



## 2020 General Canvass Monitoring 2.0 Update

### What Is It?

- Under N.C. law, “canvass” means the process of determining the final vote count, including the **final tabulation of all properly cast ballots to certify election results.**
- As part of the process, county election officials **review absentee ballots and provisional ballots to determine if they should count.**

### When Is It?

- By law, county boards of elections meet at 11 a.m., on the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the election (i.e. the **“Day of Canvass” for the 2020 General Election is Friday, Nov. 13**); but counties can have additional meetings (pre-canvass meetings) when one day may not be enough.
- Many counties will have had preliminary canvass meetings (i.e., meetings run throughout this week or longer, depending on ballot volume) **on Thursday, Nov. 12.**

### Who will be there?

- **Five (5) County Board Members** (three Democrats, two Republicans)
- **County Board of Elections staff and director**

### Who might be there?

- **Voters**, interested in being heard on their disputed or challenged ballots
- **Partisan observers**, potentially from various local, state, and/or federal campaigns
- **Attorneys**, potentially representing voters, groups, or campaigns
- **Advocacy groups**, observing proceedings based on interests they serve
- **Media**, covering this historic election, including record absentee voting

### What can you expect?

- These are **public meetings**. We’re entitled to attend, but the boards may not be used to people caring so much about the process, especially at preliminary canvass meetings.
- **Don’t be intimidated.** You have a right to be there and observe what the county is doing.
- **Don’t be afraid to ask questions** of county board staff if there are any mechanisms for public input, if necessary. This can be phrased delicately, e.g., “Can we ask a question if we can’t understand what is being said, so the public can follow what is happening?”

### Post-Election State of Play: How is 2020 different?

- Due to record absentee voting in 2020, **any outstanding absentee ballots (110,000+)**

reviewed during the **Day of Canvass** could have a major impact on everything from key local races, to close statewide judicial races, and possibly even which U.S. Presidential candidate receives our state's electoral votes. As a result, there will be new and broader interest in these proceedings, and meetings could be crowded with concerned voters, partisan observers, campaigns and attorneys, the media, and others.

- Many of the **tens of thousands provisional ballots (40,000+)** cast statewide in this election could be counted during the “**Day of Canvass**,” making a difference in some races too.
- While ballot counting began on Sept. 29, due to record absentee voting, Day of Canvass proceedings may still be more lengthy than in prior years, spreading over several days or more with **contentious debates over even handfuls of votes**.
- Due to legal challenges to the absentee cure process and the extension of the absentee ballot receipt deadline to Nov. 12, there may be **more discussions of mail-in ballots fixed at the last minute** (e.g., voter certifications of their signature or witness names).
- There may be discussions of **trends in problems with absentee ballots**, such as consistency in voters’ failure to sign or signing in the wrong places, evidence of which could justify future changes in ballot envelopes, etc.
- Because of the stakes, Canvass proceedings could be **more heated than in prior cycles** as various stakeholders attempt to document or even challenge the process.

## What we need you to do

- **Grab any documentation provided by the county for the public.**
  - As in past election cycles, counties may provide printed documentation of vote totals in key categories to help the public follow the process.
- **Take lots of notes.**
  - Try to identify who is in the room (e.g., which board members are speaking, the director, impacted voters, any observers, including parties and lawyers)
  - Jot down any overall numbers, including absentee and provisional totals and numbers within provided categories.
    - Board may discuss individual absentee voters’ and their issues, including ballot certification deficiencies and late ballots
    - Board may discuss provisional ballots by category; If you catch names of provisional ballots being discussed, jot those down, e.g.,
      - Out of precinct
      - No record of registration
      - Jurisdiction dispute
- **If you’re comfortable doing so, talk to impacted voters who are present.**
  - If possible, approach voters present who had their votes challenged. Ask if they’d be willing to speak to election experts about their experience.
  - Collect their names, emails and phone numbers for follow-up.
  - Call the canvass hotline (and provide voters with information to do the same) at **855-4-WE-VOTE**.

