

PRESENTATION TO PULASKI COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION ON THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING ELECTION OFFICIALS

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MISSION OF PULASKI COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION

The Pulaski County Election Commission is an independent, bi-partisan government entity operating under state and federal election laws to promote accurate, efficient, accessible and secure elections to the citizens of Pulaski County.

We are committed to ensure the integrity of every vote cast by administering election law and procedures equally and fairly to all, by providing the most efficient, accurate and secure election process possible, and, in all our endeavours, exceeding the expectations of the voters, taxpayers and citizens of Pulaski County in accountability and competence.

PULASKI COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION BY PARTY

- ▶ Total Eligible Voters as of 10/23/2019 – **247,084**
- ▶ Republicans – **11,110 (4%)**
- ▶ Democrats – **23,470 (9%)**
- ▶ Independent/NPA – **212,355 (86%)**


CURRENT POOL OF ELECTION OFFICIALS

- ▶ Total Active Workers as of 10/15/2019 – **964** (29 of those are designated for Absentee)
- ▶ **Republicans – 183 (19%)** (Exceeds VR reporting of party by 15%)
- ▶ **Democrats – 523 (54%)** (Exceeds VR reporting of party by 45%)
- ▶ **Independent/NPA – 258 (26%)** (Below VR reporting of party by 60%)

CURRENT ABILITY TO STAFF POLLING LOCATIONS FOR THE 3/3/2020 PRIMARY ELECTION

- ▶ Even distribution – 8 Pollworkers in each of 115 Polling Locations
- ▶ Approximately 250 of the current Pollworkers will retire or be unavailable by Election Day
- ▶ Even distribution after adjustment – 6 Pollworkers in each of 115 Polling Locations
- ▶ 5% of assigned Pollworkers will likely not show up to work on Election Day
- ▶ ***Even distribution of Pollworkers is hypothetical and could not be effectively put into practice***
- ▶ ***In reality, with current resources most Polling Locations would likely have between 4 – 6 Pollworkers depending on the site on Election Day***

WHY VOTERS BECOME ELECTION OFFICIALS

- ▶ They believe in civic engagement and volunteerism
 - ▶ They are interested in politics or the electoral process
 - ▶ They are looking for social interaction
 - ▶ They want the extra income
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WHY OFFICIALS WORK AT PARTICULAR POLLING LOCATIONS

- ▶ The Polling Location is near their home
- ▶ They are registered to vote at the site
- ▶ They enjoy working with a certain peer group (friends, family, church)
- ▶ They are loyal to their crew and will only work with those people.
- ▶ A small percentage (less than 5%) will work where they are needed within a specified distance from their home or certain parts of the County
- ▶ **All Pollworkers** have restrictions on where they are willing to work. No Pollworker has been truly willing to work any polling site around the County.

ARKANSAS LAW REGARDING STAFFING THE POLLING LOCATIONS

- ▶ §7-4-107 (a) – The county board shall appoint the requisite number of election officials at each site where voters present themselves to vote to ensure that there is a sufficient number of election officials at each site, based upon the votes in the immediately preceding comparable election.
- ▶ §7-4-107 (b)(1) ...not less than 20 days preceding an election

ARKANSAS LAW REGARDING STAFFING THE POLLING LOCATIONS

§7-4-107 (b)(2) Each polling site shall have a minimum of two election clerks, one election judge and one election sheriff...**The minority party election commissioner shall have the option to designate a number of election officials equal to one less than the majority** of election officials at each polling site, with a minimum of two officials at each polling site. In the event that the county party representatives on the county board fail to agree upon any election official to fill an election post allotted to the respective party 20 days preceding an election, **the county board shall appoint the remaining election officials.**

ARKANSAS LAW REGARDING ELECTION OFFICIAL QUALIFICATIONS

- ▶ §7-4-109 (a)(1)...an election official shall be a qualified elector of this state, able to read and write the English language, and shall not have been found guilty or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to the violation of an election law of this state.
- ▶ §7-4-109 (b)(2)(A) An election official shall be a resident of the precinct in which he or she serves at the time of his or her appointment.
- ▶ §7-4-109 (b)(2)(B) However, if at the time of posting election officials the county board of election commissioners votes unanimously and certifies to the county clerk that it is impossible to obtain a qualified election official from any precinct in the county, another qualified citizen of the county may be designated to serve in the precinct.
- ▶ §7-4-109 (b)(2)(i) All election officials at a polling site shall have completed training under §7-4-109 within the twelve months before the election.

