



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

## GENERAL REGISTRAR'S REPORT

**DATE:** April 13, 2022

**TO:** Amb. (ret.) Christopher Henzel, Chairman of the Fairfax County Electoral Board  
Bettina M. Lawton, Vice Chairman of the Fairfax County Electoral Board  
Katherine K. Hanley, Secretary of the Fairfax County Electoral Board

**FROM:** Eric L. Spicer, General Registrar and Director of the Office of Elections

**CC:** Beth Dixon Methfessel, Clerk to the Electoral Board  
Office of Elections – All staff

**SUBJECT:** General Registrar's Report for the April 14, 2022 Electoral Board meeting

### Voter Registration

	April 11, 2022	March 22, 2022	Change
Active Voters	746,603	745,095	+1,508
Inactive Voters	37,918	30,049	+7,869
<b>Total</b>	<b>784,521</b>	<b>775,144</b>	<b>+9,377</b>

Registration Transactions	March 2022 (3/1 to 3/31)	Year-to-Date (1/1 to 3/31)
DMV online voter registration transactions	17,462	46,883
Web voter registration transactions	585	1,741
Third-party voter transactions	638	931
Other voter registration transactions	538	1,756
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,223</b>	<b>51,311</b>

Voter Cancellations	March 2022 (3/1 to 3/31)	Year-to-Date (1/1 to 3/31)
Deceased	316	1,094
Out-of-state	270	598
Other	73	105
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>1,797</b>

Fairfax County Office of Elections

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## **Redistricting**

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### **Certificate of No Objection from the Office of the Attorney General**

On April 12, we received the Certification of No Objection from the Office of the Attorney General for our redistricting changes.

### **Updating Precincts and Street Segments in VERIS**

Our dedicated staff have been working diligently on implementing new precinct information in VERIS for many weeks. We created 27 new precincts, eliminated 10 precincts, adjusted boundaries for 87 precincts, and moved more than 16,000 street segments from existing precincts to new or modified precincts. In total, this work required approximately 2,500 staff hours to complete.

On March 9, ELECT told all localities to stop making redistricting updates in VERIS until further notice. On March 22, we received the green light from ELECT to resume work and quickly began updating VERIS again. Our given deadline was March 31 by 6:00 p.m. and we met this deadline.

We were scheduled to have ELECT process our updates on the weekend of April 2-3. However, ELECT indicated that they had to delay our updates due to scheduling issues. We were then scheduled to have our updates processed during the weekend of April 9-10. Again, our updates were not accomplished as scheduled and ELECT indicated that the delay was caused by issues with the processing of updates for Norfolk, which took much longer than expected well into the weekend of April 9-10.

My staff and I have been in daily contact with ELECT trying to move things forward and we have continually stressed the importance of finishing the updates well before the start of absentee voting on May 6. After many delays, ELECT finally began processing our updates on the evening of Tuesday, April 12. Since they were processing our updates in blocks, we asked them to do this by magisterial district. They completed the Dranesville district on Tuesday night, which took approximately 9 hours. ELECT staff estimate that it will take approximately 80 hours to complete our updates. ELECT staff have advised me that they will finish processing our updates before starting on any other jurisdiction.

### **Redistricting Notice for Voters**

Once VERIS has been updated with the redistricting changes, we will mail a notice to all voters with information about redistricting and providing their updated district and precincts. The notice is with the printer, so we can move quickly once we are able to provide the updated voter data.

### **Insert with County Tax Mailing on “Advantages of Voting by Mail”**

I learned on Monday, April 11, that the Office of Elections included an insert on “Advantages of Voting by Mail” in the county’s tax mailing that was sent to Fairfax County residents recently. I believe it is more appropriate to notify voters of all methods of voting instead of suggesting only one method.



