



# ELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION REPORT

October 5, 2022

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Riverside County Board of Supervisors directed the Registrar of Voters and Executive Office to create and implement an organized meeting body to review the electoral process and provide a public forum for members of the public to receive information, ask questions, and raise concerns about the electoral process. On March 29, 2022, the Board unanimously approved the Election Advisory Committee proposal.

The Committee is tasked with preparing a report identifying public feedback and recommendations after each statewide election which will be presented to the Registrar of Voters Ad Hoc Committee, Board of Supervisors, Registrar of Voters, and Executive Office.

On August 11, 2022, the Committee held a [public meeting](#) to discuss the June 7, 2022, primary election. This report reflects the feedback and recommendations collected from the meeting.

## **BACKGROUND**

On March 10, 2020, Riverside County Board Supervisor Kevin Jeffries presented [Agenda Item 3.1](#) recommending that the Executive Office evaluate the creation of a Citizens Commission on Election Integrity as a means for an organized meeting body to review the electoral process and hear from the public on concerns regarding the County's election process.

On May 11, 2021, the Board of Supervisors received a November 2020 Election After-Action report from the Executive Office. As part of the discussion related to that item, the Board directed the Registrar of Voters and Executive Office to re-examine the concept of the Citizens Commission on Election Integrity and return with an implementation recommendation.

On August 24, 2021, the Registrar of Voters and Executive Office presented [Agenda Item 3.3](#) to implement an enhanced Election Observer Panel to increase voter confidence in the election process. The Board directed the Executive Office to return with a revised proposal which would closely align with the Citizens Commission on Election Integrity concept.

On March 29, 2022, the Registrar of Voters and Executive Office presented [Agenda Item 3.4](#) recommending that the Board approve the implementation of the Election Advisory Committee. The intent of the Committee is to provide recommendations to the Registrar of Voters Ad Hoc Committee, Board of Supervisors, Executive Office, and Registrars of Voters on improvements to the electoral process to ensure voter confidence and public trust in how the County conducts elections. Additionally, the Committee will provide a public forum by way of public meetings for voters to receive information, ask questions, and raise concerns about the electoral process.

The Board unanimously approved the proposal, and the Registrar of Voters and Executive Office has implemented the formation of the Committee.

## **ELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE OVERVIEW**

The Committee meeting schedule is structured to allow the Committee to meet every calendar year, regardless if there is a statewide election to report on. The Committee will conduct a total of five meetings during a statewide election year. The Committee will conduct two meetings during a non-statewide election year.

### ***Committee Membership***

The Committee members will be appointed to a two-year term and serve no more than two consecutive two-year terms. The Committee Chairperson will be nominated by the Chair of the Board of Supervisors. The Committee Chairperson will be an individual citizen member, ideally with experience in conducting public meetings. The appointees are:

- Larry Rubio, Committee Chairperson
- Janet Bernabe, League of Women Voters Riverside designee
- Loren Dean, Riverside County Libertarian Party designee
- Gilberto Esquivel, League of United Latin American Citizens Council #3190 designee
- Tisa Rodriguez, Riverside County Democratic Party designee
- Chad Schnitger, Riverside County Republican Party designee

### ***County Staff***

- Juan C. Perez, County of Riverside COO, serves as an ex-officio representative.
- Rebecca Spencer, Registrar, provides information on the election process
- Ronak Patel, County Counsel, provides clarification on election law
- Jackie Ruiz, Executive Office Analyst, facilitates meetings and reports on follow-up matters

### ***Committee Reporting***

The Committee will prepare a report identifying public feedback and recommendations after each statewide election which will be presented to the Registrar of Voters Ad Hoc Committee, Board of Supervisors, Registrar of Voters, and Executive Office.

## **June 7, 2022, PRIMARY ELECTION REPORT**

Rebecca Spencer, the Registrar, provided the following information at the August 11, 2022, Election Advisory Committee meeting.

- 1<sup>st</sup> election conducted by the Registrar of Voters utilizing the Voter's Choice Act election model
- 1,304,447 registered voters received a vote-by-mail ballot

- 375,610 ballots cast
- 28.79% voter turnout; low voter turnout was a statewide trend
- [Election results certified by the Board of Supervisors on July 12, 2022](#)
- Registrar’s office frequently posted election results online at [voteinfo.net](http://voteinfo.net); a total of 15 updates were posted

**COMMENTS**

**Election Advisory Committee Comments**

The Election Advisory Committee members provided comments in response to the June 7, 2022, Primary Election at the August 11, 2022 and at the September 22, 2022 Committee meetings. It should be noted that the recommended action steps reflect the views of a majority of Committee members, and in some cases, there can be disagreement from one or more members on the recommended action steps.

