absentee Ballot Cast	1,951	73	22	14	589	55	565
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	12%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	8%

Description	Carroll	Chickasaw	Choctaw	Claiborne	Clarke	Clay	Coahoma
Total Active Registered Voters	7,881	12,777	6,139	8,360	12,462	14,027	15,062
Total Votes Cast Per County	5,965	9,058	4,128	5,453	8,397	11,092	10,568
Voter Turnout %	76%	71%	67%	65%	67%	79%	70%
Absentee Ballot Cast	629	889	346	28	28	389	44
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	11%	10%	8%	0%	0%	4%	0%

Description	Copiah	Covington	DeSoto	Forrest	Franklin	George	Greene
Total Active Registered Voters	19,718	13,837	83,879	40,510	6,099	14,962	7,985
Total Votes Cast Per County	14,502	9,461	64,323	27,184	4,685	9,335	5,789
Voter Turnout %	74%	68%	77%	67%	77%	62%	72%
Absentee Ballot Cast	68	27	5,581	100	20	39	17
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%



Description	Grenada	Hancock	Harrison	Hinds	Holmes	Humphreys	Issaquena
Total Active Registered Voters	17,257	28,132	97,446	153,471	13,894	9,712	1,646
Total Votes Cast Per County	11,321	17,056	61,957	108,902	9,543	5,126	950
Voter Turnout %	66%	61%	64%	71%	69%	53%	58%
Absentee Ballot Cast	91	1,768	256	428	38	15	
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	1%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Description	Itawamba	Jackson	Jasper	Jefferson	Jeff-Davis	Jones	Kemper
Total Active Registered Voters	15,395	79,436	12,036	7,103	10,809	41,671	7,834
Total Votes Cast Per County	9,951	54,296	9,210	4,478	7,370	29,273	5,223
Voter Turnout %	65%	68%	77%	63%	68%	70%	67%
Absentee Ballot Cast	437	215	28	18	734	73	20
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	4%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%

Description	Lafayette	Lamar	Lauderdale	Lawrence	Leake	Lee	Leftore
Total Active Registered Voters	24,797	30,787	44,072	10,089	16,587	53,145	27,807
Total Votes Cast Per County	18,460	23,910	33,114	7,009	9,359	34,960	13,081
Voter Turnout %	74%	78%	75%	69%	56%	66%	47%
Absentee Ballot Cast	1,952	82	2,701	11	8	2,024	51
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	11%	0%	8%	0%	0%	6%	0%

Description	Lincoln	Lowndes	Madison	Marion	Marshall	Monroe	Montgomery
Total Active Registered Voters	26,082	43,157	77,046	17,885	20,915	24,781	7,774
Total Votes Cast Per County	16,402	27,465	47,269	13,010	16,478	17,496	5,712
Voter Turnout %	63%	64%	61%	73%	79%	71%	73%
Absentee Ballot Cast	56	118	2,155	1,397	93	61	11
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	0%	0%	5%	11%	1%	0%	0%

Description	Neshoba	Newton	Noxubee	Oktibbeha	Panola	Pearl River	Perry
Total Active Registered Voters	16,098	13,702	10,248	27,139	20,588	32,441	8,638
Total Votes Cast Per County	11,402	9,855	6,589	18,792	16,416	22,443	5,664
Voter Turnout %	71%	72%	64%	69%	80%	69%	66%
Absentee Ballot Cast	41	31	22	79	53	84	19
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Description	Pike	Pontotoc	Prentiss	Quitman	Rankin	Scott	Sharkey
Total Active Registered Voters	22,207	18,550	17,751	5,822	82,963	22,917	4,678
Total Votes Cast Per County	18,055	12,868	10,944	4,168	63,103	11,671	2,795
Voter Turnout %	81%	69%	62%	72%	76%	51%	60%
Absentee Ballot Cast	58	981	722	772	195	31	3
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	0%	8%	7%	19%	0%	0%	0%



Description	Simpson	Smith	Stone	Sunflower	Tallahatchie	Tate	Tippah
Total Active Registered Voters	18,105	12,150	9,472	15,432	13,226	17,997	15,529
Total Votes Cast Per County	12,610	8,305	7,246	11,193	6,943	12,778	9,725
Voter Turnout %	70%	68%	76%	73%	52%	71%	63%
Absentee Ballot Cast	34	19	588	31	583	888	13
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	0%	0%	8%	0%	8%	7%	0%