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## **June 2022 Democratic Primary**

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### **Precincts for June 2022 Democratic Primary**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District is the only district with at least two qualified candidates for a Democratic Primary. We will hold only a Democratic primary in the 82 voting precincts that are now in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

### **Absentee Applications for June 2022 Democratic Primary**

As of April 11, we have received 50,660 absentee ballot applications for the June 2022 Democratic Primary, including 49,950 permanent applications, 710 overseas applications, and 130 one-time applications.

Of these totals, 10,656 absentee applications were from voters in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

### **Congressional District Ballot for June 2022 Democratic Primary**

Although we are confident that our precinct changes associated with the redistricting effort will be processed in VERIS before the start of absentee voting on May 6, we will move forward with extreme caution. We plan to print all ballots by Congressional district so we may begin absentee voting on time, even if there are further delays associated with ELECT's work on the redistricting effort. We will print one ballot style, for the 8th Congressional district, and ensure each voter lives in this congressional district before issuing them this ballot.

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## **Office Personnel & Space**

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### **Deputy Registrar**

I have appointed Cheryl Jones as Deputy Registrar, at a Management Analyst III level, effective April 11. Cheryl has been with our office for 10 years, including capably serving as our Assistant Registrar for Absentee Voting for the last 5 years. In her new capacity, Cheryl will serve as my backup, be our liaison with ELECT, and oversee voter services, absentee mail voting, and outreach.

### **Other Positions & Office Re-organization**

My next priority is to hire an Election Operations Manager, at a Management Analyst II level, to manage all in-person voting operations before and on election day. I will also hire and re-align four appointed positions. I am continuing to work on an office re-organization that will more closely align similar teams and functions. Input from office staff has been valuable and will help me develop a final plan.

### **Work-from-Home**

In accordance with the work-from-home policy established in early February (2 days per week maximum), office staff will stop working from home on April 22 (60 days before election day). Office staff may resume work-from-home after election day, once the election is certified and all critical work is complete.



### **Work-from-Home (Continued)**

To maintain the highest standards of security, I have decided VERIS will only be accessed from our office and we will not pursue work-from-home for any staff or functions associated with VERIS. Even IT staff, who need to update VERIS at 6:00 a.m. each day during the 45 days of early voting, will only do so from our office.

### **New Space in Suite 251**

As the Health Department is still providing COVID vaccines, all available meeting rooms in the building continue to be occupied. County officials have located and provided us with additional space in Suite 251 to conduct absentee ballot operations before and on Election Day. We have significant concerns about the space in Suite 251, most notably the lack of secure storage space that we need for absentee mail and ballots. We will continue working with the county to secure space that more adequately meets our needs.

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### **Budget**

I am carefully reviewing and monitoring our projected expenditures through the end of the fiscal year (June 30). It is my desire to minimize expenditures where possible without in any way compromising the integrity or efficiency of the election process, and to utilize the savings to fund essential programs and initiatives such as a ballot-on-demand solution at satellite voting locations (if the pilot is successful in June).

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### **FOIA**

#### **VFOIA Requests**

From March 24 to April 11, we received 4 VFOIA requests, sent 3 responses, and are in the process of responding to the remaining request. Copies of the requests and responses have been shared with each Board member.

#### **NVRA Request**

We received and responded to a request made under the National Voter Registration Act.

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### **IT, Voting Equipment, Ballots & Warehouse**

#### **New Poll Pads**

We ordered 1,000 new Poll Pads for the June primary to replace our current devices. We received 483 units on April 5 and will receive the remainder by the end of the month. We plan to order about 200 additional devices for use in future elections, for a total of 1,200 new devices.



### **New Poll Pads (Continued)**

The new Poll Pads each have an individual case with all required supplies, making transport less cumbersome and obviating the need for a separate gray accessory bin for each precinct. The new devices have a built-in cellular data connection, eliminating the need for separate mobile hotspot (“MiFi”) devices.

Our older Poll Pads have been reset to wipe out our data and sent back to our Springfield warehouse. They will be given to the Department of Procurement and Material Management as part of the county’s surplus inventory.

