

Wisconsin Elections Commission: Voting equipment audit finds no mechanical errors

Posted on Friday, Feb 3, 2023

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MADISON, Wis. – The largest post-election voting equipment audit in state history found no mechanical errors and that all audited voting equipment performed to certification standards.

At their Feb. 2 meeting, Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) members unanimously determined the effective error rate of the 2022 post-election voting equipment audit as 0.0%. The historic audit of voting equipment used in the November 2022 General Election covered 10% of reporting units across the state and included review of nearly 225,000 ballots.

Wisconsin law requires the WEC to audit each voting system used in a General Election in order to determine an error rate. County and municipal clerks in late November and early December 2022 directed a hand tally of ballots selected for audit. WEC subject matter experts reviewed findings and found no election equipment changed votes from one candidate to another, incorrectly tabulated votes, or altered the outcome of any audited contest. Additionally, there was no evidence of programming errors, unauthorized alterations or “hacking” of voting equipment software, or malfunctions of voting equipment that altered the outcome of any races on the ballot.

WEC officials ultimately selected 357 reporting units for audit via a random drawing. While not every municipality was selected, the audit included at least one reporting unit per county, and at least five reporting units for each type of equipment used. While the Commission found zero errors caused purely by voting equipment malfunction, the audit did identify six issues attributed to human mistakes. The six

human errors occurred in four separate municipalities and affected a single contest on each individual ballot. None impacted the outcome of any contest.

State law requires the Commission to determine an error rate based on the audit results and to compare that rate to 2002 federal standards. These standards contemplate purely technical errors, when equipment performs contrary to the way it is programmed and certified to operate. The federal standard does not account for human errors; however, WEC commissioners asked WEC staff to also flag all errors, including those caused by human behavior. While human factors may not be relevant to the federal error definition, they nonetheless inform the WEC of opportunities for improvement through additional training, procedural changes, or other actions.

The WEC detailed audit findings can be found in Commission meeting materials at the following

link: <https://elections.wi.gov/event/wisconsin-elections-commission-february-2023-meeting>