Description	Tishomingo	Tunica	Union	Walthall	Warren	Washington	Wayne
Total Active Registered Voters	12,312	6,641	17,123	13,875	36,957	29,016	14,364
Total Votes Cast Per County	8,419	4,332	12,195	7,780	21,764	19,583	10,022
Voter Turnout %	68%	65%	71%	56%	59%	67%	70%
Absentee Ballot Cast	607	343	993	30	80	95	24
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	7%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Description	Webster	Wilkinson	Winston	Yalobusha	Yazoo
Total Active Registered Voters	7,696	10,254	14,339	9,953	18,287
Total Votes Cast Per County	5,457	5,139	10,221	6,826	11,477
Voter Turnout %	71%	50%	71%	69%	63%
Absentee Ballot Cast	18	24	25	25	34
Absentee Ballots % to Votes Cast	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Voter Turnout Totals November 4, 2008 General Election

Description	Mississippi
Total Active Registered Voters	1,895,583
Total Votes Cast	1,289,865
Voter Turnout %	68%



**Voter Registrations - General Election 2008**  
**01/01/08 - 10/04/08**

County	Current Active Voters as of 01/01/08	Voter Registrations between 01/01/08 and 10/04/08	Percent of Increase
Adams	21,118	1,780	8.43%
Alcorn	21,970	1,498	6.82%
Amite	10,492	572	5.45%
Attala	12,933	996	7.70%
Benton	6,620	380	5.74%
Bolivar	28,016	1,949	6.96%
Calhoun	10,025	444	4.43%
Carroll	7,690	540	7.02%
Chickasaw	12,462	718	5.76%
Choctaw	5,806	537	9.25%
Claiborne	8,163	592	7.25%
Clarke	12,017	696	5.79%
Clay	13,351	977	7.32%
Coahoma	15,873	1,313	8.27%
Copiah	18,757	2,420	12.90%
Covington	13,646	800	5.86%
DeSoto	69,296	16,569	23.91%
Forrest	36,344	6,157	16.94%
Franklin	6,066	323	5.32%
George	14,661	820	5.59%
Greene	7,862	350	4.45%
Grenada	16,577	1,398	8.43%
Hancock	27,092	2,416	8.92%
Harrison	85,327	13,014	15.25%
Hinds	133,307	26,670	20.01%
Holmes	13,453	1,171	8.70%
Humphreys	9,921	384	3.87%
Issaquena	1,743	49	2.81%
Itawamba	15,085	866	5.74%
Jackson	74,625	8,414	11.28%
Jasper	11,584	822	7.10%
Jeff-dav	11,374	501	4.40%
Jefferson	7,127	286	4.01%
Jones	40,363	2,800	6.94%
Kemper	8,002	243	3.04%
Lafayette	21,059	4,523	21.48%

