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together tirelessly and professionally, with much respect towards one another earning my enduring appreciation and esteem for the citizens that they are.

It has been my honor to serve as this year's foreperson and as a member of the 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Roosa

Arthur Roosa
Foreperson
2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury

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2024-2025 Grand Jury Membership Roster

Samuel Brinker	Napa
Paul Cantey	Napa
John Dunbar	Napa
Kathy Fritz	Napa
Addison Holmes	Napa
Deborah McGrath	Napa
Kimberly McMaster	Napa
Patrick Muleady	Napa
Mary Nevius	Napa
Jose Palma	American Canyon
Arthur Roosa	Napa
Marie Skillings	Napa
Robert Van Der Velde	Napa
Russell Wilsey	Napa
Margaret Woodard	Napa
Richard Yarlott	Napa



Front Row: Marie Skillings, Richard Yarlott, Mary Nevius, Hon. Scott R.L. Young, Arthur Roosa, John Dunbar, Margaret Woodard, Robert Van Der Velde
 Back Row: Kathy Fritz, Paul Cantey, Patrick Muleady, Russell Wilsey, Kimberly McMaster, Samuel Brinker, Deborah McGrath, Jose Palma

Acknowledgements

The 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury acknowledges the following individuals for their assistance to and support of the Civil Grand Jury:

- Hon. Scott R. L. Young, Judicial Liaison, Napa County Superior Court
- Silva Darbinian, Chief Deputy County Counsel, Napa County
- Bob Fleshman, Chief Executive Officer, Napa County Superior Court
- Heidi Van de Ryt, Court Executive Assistant, Napa County Superior Court
- Oscar Ortiz, Napa County Sheriff
- Tracy Schulze, Napa County Auditor-Controller
- Daniel Sanchez, Senior Management Analyst, Napa County
- Kyung Lee, Napa County ITS
- Alice Danner, Staff Services Analyst, Napa County
- The Peter and Vernice Gasser Foundation, Nancy Watt, Chief Executive Officer
- Mitch Wippen, Chief Operations Officer, The Gasser Foundation
- Napa Chapter, California Civil Grand Jury Association
- Dan Evans, Editor, *Napa Valley Register*
- Laura Gregory, photographer, Grand Jury group photo
- Maggy Walton and Napa Printing

2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury Final Reports

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A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

NAPA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY 2024-2025

April 23, 2025

FINAL REPORT

**The Votes Are In -
and Were Counted Securely and Accurately**

**A Look Inside Napa County's
2024 General Election Process**

SUMMARY

Questions regarding the validity of elections across the United States grew out of public claims of fraud, miscounts and unlawful behavior related to the 2020 General Election. In response, the 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury investigated the safety, accuracy, and security of the election process for the 2024 General Election in Napa County.

The Civil Grand Jury conducted its investigation using three methods: interviews, research, and first-person observations of the election processes and procedures. As a result of this investigation, the Civil Grand Jury determined that the 2024 election process in Napa County followed local, state and federal regulations and laws and was safe, secure, and executed with integrity.

After a thorough review of the detailed regulations and procedures performed by and under the supervision of Napa County's Registrar of Voters, the Civil Grand Jury found the County Elections staff to be dedicated and committed to completing their duties, exhibiting expert knowledge of the regulations and laws governing their work.

The observations and detailed descriptions in the report validate the integrity of the elections in Napa County.

The Civil Grand Jury finds:

- Napa County's 2024 General Election was safe, secure, and performed with integrity.
- The election procedures were followed in accordance with the law.
- The legally required manual audit of the election was secure and accurate.
- The confidentiality of a voter's ballot was maintained and protected throughout the entire election process.
- No eligible vote, cast in the prescribed manner, was found to be uncounted.
- The Napa County election computer systems were secure.
- The Voter Registration Database was maintained accurately.
- The election process was transparent, and observers were welcomed and encouraged to witness the activity.
- The Napa County Elections Division's office workspace was inadequate and warrants improvement.
- Napa County Elections Division website lacked information and organization to assist voters and the community in an easy-to-understand format.

- Napa County Elections Division did not maintain its own social media accounts as required by the Napa County Social Media Use Policy, leading to personnel utilizing personal accounts for county business.
- Napa County Elections Division outreach lacked effective strategies to target soon-to-be-of-age eligible voters.

