



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Independent Audit of Richland County Vote in November 2010 Reveals Uncounted Votes
LWVSC Calls for Post-Election Audits in All Elections.

Columbia, South Carolina - Analysis of vote data files from Richland County for the November 2010 General Election has revealed that more than 1000 votes from Bluff precinct and Ward 21 are missing from the certified totals. Audit files show 1026 votes were cast in Bluff precinct, but only 254 votes were certified. These same files show 694 votes cast in Ward 21, but only 339 votes certified. In all, 1127 votes cast in these two precincts were not counted in the certified totals.

Other problems occurred in Ward 22, Eastover, Fairlawn, N. Forest Acres, Harbison 1, Pine Lakes and Westminster precincts, where the detailed vote image file did not provide confirmation for 1362 votes that were certified. In addition, 1454 votes from Gadsden and Riverside precincts were entirely missing from the vote image file.

A citizens group, working with the League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC), is analyzing data from the November 2010 Election. Data for Richland County was obtained in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. Analysis of the data files was performed independently by Dr. Duncan Buell, a computer science professor from Columbia, and Chip Moore, a Massachusetts programmer with South Carolina roots. Their analysis clearly documents a failure to count votes in Bluff and Ward 21 and the missing vote detail data in the other nine precincts.

"The failure to count votes from some voting machines and the failure to document votes from other voting machines is a human failure, but it's a human failure that the software should have caught, so the root cause is a software system that isn't doing what it's supposed to do. What we have done is to run some self-checks that should always have been in the system," Moore stated.

"The State Election Commission claims that no vote has ever been lost. But in Richland County, the election system supervised by the SEC failed to include more than 1000 votes in just two precincts and hadn't provided full support for more than 2800 votes that were certified as cast. This is not a system that is working. Collecting, storing, and retrieving data is what computers do all the time, but apparently not here with our vote data," added Buell.

"Transparency in government demands that counties collect and maintain all the vote data so that they and anyone else can verify that the certified election results are justified by the data collected. It should be simple to take the vote data from a county and reproduce the results independently. We are very concerned that so many errors in collecting and preserving votes and vote data were made by one of our largest counties," said LWVSC president Barbara Zia

LWVSC and the citizens group are recommending that the kind of post-election audit done by Moore and Buell be required statewide. Moore and Buell have offered their software for free to Richland County for use after subsequent elections, and county officials have since found the memory cards from the nine precincts with the missing data. The vote data from several other counties, including Colleton, is also being analyzed.