Below is a summary:

<b>COMMITTEE COMMENT(S)</b>	<b>COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION(S)</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS</b>
<p><b>1. Concern regarding low voter turnout and how can the Registrar of Voters increase voter education.</b></p>	<p>Identify outreach efforts to engage registered voters and increase efforts to register new voters.</p>	<p><i>Future Action Steps:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROV and EO will research securing digital billboard locations in proximity to interstate roadways. Messaging will include election date, voting information, ROV website and more.</li> <li>• ROV and EO will research options to develop and place additional Public Service Announcements in various outlets.</li> </ul> <p><i>Current Practices:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROV and EO Communications Team will continue to utilize traditional media platforms including radio, newspaper, and television to push out messaging in both English and Spanish.</li> <li>• Additionally, the team will continue to utilize social media including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to post messaging in both English and Spanish.</li> <li>• On Election Day, RivCoTV staff and the EO Communications</li> </ul>

		team are on site at ROV to capture live footage and interviews.
<b>2. What are current mobilization efforts to engage communities including the Latino community?</b>	Utilize partnerships with Community Based Organizations, including Latino, African American and Asian American groups.	<p><i>Future Action Steps:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EO and ROV will research opportunities to collaborate with organizations representing communities of color.</li> <li>• ROV will take required steps to modify the start time of the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee to allow for additional members of the public to participate.</li> </ul> <p><i>Current Practices:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROV has an established Language Accessibility Advisory Committee which meets quarterly. Latino community-based organizations are invited to attend all meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Concern regarding public lack of trust with the electoral process.</b>	Increase transparency for every step of the voting process.	<p><i>Future Action Step:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROV and EO will research providing tours of the ROV for members of the public in addition to existing public observation opportunities.</li> <li>• Will explore digital archiving of ballots for election integrity purposes.</li> </ul> <p><i>Current Practices:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, a livestream was made available to show viewers live footage of the ROV ballot counting room. The livestream is available at <a href="http://www.voteinfo.net">www.voteinfo.net</a></li> <li>• Interested individuals are invited to participate onsite at ROV as an Election Observer.</li> <li>• Interested individuals are invited to attend the onsite Logic and Accuracy Testing at ROV prior to each election date.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Request to increase outreach efforts to inform voters about ways to cast a ballot.</b>	Increase efforts to inform voters about options to cast a ballot, time period to cast a ballot, and vote center and ballot drop off locations.	<p><i>Future Action Step:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROV and EO to research incorporating multi-language voice-overs to existing videos.</li> </ul>