BACKGROUND

The Napa County Civil Grand Jury chose to investigate the safety, accuracy, and security of the 2024 General Election process in Napa County due to public accusations of fraud, miscounts, and unlawful behavior related to the 2020 General Election across the country.

The 2024 General Election in Napa County, which occurred on November 5, 2024, included 60 voting contests spread over 206 different precincts.¹ Of the 85,150 registered voters in Napa County, 66,634 votes were cast, totaling approximately 78% of registered voters. While most Napa County voters chose mail-in ballots (61,783), live ballots totaled 4,851.²

The primary focus of the Civil Grand Jury investigation was centered on addressing a series of questions:

- Are poll books maintained accurately?
- Can a person vote twice?
- Can a person vote in the place of someone else?
- Are ballots protected and kept confidential?
- Are computer systems used in voting secure?
- Is every vote counted?

METHODOLOGY

Civil Grand Jury members researched local, state, and federal laws and regulations for elections. These laws and regulations described local procedures in detail and limited variation or interpretation of the process.

The Civil Grand Jury conducted interviews with members of the Napa County Elections Division staff and Napa County employees about their general roles and responsibilities during an election in Napa County. Jury members also observed election activities in person. The Civil Grand Jury selected voting centers in Napa County to observe the facilities, processes, and procedures, and observed all the at-large processes at the Napa County Elections Division office on First Street in Napa.

¹ November 5, 2024 General Election Napa County Election Division Final Certified Results, available via: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/DocumentCenter/View/35129/Final-Certified-Summary-Report-2024-PDF>

² Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

The investigation also included monitoring of Napa County Elections Division policy and procedures and confirmed compliance with state and federal law.

DISCUSSION

Accurate Maintenance of Poll Books

Voter Registration

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter Act) permitted voters to update their voter registration, specifically their address, upon renewing or obtaining a driver's license or REAL ID from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The Act removes an important roadblock, increasing voter accessibility for eligible voters.³

Voters may also register at the California Secretary of State's Online Voter Registration page or at the Napa County Elections Division office. A first-time voter needs to provide a valid driver's license, REAL ID or the last four digits of their Social Security Number to confirm their United States citizenship and residency in Napa County.

All registered voters receive, via the United States Postal Service (USPS), their mail-in ballot sent to their last known address. Updates to a voter's address may be resolved via the DMV, USPS or directly with the Napa County Elections Division, depending upon the circumstances. Any mail-in ballots returned to the Elections Division due to an address discrepancy await the voter's initiative to resolve the issue.

Voter Registration Database

The Voter Registration Database contains registered voter information such as name, address, voting precinct, if the voter was issued a mail-in ballot, and if identification needs to be verified.⁴ The accuracy of the Napa County Voter Registration Database is maintained with monthly updates from information provided by the DMV, Department of Health and Human Services deceased persons update, and from the Department of Corrections for those recently incarcerated with a felony conviction. This database

³ California National Voter Registration Act Manual, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/nvra/laws-standards/nvra-manual>

⁴ California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> ; and California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

maintains changes of address, changes based on minimum voting age (currently 18), deaths, and incarcerations.⁵

Designated Voter Registration database computers at all vote centers are on a secure, closed network and only have access to the database information.⁶

Generation of Ballots

Napa County Elections Division staff worked with a state approved vendor to generate ballots. This vendor received a list of names and addresses for registered voters from the Voter Registration Database to print and mail ballots and return envelopes. Voters could return completed ballots by mail, in person to the Elections Office, or at an official ballot drop off location.

Mail-in envelopes have barcodes that are used to identify an individual voter's envelope. Only the first ballot cast by a voter, based on the date received by Elections Office personnel, whether by mail, in person at the Elections Office, or at an official ballot drop off location, are considered the eligible ballot that moves forward to be counted.⁷

Voting Twice: Is It Possible?

Voting In-Person

To assist in the authentication of the process, a selected number of Civil Grand Jury members voted in-person to observe the processes for a physical ballot and an electronic marked ballot. In both scenarios, the voter completed a voter identification form to allow the Voter Registration Database staff at the Vote Center to verify the address and voting precinct. The voter was able select either a paper ballot or an electronic marking ballot. See examples in Appendix A and Appendix B.

⁵ California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> ; and California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

⁶ California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system> ; and California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> ; and California Secretary of State, Voter's Choice Act, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>

⁷ California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> and California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

Electronic ballots were read by a machine connected only to its own printer. The machine was activated by a microchipped card, which an eligible voter acquired from election staff at the time of voting.