## 2020 Canvass Monitor Hotline: When do you use it?

Please contact Democracy NC’s canvass hotline (855-4-WE-VOTE) if you observe or experience:

- **Voters or others denied access** to in-person Canvass meetings,
- **Heated partisan debates** influencing the canvass process or results,

- **Contentious voter challenges** or other barriers to counting every vote,
- **Incidents of voter intimidation**, including threats or violence, or
- Other occurrences that you feel **negatively impact an otherwise fair election outcome.**

**NOTE:** You will have access to an online report form (at [demnc.co/canvassreport](https://demnc.co/canvassreport)), and printable report forms (at [demnc.co/canvass](https://demnc.co/canvass)). Bring extra paper or preferably take your computer or tablet to help capture and submit notes more quickly.

### **Absentee Issues to Monitor**

- **Late Mail-in Ballots**
  - Any discussion of late mail-in absentee ballots?
- **Ballot Deficiencies**
  - Count of how many absentee ballots are being rejected for certain reasons? (e.g., lack of signature, lack of witnesses)
  - Count of and/or types of Issues or errors with ballots attempting cure (e.g. improperly completed cure certificates)
- **Absentee Hearings**
  - Voters present to have their ballots counted
  - Lawyers or others present to represent voters in ballot hearings
  - Other parties or groups present to challenge/contest absentee ballots
- **Impacted races**
  - Including local races that could be determined by fewer votes

### **Provisional Categories to Monitor**

- **No Acceptable ID**
  - The photo ID requirement was blocked for the 2020 General, but first time voters, depending on how they registered, might have been asked to show some sort of identification, known as a HAVA document (any government document, utility bill, bank statement or payroll stub with the voter’s name and registration address)
  - Voters should be allowed to cure their provisional by bring in a HAVA document even if they didn’t have that documentation on Election Day
  - Might be some discussion of the numbers of folks who have brought in HAVA documents already. If it’s a pre-canvass meeting (prior to November 13), is the board making an effort to reach voters who failed to return with an ID? They could do so.
- **No Record of Registration** – registered or updated address at DMV
  - Voters who registered/updated their registration at DMV but didn’t show up on the rolls were supposed to be given a yellow form to sign.
  - If the DMV didn’t convey the registration, the provisional ballot may still count, depending on research the County Board does with the DMV.
  - We want to document how many of those are dealt with, the results of the DMV research, or if there are DMV registration provisionals without a yellow form.
  - Did you hear the board say that all voters with “no record of registration” were

submitted to the DMV to see if they had visited the DMV?

### Other Issues to Monitor:

- **Same-Day Registration and Voting**
  - Any discussion of mailings (verifications) being sent to SDR voters and those mailings being returned?
  - Were any SDR ballots being challenged or denied? If so, how many?
- **Machine or Software Issues**
  - Any discussion about problems involving equipment or voting procedures?
  - What was discussed—and concluded?
- **Challenges/Hearings**
  - Was there a hearing in which a voter was questioned about their eligibility to vote?
  - What happened?

### Report Form

- Find and fill out the form online at: [demnc.co/canvassreport](https://demnc.co/canvassreport)
  - Entries for **absentee** ballot counting
  - Entries for **provisionals** NOT counted
  - Entries for **voter challenges**
  - Need more space? Feel free to document other observations and send:
    - via email (or scan and attach) to [elections@democracync.org](mailto:elections@democracync.org)
    - via mail (print forms available at [demnc.co/canvass](https://demnc.co/canvass))

### Goals: What we'll do with the information

- **Provide your observations as soon as possible on Nov. 13**, or from pre-canvass meetings before the Day of Canvass when possible. Your immediate reporting will help election experts more quickly:
  - identify problems with the process in almost real time
  - Identify the numbers and types of voters impacted
  - advocate for better election policies and voting access