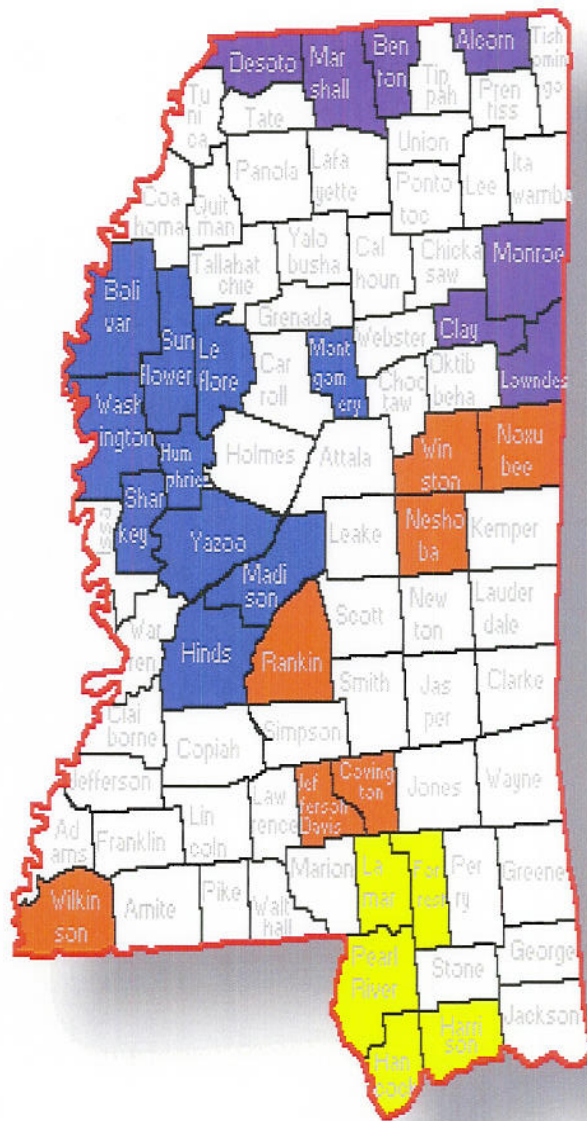
County	Current Active Voters as of 01/01/08	Voter Registrations between 01/01/08 and 10/04/08	Percent of Increase
Lamar	27,979	4,466	15.96%
Lauderdale	39,559	5,109	12.91%
Lawrence	9,832	443	4.51%
Leake	16,159	307	1.90%
Lee	49,208	5,524	11.23%
Leflore	26,930	1,630	6.05%
Lincoln	25,436	1,566	6.16%
Lowndes	41,211	3,521	8.54%
Madison	69,976	9,012	12.88%
Marion	17,969	1,061	5.90%
Marshall	18,261	2,980	16.32%
Monroe	24,000	1,678	6.99%
Montgomery	7,979	448	5.61%
Neshoba	14,996	1,607	10.72%
Newton	11,626	1,152	9.91%
Noxubee	10,203	430	4.21%
Oktibbeha	24,447	4,164	17.03%
Panola	19,800	2,222	11.22%
Pearl River	30,437	2,692	8.84%
Perry	8,560	450	5.26%
Pike	24,668	1,899	7.70%
Pontotoc	17,806	1,487	8.35%
Prentiss	17,235	1,026	5.95%
Quitman	6,003	268	4.46%
Rankin	74,800	13,209	17.66%
Scott	22,727	1,289	5.67%
Sharkey	5,291	166	3.14%
Simpson	17,359	1,316	7.58%
Smith	12,163	714	5.87%
Stone	9,152	714	7.80%
Sunflower	14,525	1,466	10.09%
Tallahatchie	13,425	412	3.07%
Tate	16,997	1,485	8.74%
Tippah	18,503	502	2.71%
Tishomingo	12,170	598	4.91%
Tunica	6,649	567	8.53%
Union	16,449	1,232	7.49%
Walthall	13,878	635	4.58%
Warren	35,444	2,602	7.34%



County	Current Active Voters as of 01/01/08	Voter Registrations between 01/01/08 and 10/04/08	Percent of Increase
Washington	25,643	3,466	13.52%
Wayne	14,012	640	4.57%
Webster	7,547	410	5.43%
Wilkinson	10,138	350	3.45%
Winston	14,794	767	5.18%
Yalobusha	10,370	591	5.70%
Yazoo	17,890	1,473	8.23%
	<b>1,780,013</b>	<b>193,734</b>	<b>10.88%</b>

# Statewide Deployment by Congressional District

- - Cong. Dist. 2
- - Cong. Dist. 1
- - Cong. Dist. 3
- - Cong. Dist. 4



11-1-08



# General Election

November 4, 2008

Circuit Clerk \_\_\_\_\_  
Bailiff \_\_\_\_\_  
Poll Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
County \_\_\_\_\_  
Precinct \_\_\_\_\_



**Delbert Hosemann**  
Secretary of State

## Volunteer Information Checklist

	Yes	No
1. Did the Polls open on time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did all machines operate when the Polls opened? If not, how many failed to operate? _____ How many machines are in the precinct? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you feel Poll Workers are prepared to answer voter questions concerning an affidavit ballot?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How many hours of training did Poll Workers have for this election, since last year's General Election? ___ 0 ___ 2 ___ 4 ___ 6 ___ 8 ___ More than 8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. How many years have been served by the Poll Workers? ___ 1-4 ___ 5-8 ___ 9-12 ___ 13-16 ___ 17-20 ___ More than 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Was someone allowed to vote in their car at curbside if they could not come into the polls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Did anyone, other than a Poll Worker, assist a curbside voter in voting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Did you witness any challenges to a voter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Were Absentee Ballots reviewed properly at the polling place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Were voters marked in the Poll Books to show ID required to show ID?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Was the polling place ADA compliant? i.e. ramp, paved entrance, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Did you observe anything out of the ordinary or that you feel should be recorded? (Additional space available on back of page).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(over)