Mail-in Ballots

The instructions contained in the mail-in ballot included how to sign and return the envelope via USPS or at a drop-box location. This signature was critical to voter identification and was described in the signature verification section. Ballots returned via USPS followed USPS procedures documented and described via:

<https://about.usps.com/what/government-services/election-mail/>.

The Napa County Registrar of Voters confirmed receipt from the USPS any election mail postmarked by the election deadline for seven days following Election Day. This ensured that voters whose ballots may have had a flaw or required signature verification had an opportunity to correct the issue in time to have their ballots counted.

Ballot Drop Boxes and Chain of Custody

Drop box locations were determined by the County Registrar of Voters using population, geographic area, voter convenience, proximity to public transportation, security and funding data.⁸ The County Registrar of Voters determined that 11 drop box locations throughout the County were warranted in 2024.⁹

The County Registrar of Voters was responsible for establishing drop-box collection of ballots and chain of custody procedures. Napa County followed the prescribed procedures set forth by the Secretary of State, including chain of custody for all ballot collections.¹⁰

Voters were also able to bring their mail-in ballot to any vote center to vote using a ‘live’ ballot. This process involved ‘spoiling’ the mail-in ballot to prevent two ballots being cast by one voter. A vote center employee confirmed the precinct of the voter and eliminated or “spoiled” their mail-in ballot from being counted. This voter information was immediately updated in the Voter Registration Database.

⁸ California Secretary of State, Vote-by-Mail Ballot Drop Boxes and Vote-by-Mail Drop-Off Locations, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/vote-mail-ballot-drop-boxes-and-drop-locations>

⁹ Napa County, Drop Box Locations, accessed via: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/2355/Drop-Box-Locations>

¹⁰ Ibid.

Preventing Casting a Ballot That's Not Your Own

Sorting Ballots

In a dedicated room, completed ballots held within their mail-in envelopes were stored in trays for processing. The sorting process of mail-in envelopes occurred in multiple steps resulting in an organization by precinct. This precinct organization was not required, but Napa County chose to do so to make the mandated manual recount process more efficient.

Signature Verification

Signature verification was performed by Elections Division staff and occurred on desktop computers on a closed network. Software facilitated the California Secretary of State's regulations to ensure a consistent approach to signature verification.¹¹ The regulations required that elections officials "must compare the signature on a voted vote-by-mail envelope...to the voter's signature(s) in the voter's registration record prior to counting a ballot."¹²

The overall training and process of signature verification followed the California Secretary of State's Signature Verification code of regulations that states: "examination of the signature shall be liberally construed in the favor of the voter."¹³ Signature verification cards and letters were sent out by Napa County Elections Division as soon as they received mail-in ballots with problematic signatures. This process of 'curing' the signature required the voter to return the card to the Elections Division Office with a resolved signature. This card had to be received by the elections official no later than 5 PM two days prior to the certification of the election.¹⁴ Until the signature was verified, the mail-in envelope containing the ballot was set aside and remained in the secure sorting room.

Out of the 61,783 votes cast by mail-in ballot for 2024 General Election in Napa County, 244 signatures were challenged without curing the signature, for a 99.6% signature verification rate.¹⁵

¹¹ California Secretary of State, Signature Verification, Ballot Processing, and Ballot Counting (Emergency Regulations), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ California Legislative Information: Elections Code accessed via: https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=ELEC§ionNum=3019

¹⁵ Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

Ballots are Confidential and Protected

Boards/Canvassing

The boards/canvassing process began with the delivery of a tray of mail-in envelopes sorted by voting precinct to groups of three or four individuals. As prescribed by regulation, a specifically sequenced process separated the ballots from their mail-in envelopes and prepared the ballots for the scanning and counting of votes. Any damaged ballots that would prevent a successful scan were set aside for duplication (see process as described below). Ballots were separated from the envelopes and no longer had voter information. They were protected and sealed in rooms that were locked, alarmed, and had constant video coverage. At the end of the boards/canvassing, sealed boxes of ballots, organized by precinct, were delivered to the counting room.

Voting Computer Security

Preparation for Counting Ballots

In preparation for the election, Napa County performed its logic and accuracy quality assurance process on the official counting/scanning equipment. In accordance with the law and California Secretary of State regulations, testing was completed on February 9, 2024, and documented the equipment functioning as expected in preparation for the 2024 General Election.¹⁶

Napa County utilized Dominion Voting Systems for its counting/scanning and ballot adjudication processes. This system was approved by the California Secretary of State, having met specific requirements.¹⁷ Had there been any problems during the election counting/scanning of ballots, the vendor's technical staff were available for assistance.