### **Ballot Printing and Mailing**

For many years prior to the November 2021 General Election, the Fairfax County Office of Elections sourced our precinct and in-person absentee satellite ballots from Printelect, the approved vendor for our voting equipment, located in New Bern, North Carolina. For the November 2021 General Election, we moved our ballot mailing operations to K&H Integrated Print Solutions, located in Everett, Washington, as new laws permitted the use of a third-party ballot mailer. At the same time, we moved all ballot printing services for precincts and in-person absentee satellites to K&H. The ballot mailing operation was very successful, and it resulted in a significant reduction in the space and staffing that was previously required for this operation.

While the quality of the ballot printing through K&H for precinct and satellite ballots met our expectations, we found that it took much longer to receive precinct and satellite ballots from K&H because they are located on the West coast and needed to be transported across the country. In contrast, Printelect often delivered ballots by truck to our office and secure warehouse the day after they were printed. The increased distance also resulted in a significant increase in freight/shipping costs.

Given this, I plan to use Printelect to print our precinct and satellite ballots. We will continue to use K&H for the third-party ballot mailing program.

### **Morrisette Warehouse**

For the June election, voting equipment will be deployed from the current Logistics Center in Springfield, VA, but returned to the new Morrisette warehouse in Burke, VA. This will enable us to transition to this new warehouse space more quickly.

### **Logic and Accuracy Testing for June 2022 Democratic Primary Election**

The following is the Logic and Accuracy Testing schedule for the upcoming election:

- **L&A for DS850:**  
Tuesday April 26, 2022, 9:00 a.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center
- **L&A for voting machines to be used at early voting satellites:**  
Thursday April 28-29, 2022, 9:00 a.m. at the Springfield Logistics Center
- **L&A for voting machines to be used at precincts on election day:**  
Tuesday May 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m. at the Springfield Logistics Center



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## **Absentee Voting by Mail**

### **Absentee Application Approval Process**

Section 24.2-706 of the Code of Virginia requires General Registrars to review absentee ballot applications for omissions that preclude determining whether the applicant is qualified to vote absentee. The voter is not required to provide their full Social Security number, but applications must contain the last four digits of the Social Security number under Virginia Code § 24.2-701(C), and as noted on the absentee ballot application form. The General Registrar is required to determine if an error or omission on the application is material in determining the applicant's qualification to vote absentee.

After carefully considering this matter, I have determined that the absence of the last four digits of the Social Security number prevents my staff and me from determining the applicant's qualification to vote absentee. I do not take this matter lightly and I want to give every voter the opportunity to provide any information that is missing on their absentee ballot application. In past elections, our practice has been to send letters to individuals with missing information on their absentee ballot application including missing name, address, signature, and the last four digits of the Social Security number. Voters with missing information on their absentee ballot application were asked to submit a new application. This met the statutory requirements, but it resulted in many incomplete absentee ballot applications. In addition, voters who did not submit a new application did not receive an absentee ballot.

Effective immediately, I have instructed my staff to implement a process to obtain the missing information that is consistent with the process that we use to collect missing information when absentee ballots are returned to our office. If an email address is available, we will send an email to the voter just as we do with the process for absentee ballots. In addition, we will not require the voter to submit a new absentee application unless they choose to do so. Voters will be permitted to provide all missing information except for a missing signature by phone, email, or fax.

### **Mailing for Party Preference for June Primary**

On April 13 we sent a postcard to voters who requested an absentee ballot without identifying the type of ballot they wished to receive on their application. The purpose of this mailing is to determine if any of these individuals wish to receive a ballot for the Democratic Primary.

### **Hand Count Process**

Absentee ballots that cannot be scanned on our voting machines, such as those returned by mail with extraneous marks or submitted by overseas email voters, must be hand-counted. We have asked ELECT to authorize a pilot of a duplication process, in place of hand-counting those ballots, because this would be more accurate and enable us to produce all results electronically.