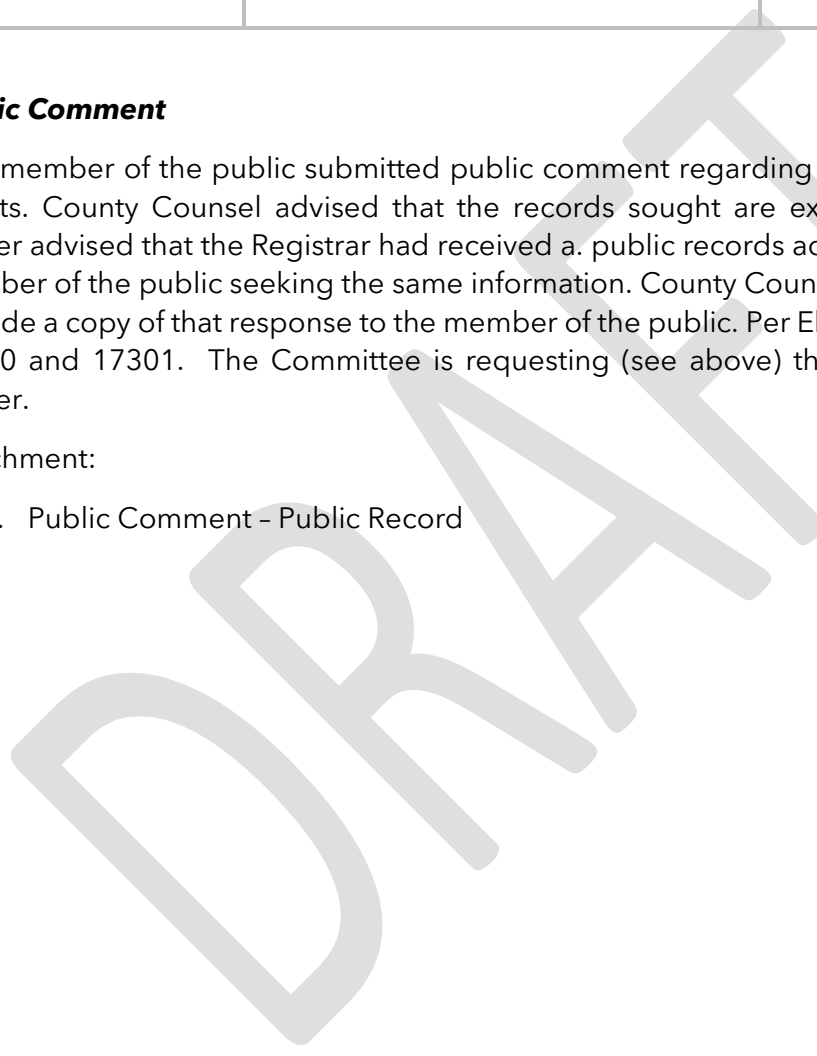
	Provide information in multiple languages.	<p><i>Current Practices:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROV and EO team will continue to create videos to inform viewers about how a registered voter can cast a ballot, how ballots are processed, and additional topics.</li> <li>• A video series, will be created to piggyback on <a href="#">"Life of a Ballot"</a> video presented at August 11, 2022 meeting.</li> </ul>
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**Public Comment**

One member of the public submitted public comment regarding releasing digital images of ballots. County Counsel advised that the records sought are exempt from disclosure and further advised that the Registrar had received a public records act request previously from a member of the public seeking the same information. County Counsel advised that they would provide a copy of that response to the member of the public. Per Election Codes §2300, 3017, 15370 and 17301. The Committee is requesting (see above) that the County explore this further.

Attachment:

1. Public Comment - Public Record



**From:** [Greg Taber](#)  
**To:** [Ruiz, Jacqueline](#)  
**Cc:** [Perez, Juan](#)  
**Subject:** submittal for Riv Co Election Advisory Committee  
**Date:** Friday, July 29, 2022 10:48:08 AM

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**CAUTION:** This email originated externally from the **Riverside County** email system. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings Ms. Ruiz,

Below is a short essay containing information I would like to provide to the Riverside County Election Advisory Committee members for their August meeting. Please reply to this email to indicate that you were able to provide it to them.

Honorable Commission Members,

I urge this commission to consider advocating for the release of Digital Ballot Images as 'public records', records that can be provided to the public for use in auditing elections.

Newer election systems, including the Dominion system used by Riverside County, create electronic images of the ballots, which are then used to tabulate the vote.

As we have seen in recent events, not only does the winner in an election have to acknowledge the results, even more importantly, those who come in second must satisfy themselves that the results were accurate. Facilitating the release of the ballot images would help all stakeholders in an election, as they could use private computer programs to verify the results.

Presently, California law allows, but does not require, jurisdictions to release ballot images after an election. San Francisco County currently releases them (see the reference in the last paragraph of the linked press release: <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/article/san-francisco-department-elections-certifies-june-7-2022-consolidated-statewide-direct>).

I've included a link to the United States Elections Assistance Commission that mentions Ballot Image Audits on page 6:  
[www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/electionofficials/postelection/Post\\_Election\\_Tabulation\\_Audits.pdf](http://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/electionofficials/postelection/Post_Election_Tabulation_Audits.pdf)

Another organization with extensive information about Ballot Image Audits is Citizens' Oversight Project, or COPS ([citizenoversight.org](http://citizenoversight.org)).

COPS has developed one of the private computer programs, Audit Engine. A case study of its use in three Florida counties is outlined in <https://copswiki.org/Common/M1970> .

Please contact me directly at [greg@tabercompany.com](mailto:greg@tabercompany.com) if I can be of assistance on this issue.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Greg Taber