Every Vote is Counted

Ballot Counting

Sealed boxes of ballots from the boards/canvassing process were opened by authorized staff engaged in the scanning. In most cases, if a ballot was rejected by the scanner due to errors reading the tick marks, tears, crease or fold problems, the individual conducting the scanning resolved the problem. An example ballot is included

¹⁶ California Secretary of State, Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum # 24043, RE: Voting Systems: Logic and Accuracy Test Reporting, January 25, 2024, accessed via:

<https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/2024/january/24043nr.pdf>

¹⁷ California Secretary of State, Certified Voting Technologies Used by County, accessed via:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ovsta/frequently-requested-information/voting-systems-used-counties>

in Appendix B. If a ballot still could not be scanned, the Elections personnel conducting the scanning removed the page(s) and placed them in the duplication bag. To maintain tracking and accountability, the Elections staff made a note updating the physical count for the box seal.

If valid, the contest was tallied and maintained by the system until a report was generated by a user. No vote count was available until manually requested, which occurred during reporting. If a contest had an invalid vote such as an over-vote, where a voter voted for more than the choices available in a contest, the vote was not counted for that specific contest, and its scan was placed in a watch folder for the ballot adjudication process.

Ballot Adjudication

Adjudication is defined: “to decide the correctness of a ballot and accept or deny the ballot.”¹⁸ The adjudication process was performed by trained Elections staff. Staff selected a batch number of scanned ballots to perform the adjudication. The Civil Grand Jury found the Vote Counting Standards, established by the California Secretary of State, to be useful in researching ballot adjudication, and a relevant excerpt is available in Appendix C.

The standards for valid and invalid ballots are detailed. According to regulation, there are more reasons to honor the intent of the voter than to mark a contest invalid.¹⁹ The Civil Grand Jury found Napa County Elections Division performed the adjudication process in accordance with the law.

Duplication of a Ballot

“(A) duplicated ballot is a ballot which is a true copy of the originally cast ballot. It is created when damage, improper marking or some other action/defect prevents the original ballot from being read by a ballot tabulating machine and is used to properly process and count the votes originally cast by the voter. A duplicated ballot also is necessary for a ballot cast using a remote accessible vote-by-mail ballot.”²⁰

Napa County Elections Division staff operated in a group of four people when it was necessary to duplicate ballots using electronic marking machines. One person held and

¹⁸ California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

¹⁹ California Secretary of State, Signature Verification, Ballot Processing, and Ballot Counting (Emergency Regulations), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations>

²⁰ California Secretary of State, Signature Verification, Ballot Processing, and Ballot Counting (Emergency Regulations), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations>

read aloud the original ballot. A second individual witnessed the accuracy of what was stated as the vote. A third individual stood at the electronic marking machine and marked the called-out vote. A fourth individual confirmed the mark was accurate. For the 2024 General Election, Napa County duplicated 2,411 ballots, or 3.62% of those returned.²¹

Reporting Results

Napa County, like all other California counties, provided elections results in a series of reporting instances. The first report for Napa County was on election night at 8:01 p.m. local time and included all ballots cast in-person on election day. This initial report included early voting ballots deposited at vote centers or drop boxes, as well as mail-in ballots received by noon the Saturday before election day. Reporting thereafter was provided at determined increments based upon volume of ballots received until every identified eligible vote was counted.

The results were made available on the Napa County Elections Division website. The results were not easy to find and required following a small link among regular text to get to the reporting page. The Civil Grand Jury recommends a modernization review of the Elections Division website. This is explored further in the website section of the report.

Of the 85,150 registered voters in Napa County, 66,634 cast votes, which was a 78% turnout for the 2024 General Election. No votes were miscounted by the electronic counting machines in service in Napa County and the manual tally, as required by law, matched the electronic count as well.²²

Manual Recount or 1% Manual Tally Audit

A manual recount, also known as the one percent manual tally, has been required by the California Secretary of State since 1998.²³ The manual recount is a one percent count of every contest in a randomly generated one percent of precincts. The manual recount and random generation were only accessed after all identified eligible votes were counted. The total number of ballots audited across these two categories was 3,597 ballots, or 5.40% of the overall ballots for the 2024 General Election.²⁴

²¹ Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

²² Report of 1% Manual Tally, Napa County, December 3, 2024, appendix E.

