

San Benito County Election Observer Panel Plan June 8, 2010, Statewide Primary Election

County and System Information

Name of County: San Benito County

Name of Contact: Lupe Maldonado, Bilingual Election Coordinator

Contact's Phone: (831)636-4016

Vendor and Voting Systems Used by County: Sequoia Voting Systems
DRE AVC Edge II and
Optical 400-C Optical Scan

Date: May 20, 2010

Purpose

Public observation and input assists in ensuring the integrity of the election process. All aspects of preparation for and conducting an election may be observed and San Benito County actively seeks input at every election in order to help improve service and confidence. Several code and voting system provisions require notice of the opportunity for observation of various aspects of the election process.

In San Benito County, the Election Observation Panel and Logic and Accuracy Board are combined into a single panel serving both functions.

Invite

Requests for appointment are sent out and a combined Notice of Central Count Place, Commencement of Absentee Processing and an invitation to observe and challenge the manner in which the vote by mail ballots are handled, from the processing of ballot return envelopes through the opening, counting and disposition of the ballots is published in the local newspaper. Logic and accuracy testing of voting equipment is also open to observation.

Mechanism for Feedback

Panelists are provided a form for providing feedback concerning the ballot tabulation process and any other aspects of the administration of the election.

Duties, General Rules of Conduct

Panelists are responsible for:

- The duties set forth below:
 1. Receive from the elections official all required test materials.
 2. Take steps to ensure the security of the said materials before, during and subsequent to the election, except when in the possession of the elections official.
 3. Observe the performance of all required tests.
 4. Verify that the ballot counting program accurately tallies the logic and accuracy test ballot cards.
 5. Note all discrepancies of each of the above prescribed duties.
 6. Sign the appropriate certificates.
 7. Wearing an identification badge.
 8. Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election processes.
 9. Ensure they do not interfere with the election process.

Panelists may:

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the entrance.
- Make notes and watch all procedures.
- View all activities at the central counting site on Election Day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- View absentee and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site.

Panelists may not:

- Interfere in any way with the conduct of the election.
- Touch any voting materials or equipment or sit at the official worktables.
- Converse with voters (within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place) regarding the casting of a vote, or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use cellular phones, pagers, or two-way radios inside the polling place and/or within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place.
- Talk to central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Use the telephones, computers or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Touch election personnel.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place.

Orientation, Pre-Election, Pre-Tabulation and Post-Election Test Observation and Verification

Election Observer/Accuracy Panel meets at the Registrar of Voters Office prior to the election for an orientation and to observe and verify the Pre-Election Logic and Accuracy Tests. Members are given an opportunity to ask questions about the entire election process and are given an overview of the ballot tabulation process.

The panel reconvenes on Election morning to observe and verify the Pre-Tabulation Logic and Accuracy Tests (run prior to the running of vote by mail ballots). Panelists have the option to remain or return prior to 8:00 p.m. The panel observes and verifies the Post-Election Logic and Accuracy Tests (run after all ballots have been tabulated on Election Night).

Panelists may observe any processes during the Official Canvass. To the extent possible, the Panel is comprised of the same members at all testing opportunities.

SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

Date (E-60 to E-30)

Dear XXX:

The Department of Elections will convene an Election Observer Panel to observe activities associated with the XXX Election, which will be held on XXX date. Representatives of the county central committees, advocacy groups, the League of Women Voters, and the County Grand Jury, as well as media representatives, will be invited to participate.

Typically, members of the Panel visit one or more polling places on Election Day and then visit the ballot counting center to observe the tabulation of ballots on election night. Panel members are also invited to observe staff at the Department of Elections as they process absentee ballots. Members of the Panel will be provided with the information they need to participate in these activities.

If your organization would like to be represented on the Election Observer Panel, please notify XXX by mail, by phone at xxx-xxxx or by email at XXX. Please respond by XXX date, with the name of your representative. XXX will be available to meet with Panel members to explain their role in greater detail and to provide them with the information they will need.

Thank you for your interest in protecting our electoral system.

Sincerely,

XXX
Registrar of Voters/County Clerk

SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Date (no later than E-5)

TO: Precinct Inspectors

FROM: XXX
Registrar of Voters/County Clerk

SUBJECT: ELECTION OBSERVER PANEL

This letter introduces XXX, whom I have appointed to the Election Observer Panel for the XXX election. Members of the Election Observer Panel are invited to observe activities related to the administration of an election, including visiting polling places.

No person, including a member of the Election Observer Panel, may interfere with the operation of polling places. XXX and other members of the Election Observer Panel may ask you to explain certain operations and procedures. Please extend every courtesy to XXX.

If you have any questions, please call me at xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your cooperation and your service to our county's voters.