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PRECINCT OPERATIONS
209/468-2892

Election Observer Panel Plan

November 4, 2008 Presidential General Election

I. County and System Information

- Diebold Voting Systems TSx with AccuVote O/S

II. Purpose

The purpose of an Election Observer Panel is to:

- Provide for orderly public observation of the election process
- Ensure that the election process is conducted transparently
- Encourage participation and build voter confidence in the election process

III. Invite

Between E-60 and E-30, send out letters of invitation to the following:

- County Grand Jury
- Political Party Central Committee Members
- Media

Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in observing Election Day activities may also, at the discretion of the Registrar of Voters, be included in the observer panel.

Observations at Polling Places

Letters of Introduction

Any group or individual desiring to be provided a letter of introduction for presentation to precinct board members at a polling site, may obtain one by providing the Registrar of Voters a signed written request no later than 10 days prior to Election Day. Any requests for polling place location information must be made at the same time.

General Rules for Observers

Observers are responsible for:

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting location
- Wearing an identification badge
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election processes
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the elections process

Observers 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 of, and watch, all procedures
- View all activities at the central counting location on Election Day
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election
- View vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting location

Observers May Not:

- Interfere in any way with the conduct of the election
- Touch any voting materials or equipment, sit at the official worktables, or observe from within the "voting area"
- Converse with voters (within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place), or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote
- Make notes of which particular voting machine a voter chooses to use
- 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, two-way radios, cameras, audio or video recording devices, or camera phones inside the polling place
- Talk to central counting site workers while they are processing ballots
- Use 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 in the central counting site
- Assist in operations at any polling place

Observations at Central Counting Locations

Check In Procedures

1. All observers must report and sign in daily at the Registrar of Voters central counting location located at 212 N San Joaquin St., Stockton, CA. to observe vote-by-mail ballot counting commencing October 24th 2008.

2. On Election night, November 4th 2008, all observers must report and sign in at the Registrar of Voters central counting location located at 6700 C.E. Dixon St., Stockton Ca.
3. An Election Observer Badge will be issued and must be worn at all times.
4. When leaving for the day, please return the badge to the front counter.

General Rules

1. Observers will be permitted access to a designated observation area, sufficiently close to enable them to observe and challenge whether individuals handling vote-by-mail ballots are following established procedures (Elections Code §5104d)
2. No observer shall interfere with the orderly processing of vote-by-mail ballot return envelopes or processing and counting of vote-by-mail ballots, including touching or handling of the ballots or envelopes. (Elections Code §15104e)
3. Cellular phones, pagers, two-way radios, cameras, audio or video recording devices, or camera phones are not allowed. Pagers and cellular phones must be set to vibrate or off mode while observing the canvass.
4. The individual's function is to observe that procedures are followed. Observers cannot assist in operations, touch or handle any ballots or other election-related materials.
5. All questions concerning a procedure should be directed to the supervisor or manager of the section only.
6. The number of observers may be limited so as not to interfere with the process. Observers should avoid physical contact with employees.
7. Observers are to hold discussions and conversations outside the designated canvass work areas. Anyone not adhering to these rules will be asked to leave for the day.
8. Observers will be allowed to observe the canvass work areas only when employees are performing canvass operations.
9. Operations will continue as scheduled whether or not an observer is present.
10. The Registrar of Voters and the Assistant Registrar of Voters have the discretion to eject any observer who fails to abide by the rules of this Plan for a period of time up to, and including, the completion of the election process.