²³ California Secretary of State, One Percent Manual Tally, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/one-percent-manual-tally> ; and California Elections Code 15360, One Percent Manual Tally [15360- 15360.], accessed via: https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=ELEC§ionNum=15360

²⁴ Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

The manual tally process, observed by Civil Grand Jury members, was followed in accordance with the law. For the 2024 General Election, “Napa County did not have any discrepancies on the Manual Tally” and achieved 100% accuracy.²⁵

Election Certification

All election results were required to be complete and certified by December 3, 2024, within 30 days of election day.²⁶ The Napa County Registrar of Voters sent a certified statement, available in Appendix D, to the California Secretary of State once all eligible ballots had been counted. Certified results were also posted on the County’s website.

Records Management

All digital and physical election documentation and materials, including ballots and mail-in envelopes, were sent to the Napa County Records Center. The records management process at the Napa County Records Center is set forth by the California Secretary of State and requires retention for 22 months after the certification of the election on December 3, 2024.²⁷

Outreach

As a requirement of the Voter’s Choice Act of 2016, California counties must develop an Election Administration Plan (EAP) or outreach plan in collaboration with the public.²⁸ This plan also sets forth how county elections officials utilize social media, newspapers, mail, radio, and television to disseminate voter information. Napa County’s EAP can be accessed via: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/2242/Election-Administration-Plan>.

Napa County Elections Division is required to use Napa County’s official government social media accounts. However, in 2024, it was observed that the Napa County Registrar of Voters used personal social media accounts for some voter outreach.

²⁵ Report of 1% Manual Tally, Napa County, December 3, 2024, appendix E.

²⁶ California Secretary of State, Ballot Counting, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/ballot-counting> ; and California Secretary of State, News Release: “California’s Vote Counting Process: By Law, Counting Can Take Up to 30 Days to Ensure Voters’ Rights and Integrity of Elections”, November 15, 2022, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/news-releases-and-advisories/2022-news-releases-and-advisories/californias-vote-counting-process-law-counting-can-take-30-days-ensure-voters-rights-and-integrity-elections>

²⁷ California Secretary of State, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum # 22216, RE: General Election: Preservation of Election Materials, September 9, 2022, accessed via: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/2022/september/22216sr.pdf>

California Secretary of State, Records Management Handbook, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/records-management-and-appraisal/records-management-handbook>

²⁸ California Secretary of State, Voter’s Choice Act, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>

Issues with Napa County Elections Division social media presence was previously documented in a 2020-2021 Napa County Civil Grand Jury Report.²⁹

Napa County's Social Media Use Policy states that "Napa County Department Heads...must designate authorized Social Media administrators."³⁰

The Civil Grand Jury recommends Napa County Elections Division appoint a social media administrator to configure social media accounts for the division, removing any personal accounts from involvement in official county business.

The Civil Grand Jury further recommends that additional outreach to juveniles or those coming of voting age, be incorporated into future iterations of the Napa County EAP. While California Election Code 2105.7 provides for such outreach by the Napa County Juvenile Detention Center, that effort is restricted to those detained and, as such, has limited effect. General voter information should be provided by the Napa County Elections Office for public posting at juvenile locations throughout the county, including community centers and other public and event spaces, to reach more individuals approaching voting age.

Napa County Elections Website

The Civil Grand Jury review of the Napa County Elections website found the site lacked cohesive information and proper links to related material, as well as other challenges to accessing information. Additionally, documentation was found on pages not accessible to or from the Elections pages.

The Elections website is operated by Napa County's webmaster within Countywide Communications Division and would benefit from updated website standards as recommended in the 2023-2024 Civil Grand Jury Report.³¹

While Elections Division staff demonstrated expert knowledge, backed up by process and procedural documentation held under statute and other regulations, the website presented little of this information to the public. The Civil Grand Jury recommends a review, reorganization and a modernization of the Elections content and website occur.