If a ballot duplication pilot is not approved by ELECT, we will take all necessary measures to improve the hand count process.



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## **Early Voting Satellites**

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### **Locations and Times**

We have developed a plan for 6 early voting locations, one in each magisterial district in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Each location will be staffed by approximately eight people each day, including the supervisor and assistant supervisor. We will continue using Poll Pads to check in voters and will offer each voter a paper ballot as the primary means of voting. ExpressVote ballot marking devices will be set up for any voters who choose to use it instead.

One site, in rooms 2/3 of the Fairfax County Government Center, will open 45 days before election day on Friday, May 6. It will be open 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM on all weekdays (excluding Memorial Day) and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the last two Saturdays before election day (June 11 and June 18).

Five additional satellites will open 10 days before election day on Saturday, June 11. They will be open 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on two Saturdays (June 11 and June 18). The last day to vote early in person is Saturday, June 18.

Early voting locations:

- Fairfax County Government Center (open 45 days before election day)
- Franconia Governmental Center (open 10 days before election day)
- Mason Governmental Center (open 10 days before election day)
- McLean Governmental Center (open 10 days before election day)
- Mount Vernon Governmental Center (open 10 days before election day)
- Thomas Jefferson Library (open 10 days before election day)

### **Assistant Registrars**

As in past elections, we need the Electoral Board to approve 15 individuals to serve as assistant registrars for the early voting period of May 6 to June 18. This includes 6 satellite supervisors, 6 assistant supervisors, 2 rovers, and the early voting assistant coordinator.

### **Ballot-on-Demand Pilot**

After receiving presentations from multiple vendors for ballot-on-demand solutions, we have chosen to do a limited pilot using equipment from KNOWiNK at up to three early voting locations. The vendor has provided us three ballot-on-demand printers and associated equipment, at no cost, and will be assisting in setup and training for their solution. From this pilot, we will gather data to determine if we want to use a ballot-on-demand solution at all early voting sites in November. Given new legislation, we will be required to provide a unique ballot style for each precinct in November, for an expected total of 264 total ballot styles. This will be difficult and expensive without a ballot-on-demand solution.

We will keep track of ballot paper used for the ballot-on-demand solution, in much the same manner that we keep track of pre-printed ballots.



### **Method of Voting at In-Person Absentee Satellites**

In the November 2021 General Election, we encouraged voters to use ExpressVote ballot marking devices at the satellites. We took this approach to minimize the logistical challenges associated with providing 247 different pre-printed ballot styles for each satellite (increasing to 264 ballot styles with redistricting this year). While we were able to effectively use the ExpressVote machines, some voters were confused by this process because paper ballots are our primary method of voting. Going forward, I expect that a ballot-on-demand solution will enable us to provide paper ballots as our primary method of voting at the satellites. At the same time, ExpressVote ballot marking devices will be available for voters who choose to vote in that manner.

### **Improved Signage for Absentee Ballot Drop Box at the Fairfax County Government Center**

Some voters have been confused about where they should insert their absentee ballot in the large drop box located in front of the Fairfax County Government Center. We will provide improved signage on this drop box to minimize confusion.

### **Processing of Satellite Voting Machines and Results Tapes**

The voting machines used at the in-person absentee satellites will be set up to print results tapes. The machines will be closed and secured when in-person absentee voting ends on the Saturday before the election. On Election Day, the results will be tabulated and results tapes will be printed in the Central Absentee Precinct. As required by state law, the results will not be disseminated until 7:00 p.m.

### **Statement of Results and Printed Return Sheet**

We will prepare a Statement of Results for each satellite and canvass it the day after the election with all Election Day precinct SORs. We will attach an opening zero report and a results tape to the SOR for each satellite. We will combine the results from the satellites and report the combined totals just after 7:00 p.m. on Election Night.

