



# STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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## ELECTION NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS ASSURES VOTERS ELECTIONS ARE NOT "RIGGED"**

**Chicago, IL – October 20, 2016** – The State Board of Elections has received inquiries from voters, the media and public interest groups concerning the integrity of the November 8, 2016, General Election. The State Board of Elections wishes to assure voters that the allegations of a “rigged” election are completely unfounded. A brief overview of the election process illustrates the numerous safeguards built into the election system to secure the integrity of the voting machines and tabulation of election results.

Initially, the Voting and Registration Systems Division of the State Board of Elections thoroughly tests the voting equipment to ensure compliance with both Federal and State standards prior to approving its use in Illinois elections, and also conducts testing of the voting equipment prior to each Election. This testing takes place in jurisdictions selected by the State Board of Elections both randomly and in those jurisdictions where it is deemed advisable due to any problems in previous elections, and is open to the public.

Each of the 109 election authorities in the State must conduct errorless pre-tests of its automatic tabulating equipment and program to verify that they will correctly count the votes for all offices and public questions. A copy of that program is filed with the State Board prior to the election. Thereafter, not less than 5 days prior to Election Day, the election authority must publicly test the equipment. The public test of the equipment takes place at a minimum of 48 hours after notice is published, and is open to the public and all interested parties.

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Following these mandatory public tests, the voting equipment and memory cards are locked and sealed in tamper-proof containers until Election Day. The containers are unlocked and unsealed on Election Day in the presence of the election judges and any authorized watchers that are present. If any tampering has occurred, it would be evident at that time.

In addition to the mandatory testing, the law requires training for all citizens who serve as election judges. Each election authority must establish a 4-hour training course for its judges. Also, the State Board of Elections conducts schools for the training of election judges throughout the State of Illinois. These schools, conducted by Board staff, are well-attended and on-going. Between July 25, 2016, and November 2, 2016, there are 62 schools scheduled.

Significantly, on Election Day the polling places are staffed by 5 judges – composed of both Democrats and Republicans - in each precinct. There are approximately 10,000 precincts in Illinois, which translates to 50,000 election judges present to assure the integrity of the process. Additionally, authorized poll watchers are eligible to be present in each precinct.

Following the close of the polls, the election judges process the ballots in the presence of all the judges and any authorized poll watchers in attendance.

Elections in Illinois are conducted not by the State Board of Elections, but by each of the 109 election jurisdictions. Thus, an attempt to “rig” the election would require involvement with multiple jurisdictions. The results from each of the precincts are totaled by each election jurisdiction and there is no connection to the internet. There is a paper trail in Illinois for each ballot cast, by whatever means it is cast.

Following the election, in those jurisdictions where in-precinct counting equipment is used, the election authority retabulates the total number of votes cast in 5% of the precincts within the election jurisdiction, as well as 5% of the voting devices used in early voting.

Any voter who is concerned about the integrity of the election process may want to consider becoming an election judge. Election authorities are always seeking election judges and serving as such allows the voter

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to experience first-hand the system from the opening of the precinct to the tabulation of the results. Voters may also consider volunteering as a pollwatcher though to do so they must be affiliated with a candidate, political party or civic organization engaged in overseeing the election process.

The State Board of Elections will provide updates, as necessary, prior to the General Election.

The State Board of Elections is an independent state agency charged with the responsibility of having general supervision over the administration of election laws of the State of Illinois. Elections are administered locally by the State’s 109 election authorities.

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