²⁹ Napa County Civil Grand Jury, Inquiry Report, 2019-2020, Napa County Elections: Results You Can Count On, accessed via: <https://www.napa.courts.ca.gov/system/files/napa-county-elections-results-you-can-count-c.pdf>

³⁰ Napa County Social Media Use Policy, accessed via: <https://services.countyofnapa.org/AgendaNet/DownloadDocument.aspx?type=BOS&doctype=ATTACHMENT&id=22227>

³¹ Napa County Civil Grand Jury, 2023-2024, Napa County's Communication with Its Citizens, accessed via: <https://www.napa.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/napa-countys-communication-its-citizens.pdf>

Accessibility in Voting

While the Civil Grand Jury did not observe all voting center locations in Napa County, those that were observed met accessibility requirements for individuals with mobility issues. Civil Grand Jury members also observed voting materials in a variety of languages. Napa County provided volunteers who made recommendations to improve voter access for voting and to elections materials for voters with disabilities or those with lower English proficiency. The Voting Accessibility Advisory and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee had input and collaboration with the Napa County Elections Division. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/401/Get-Involved>.

Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail Ballot

Remote voting has been available for many years with expansions to cover military, overseas voters, and voters with disabilities. Different than a mail-in ballot, the Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail or RAVBM is mainly for those requiring assistance in reading and/or marking their ballots. RAVBM permits these voters to vote privately and independently without voting via the internet. Napa County Elections Division has specific procedures related to the RAVBM, and they are in accordance with the law.³²

Napa County Elections Division Workspace

Civil Grand Jury members observed multiple activities on different days throughout the election process at the Elections Office on Second Street in Napa. During these visits, jury members noted workspace was limited, especially for rooms dedicated to perform the complex functions of elections procedures. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the Napa County Board of Supervisors, in collaboration with the Registrar of Voters, review workspace requirements and establish a plan for addressing shortcomings with the present work environment.

³² California Secretary of State, Ballot Counting, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/ballot-counting> ; and California Secretary of State, Remote Accessible Vote-By-Mail (RAVBM), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/remote-accessible-vote-mail>

FINDINGS

The Civil Grand Jury finds:

F1. Napa County's 2024 General Election was safe, secure, and performed with integrity.

F2. The 2024 election procedures were followed in accordance with the law.

F3. No eligible vote cast in the prescribed manner was found to be uncounted.

F4. The Napa County election computer systems were secure.

F5. The Voter Registration Database was maintained accurately.

F6. The confidentiality of a voter's ballot was maintained and protected throughout the entire election process.

F7. The legally required manual audit of the election was secure and accurate.

F8. The election process was transparent, and observers were welcomed and encouraged to witness the activity.

F9. The Napa County Elections Division's office workspace was inadequate and warrants improvement.

F10. Napa County Elections Division website is lacking information and organization to assist voters and the community in an easy-to-understand format.

F11. Napa County Elections Division did not maintain its own social media accounts as required by the Napa County Social Media Use Policy, leading to personnel utilizing personal accounts for county business.

F12. Napa County Elections Division outreach failed to use effective strategies to target soon-to-be-of-age eligible voters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1. The Napa County Board of Supervisors examine the need to upgrade the Napa Elections Office to ensure adequate office workspace for future elections. This examination should include collaboration with and input from the Napa County Elections Division staff, and should occur within 60 days, with a report of recommendations released in 45 days.

R2. The Napa County Elections Division review its website for modernization and standards to help the organization of information. The Elections website should include the public reports required by the state. Recommendation for a review and generation of areas of improvement of the website be within 60 days and implementation of changes within 180 days from the identification of the areas of improvement.

R3. The Napa County Elections Division set up and maintain its own social media accounts to distribute voter information, and staff should refrain from using personal accounts to communicate official county business. Both of these recommendations should be implemented within 90 days.

R4. The Napa County Elections Division examine its outreach program directed to those coming of age to vote. This outreach should be added to the next iteration of the Napa County Election Administration Plan (EAP). Materials should be readily available and circulated within 30 days.

COMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury commends the Napa County Elections Division Staff and Registrar of Voters. These individuals executed their duties expertly and conducted their operations in a manner that ensured the elections were safe, secure, and conducted in accordance with the law and procedures. The Elections Division staff governed the process with integrity and transparency.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

The Civil Grand Jury requires the Napa County Board of Supervisors to respond to F9 & R1.

The Civil Grand Jury requires the Napa County Registrar of Voters to respond to F9, F10, F11, F12 and R1, R2, R3, and R4.

INVITED RESPONSES

The Civil Grand Jury invites, but does not require, the Napa County Countywide Communications Division (or the Public Information Officer) to respond to F10 and F11 and R2 and R3.