### **Follow-up: Issues with Election Media (Thumb Drives) in November 2021 General Election**

I have determined that the issues with election media at five satellite voting locations were caused by the improper removal of the media from the voting machines. In past elections, the election media was secured in the satellite voting machines until Election Night. This procedure was changed during the November 2021 General Election and the election media was removed from the voting machines and secured until the results were uploaded to the Election Results Management (ERM) system.

In the June 2022 Democratic Primary Election and future elections, we will keep the election media in all voting equipment until the results tapes are produced. At that time, the election media will be removed and uploaded in the ERM system.



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## **Election Day Plan**

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### **Resource Allocation Plan**

For each election, we develop a resource allocation plan and order ballots based on comparable elections. In 2018, the Democratic Congressional primary was held in only a limited number of precincts. In 2021, the Democratic primary was held countywide and had an average in-person turnout of 8.6%, with the highest precinct having 22.2% turnout.

For this election, each precinct will receive a minimum of ballots for 25% of registered voters, with some precincts receiving additional ballots. We will also order ballot paper for the ballot-on-demand pilot and sufficient pre-printed ballots for use at satellites. Leftover satellite ballots will be used as a backup supply for election day.

Each precinct will receive 3 to 5 Poll Pads, 2 ExpressVote ballot marking devices, and 2 DS200 scanners.

As in the primary election one year ago, all precincts will be assigned 5 to 7 election officers.

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## **Election Officers**

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### **Half-Day Election Officers**

Given questions at the previous Electoral Board meeting, I want to provide clarification regarding half-day election officer assignments. Our policy on half-day officers has been unchanged for many years: we assign half-day officers if there are not enough full-day officers.

In some past years, we have not had enough full-day officers and have therefore assigned half-day officers in some precincts. Beginning in 2018, we made significant efforts to improve our election officer recruiting and retention processes; as a result, we have seen an increase in full-day officers each year and are now fortunate to have enough full-day officers to serve in most precincts.

### **Election Officer Assignments**

Our election officer assignment process is the same as it was for the November 2021 election, which was very successful. All officers who have completed an oath for the current term are considered for assignment, unless they indicate they are unavailable. This allows us to consider our best and most regular officers for assignment at the beginning of our assignment process, even if they do not immediately respond to an availability notice. Of course, all assigned officers will still be expected to accept and confirm their assignment before Election Day; if an assigned election officer does not accept their assignment or complete all required training in a timely manner, they will be replaced with another officer.



### **Election Officer Assignments (Continued)**

We sent an availability email to all election officers on March 12 and asked officers to let us know if they are not available for any reason. We later sent a follow-up email to all officers who did not respond to confirm that we are considering them for assignment, unless they indicate otherwise. We have also scheduled and processed many new election officers, who will be considered for assignment this election.

As of Friday, April 8, we have assigned all Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, and Language Officers and are now in the process of confirming these assignments. All Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs represent the Democratic Party. We are also currently assigning all regular officers and expect to begin sending assignment notifications in late April.

### **Election Officer Training**

We have prepared a robust training plan for this election that builds on our best practices and lessons learned over the last two years.

In addition to completing a standard online training class, all first-time officers are now required to come in person to complete a series of exercises on voting equipment, to demonstrate understanding and mastery of their use, before being eligible to serve.

