

## More than 250 audits confirm accuracy and integrity of Michigan's election

### Audit finds workers counted ballots accurately, state Legislature needs to allow more time for pre-processing, canvass

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson today announced that all of the state's more than [250 election audits](#) are complete, and every one of them confirmed the integrity and accuracy of the 2020 general election. The audit process drew tremendous support and complete transparency from county, city and township clerks. In all, more than 1,300 Republican, Democrat and nonpartisan clerks, as well as the state Bureau of Elections, participated in at least one audit.

"Over the last several months, the state Bureau of Elections has worked with local clerks to conduct more audits than ever before in our state's history, and each has reaffirmed the accuracy, security and integrity of the November 2020 election," said Benson. "We've responded to every question and claim and the evidence is clear. It is time for leaders across the political spectrum to tell their constituents the truth, that our election was the most secure in history, and the results accurately reflect the will of Michigan's voters."

In addition to the hundreds of audits of local election precincts – the majority of which were conducted by county clerks of both parties – officials also audited every ballot cast for president in Antrim County [and found that the Dominion machines used there accurately](#) counted ballots throughout the county. Officials also conducted a statewide audit exercise, by hand-counting votes cast for president on more than 18,000 ballots randomly selected across the state, which [affirmed the outcome of the presidential election as previously determined by tabulation machines](#).

An audit of Detroit's absentee ballot counting board, which has been attacked repeatedly with lies, baseless conspiracy theories and the misleading claims of people lacking knowledge of election procedure, found that while clerical errors had occurred, election workers supervised by the clerk's office properly counted 174,000 valid ballots that corresponded to signed envelopes that were submitted by registered voters and reviewed by the clerk's office.

Further, auditors found that 83 percent of the counting boards were balanced or explained, up from 27 percent at the close of the county canvass. This means that in each of those boards the number of ballots matched the number of names in the poll book, or that the imbalance could be explained in such a way that the counting board would be recountable. Auditors also found that the net number of ballots out of balance for the entire board was just 17 out of the 174,000 absentee ballots counted in Detroit.

Auditors made similar findings in audits of other cities' absentee ballot counting boards, including:

- In Grand Rapids, 87 percent were balanced or explained, compared to 62 percent at the end of the canvass. The final net number of ballots out of balance was eight.
- In Livonia, 77 percent were balanced or explained, compared to 34 percent at the end of the canvass. The final net number of ballots out of balance was one.
- In Sterling Heights, 71 percent were balanced or explained, compared to 58 percent at the end of the canvass. The final net number of ballots out of balance was four.

Further, the Sterling Heights audit was the first absentee ballot counting board ever audited in the state. Valuable lessons were learned throughout the counting board audit process, and it is expected that auditors would have balanced or explained more boards at Sterling Heights if that audit was conducted later in the process. The Bureau of Elections is drafting a final report on audit findings, which will be made available publicly.

Out-of-balance precincts are common across the state and nation, and essentially represent clerical errors where an election official failed to note that a voter at the polls checked in and then left with their

ballot in hand, or a couple mailed their two absentee ballots in one envelope. Such errors are often corrected or explained in the county canvass, but time constraints make that more difficult, especially in high-population jurisdictions. This was demonstrated by all four audits of absentee voter counting boards, where auditors were able to balance or explain numerous boards that cities were not able to resolve in the short window of time available after closing of the counting boards, and which county canvassers could not reconcile in the less than two weeks available for the county canvass.

“If state lawmakers truly want to affirm faith in our elections, they will provide more time to election officials to process absentee ballots before Election Day, and canvass them afterwards, just as I’ve proposed in my legislative agenda to advance the vote and protect democracy,” said Benson. “Had they done this prior to November, after clerks and I asked them to for more than a year, they could have pre-emptively debunked many of the lies that have since attacked our democracy.”

Secretary Benson announced her legislative agenda for elections – [Advancing the Vote, Protecting Democracy](#) – last month. In addition to calling for two weeks for election officials to process ballots before Election Day, and an additional week to canvass afterwards, she proposed changing the law that prevents precincts that are out of balance without explanation from being recounted. Michigan is one of the only states in the country with such a restriction in place.

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