



Pulaski County Election Commission

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Evelyn D. Gomez, Chairwoman
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Press Release
February 20, 2020
For Immediate Release

On February 19, 2020, Pulaski County election officials conducted a recount of the February 11, 2020 Special Primary Runoff Election. During the course of the recount, election staff noted that there was one ballot missing from the Immanuel Baptist Church Polling Site in West Little Rock. Staff followed all procedures in locating the missing ballot and ultimately returned to the polling site where the incident would have occurred due to the sealing of the ballots onsite. Unfortunately, the missing ballot was not recovered from the site, and the Pulaski County Election Commission had to certify the recount with one less ballot cast.

On February 20, 2020, six total staff members from the Pulaski County Election Commission and Pulaski County Clerk's office broke the seal on the transport box and discovered the missing ballot intermingled with the unused ballots from the election. Apparently, it was mistakenly mixed in with the unused ballots by an election official. The ballot met all the criteria of the missing ballot: ballot style 1 from precinct 75 Immanuel Baptist Church, with the ballot stub removed, and the back of the ballot marked in red with the initials of the poll worker who worked as the ballot clerk at Immanuel Baptist on election day. Additionally, the ballot was cast for candidate Ryan D. Davis, consistent with the missing vote reported in the certificate of election produced at the poll on election day as well as the unofficial results report certified by the board on election night. The machine and the missing ballot remained under the chain of custody of county election officials as it was with the polling site materials and locked in the voting machine from election day until today.

While the approved procedures were followed with the placement of the ballots and the stubs in separate sealed containers, the election workers erred in displacing the cast ballot into another stack still within and under their control. However, the fact that election staff retrieved the missing ballot in less than 24 hours is a testament to our procedures for the following reason: when staff encountered the problem, they were able to narrow down to the location and time the ballot was misplaced, which resulted in the location of the ballot.

In light of this unfortunate sequence of events, this occurrence highlights our need for new equipment, which would scan digital images of each paper ballot cast to ensure redundancy. While further improvements will be made to ensure this type of incident will not occur again, it is imperative to note that due to the size of our county, recruiting and retaining qualified election workers is at the utmost of importance.


Evelyn D. Gomez
Chairwoman


Joshua A. Price
Commissioner


Kristi McKinnon-Stahr
Commissioner