- **Election Officer Basics:** All election officers must complete this training and pass a quiz before being eligible to serve. This training is currently available online and officers may complete it at any time.
- **Chief and Assistant Chief Basics:** All officers assigned to serve as a Chief or Assistant Chief must complete this training and pass a quiz before being eligible to serve in these positions. This training is currently available online and officers may complete it at any time.
- **Equipment Practice Sessions:** We will offer open house sessions in May for officers to have hands-on practice time with the voting equipment. These sessions will be open to any officer but mandatory for first-time officers, who will need to complete a series of exercises to demonstrate understanding and mastery of voting equipment use before their first election.
- **Chiefs Briefing:** All officers assigned to serve as a Chief or Assistant Chief must also watch a pre-election briefing, which will cover election-specific changes, last-minute updates, and important reminders. As usual, this briefing will be available approximately one week before election day.
- **Zoom Q&A sessions:** In addition to all other training, we will offer two Zoom Q&A sessions in June – one for all election officers, to ask any questions they may have, and another specifically for Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs, to ask more specific questions after they have watched the Chiefs Briefing. We will solicit questions ahead of time, answer the most frequently asked questions at the beginning of the Zoom Q&A sessions, and then answer any questions received live during the Zoom session.



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## **Election Officer Pay Issues**

### **Election Officer Travel Stipends**

The Department of Finance has informed us we may no longer process election officer mileage reimbursements in the way we have for past elections. As a result, we plan to move from a per-mile mileage reimbursement to a flat travel stipend for officers who transport pollbooks, ballots, or other sensitive election materials. This will greatly reduce administrative time and costs involved with processing mileage reimbursements and will allow us to be in compliance with Department of Finance requirements. A travel stipend can be simply added to an election officer's regular stipend and can be processed at the same time, so each election officer would receive only one payment.

After a careful review of typical mileage reimbursement expenses in past elections and Code of Virginia requirements, staff have determined the best way to administer such a program is to offer a \$10 travel stipend for each day that an officer transports pollbooks or ballots.

There are two categories of officers that would qualify for such travel stipends:

- Each Chief would be eligible to receive a total of \$20, which includes \$10 for picking up pollbooks before Election Day and \$10 for returning pollbooks and voted ballots on election day. (If an Assistant Chief returns materials election night, they would receive the second \$10 travel stipend instead of the Chief.)
- Each Collector Officer would be eligible to receive a \$10 travel stipend. This is for returning absentee ballots on Election Day from the drop box at their polling place to the Fairfax County Government Center.

### **Language Officer Referral Bonus**

We currently assign Language Officers in three required languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean. We generally have sufficient officers who speak Spanish, but have never been able to recruit enough officers who fluently speak Vietnamese or Korean.

To simplify recruitment issues, we recommend adoption of a \$25 one-time referral bonus for election officers who recruit a new Language Officer in these languages, to be paid only if the recruited officer actually serves in that role in that election.

We need about 10 more Vietnamese-speaking Language Officers and 10 more Korean-speaking Language Officers. If we paid a \$25 referral bonus for each of these, it would amount to a total of only \$500. This would be paid only for the first election each of the recruited individuals serve, so it would not be an ongoing cost. If we recruit sufficient new officers in the first election in which this program is implemented, we may not need to pay these bonuses in future elections.



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## **Election Results**

### **Attaching Zero Tapes and Results Tapes to Both Copies of SOR and Printed Return Sheet**

In the June 2022 Democratic Primary Election and future elections, we will attach zero (opening) tapes and results tapes from the voting machines to each copy of the SOR for each precinct and satellite, in place of hand-written results that were transcribed from the tapes to the SOR in the past.

In addition, we will attach zero (opening) tapes and results tapes to the Yellow Printed Return Sheet.

### **Posting Zero Tapes and Results Tapes in Place of Call Sheets**

Instead of posting results on hand-written Call Sheets at the door to each polling place, we will post copies of the zero (opening) tape and results tape for each voting machine.

### **Election Results Management (ERM) Reports in Place of Call-in Results**

Continuing the practice that we started in November 2021, we will use ERM reports in place of called-in results. This reduced errors and improved the accuracy of the process.

### **Posting Results on Office of Elections Website**

We will post Election Day results on our website as the election media is received from precincts and uploaded to the ERM system. We will have a team check the results that are loaded in the state system (VERIS) to ensure that they match the results from the ERM process that are loaded on our website. The results on our website will include hand-counted results if we continue that process.