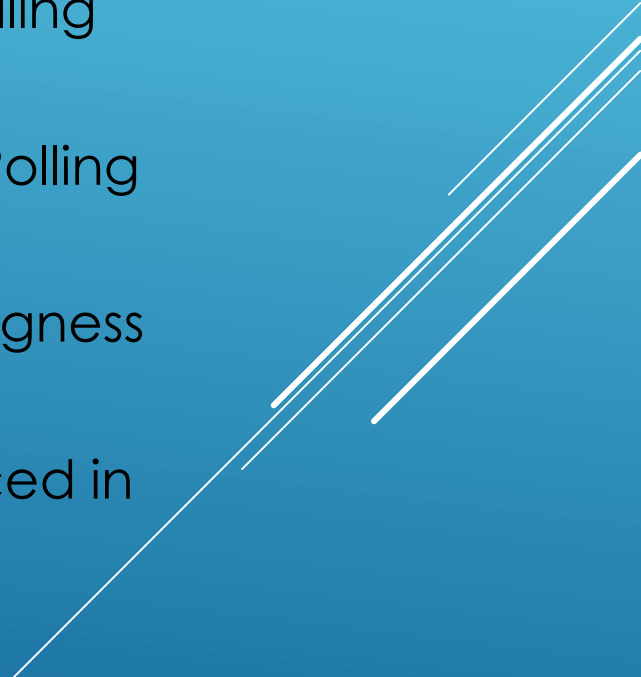
THE ELECTION OFFICIAL SELECTION PROCESS

- ▶ The current Pollworker selection process has been iterative, but has remained substantially the same for decades because it is effective at fulfilling the statutory requirements placed on the Commission
- ▶ Several Directors and Assistant Directors have made minor improvements, primarily in the area of how information is communicated to Pollworkers
- ▶ After every election cycle (at a minimum) the Director and Assistant Director review the process and make improvements as needed
- ▶ Best practices from around the State and Nation are adopted where appropriate
- ▶ Input from focus groups of Pollworkers has been integrated where possible
- ▶ Pollworker selection by Political Party affiliation has been considered but never implemented because it would be unmanageable, inefficient and divisive among the Pollworker population
- ▶ The Pollworker selection process is guided by Arkansas election law and rules promulgated by the State Board of Election Commissioners

THE ELECTION OFFICIAL SELECTION PROCESS

- ▶ Polling locations for an election are approved by the Commission
- ▶ Chief Judges for approved locations are sent a letter requesting that they select a crew for the Election from a list of trained Pollworkers who have previously worked at the location
- ▶ After Chief Judges select their crew members, the Assistant Director identifies vacancies and fills those positions so each polling site has the desired number of Pollworkers for that election
- ▶ The Commission appoints Election Officials
- ▶ All Pollworkers are mailed an appointment letter with polling location specific and election specific information
- ▶ Chief Judges are contacted two weeks prior to the election by their Area Manager to identify any changes to polling location staffing

THE PROCESS TO FILL A VACANCY AT A POLLING SITE BEFORE ELECTION DAY

- ▶ Begin by contacting trained Pollworkers from the same Polling Location who have not been appointed
 - ▶ Contact trained but unassigned Pollworkers from nearby Polling Locations
 - ▶ Contact unassigned Pollworkers who have indicated willingness to fill in around the county
 - ▶ If training is scheduled, then a new Applicant can be placed in the vacancy
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THE PROCESS TO FILL AN ELECTION DAY VACANCY AT A POLLING SITE

- ▶ **7-4-108(c) (1)** Except as provided in subdivision (c)(2), upon notification of the absent election official, at least one (1) member of the county board of election commissioners shall respond to the polling site and assist with the election until the new election official is appointed.
- ▶ **(2)** If all three (3) of the members of the county board of election commissioners are assisting at other polling sites and the election judge does not timely appoint a qualified person, the other election officials present at the polling site shall appoint a qualified person to act as an election official until the county board of election commissioners appoints a new election official.

CURRENT SAFEGUARDS AGAINST PARTISAN INTERFERENCE BY ELECTION OFFICIALS

- ▶ Pollworkers are trained not to discuss any items on a ballot
- ▶ Pollworkers are trained not to discuss political preferences
- ▶ Pollworkers are trained on the application of SBEC approved procedures
- ▶ Pollworkers are trained about the consequences of violating election laws as enumerated in §7-1-103
- ▶ All Pollworkers take an oath to abide by all federal and State election laws
- ▶ All election procedures are conducted in public view

CURRENT SAFEGUARDS AGAINST PARTISAN INTERFERENCE BY ELECTION OFFICIALS

- ▶ At least 15 days before the beginning of early voting, the Election Commission must post the list of appointed Election Officials in the County Clerk's Office (§7-5-202(b)(2))
- ▶ The Notice of Election must contain information on how the public can object to any Pollworker
- ▶ Political Parties and Candidates can utilize Poll Watchers to ensure that proper election procedures are followed
- ▶ The State Board of Election Commissioners can utilize Election Monitors to ensure that proper election procedures are followed

OATH TAKEN BY EVERY ELECTION OFFICIAL ON ELECTION DAY

We the undersigned, duly appointed Election Officials do swear on this date **March 3, 2020**, that we will perform the duties of this election according to law and to the best of our abilities, and that we will studiously endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit, and abuse in conducting the same, and that we will not disclose how any voter shall have voted, unless required to do so as a witness in a judicial proceeding or a proceeding to contest an election.

