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# TRINITY COUNTY

Shanna S. White  
County Clerk/Recorder/Assessor  
Julie K. Barcellona  
Assistant County Clerk/Recorder/Assessor

TO: The Honorable Michael B. Harper  
Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: Shanna S. White *SSW*  
County Clerk/Recorder/Assessor

CC: Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendations of 2016-2017  
Grand Jury Financial and Administrative Committee Final Report  
Re: FAR 2016-2017-002 Transparency and Elections Codes

DATE: August 24, 2017

The Grand Jury Financial and Administrative Committee has requested a written response to their final report on the FAR 2016-2017-02 Transparency and Elections Codes. The response of the Trinity County Clerk/Recorder/Assessor is as follows:

**Finding #1:** Visual access at the Canvass was hindered for observers although direct access was not requested by the GJ at the time of its observation.

**Response:** Disagree wholly. Access was allowed to all members of the public to observe all election processes with adequate visual access.

**Recommendation 1:** Adhere to the Election Codes concerning observers.

**Response:** See response to finding #1.

**Recommendation 2:** The computer screens used for the signature validation shall be placed closer to the observers' relegated viewing area, enabling them to see the signatures clearly as stated in EC 15272.

**Response:** EC §15272 refers to the manual tally; which the observers had clear access to the individuals conducting the tally. As for the computer screens being closer to the observers so they can view signatures, EC §15104 (d) states an observer shall be allowed sufficiently close access to the ballot envelopes and signatures to enable them to challenge if the individuals handling the vote by mail ballots are following procedures. This code was followed and voters' personal information was kept confidential. The observers had close enough access to determine if procedures were followed.

**Finding #2:** The EO designated viewing area at the Weaverville Veteran's Hall polling place wherein observers could view the election process but not interfere with voters' rights to secrecy.

**Response:** Agree

**Recommendation 3:** The EO must continue to balance the rights of individual voters and observers to assure the election process is transparent and all voter/citizen rights are upheld.

**Response:** It is the responsibility of the Elections officials to allow all eligible voters the right to vote confidentially and keep their personal information confidential.

**Finding #3:** EC 12109 was not adhered to by the EO. Whenever the ballots of any election or from any precincts are to be tallied at a central place and not at the precincts, the elections official or secretary of the jurisdiction conducting the election shall specify the public place to be used and give notice thereof as EC12109 dictates.

**Response:** Notices were placed on the Trinity County Elections website. With a newspaper of general circulation published weekly and the deadlines to publish, the website was the only option to meet the notification requirements of EC §12109.

**Recommendation 4:** Place a public notification of Precanvass, Election Day and Canvass procedures in a newspaper of general circulation published in Trinity County at least 10 days before the day of the election.

**Response:** To place public notification of the procedures in the local newspaper for the Election Day and Canvass would not be feasible, as there are many California Election codes that dictate these procedures.

**Recommendation 5:** Place a public notification of Precanvass, Election Day and Canvass procedures at least 10 days before the day of the election in the glass enclosed bulletin board on the wall near the Court House main entrance.

**Response:** Notices were placed on the window of the Courthouse, for future elections notices will be placed in the glass case, noting the dates, times and places of particular procedures as per Election Codes.

**Recommendation 6:** Place a public notification of Precanvass, Election Day and Canvass procedures at least 10 days before the day of the election to [www.trinitycounty.org](http://www.trinitycounty.org) website.

**Response:** Notices are placed on the Trinity County Elections department web page noting the dates, times and places of particular procedures as per Election Codes.

**Recommendation 7:** Utilize the SOS's suggested Election Observer Panel Plan available at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-systems/oversight/county-election-observer-panel-plans/>.

**Response:** The Secretary of States Observer Plan is used by the Trinity County Election's office.

**Finding #4:** Trinity County employees working at the Court House have access to voter information kept in the secure storage area.

**Response:** Voter information, such as Voter Registration Applications are locked and only the employees of the Trinity County Clerk/Recorder/Assessor's office have access. Election related documents after the election, are stored in sealed boxes in a general storage area of the courthouse. The Trinity County Clerk/Recorder/Assessor does not distribute keys or determine storage areas for the courthouse departments.

**Recommendation 8:** Perform inventory of all keys distributed to Court House employees.

**Response:** See response to finding #4.

**Recommendation 9:** Distribute keys as necessary for County and Court employees to perform their duties.

**Response:** See response to finding #4.

**Recommendation 10:** Designate separate secure storage locations in the Courthouse for each County department use that is also separate from Court use.

**Response:** See response in finding #4.