

## **Statewide Recount**

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **Why is there a recount?**

Minnesota Statute, section 204C.35, mandates a hand recount of ballots for any federal or state election where the margin between the two candidates receiving the most votes is less than one-half of 1 percent.

#### **Why do the vote totals on the Secretary of State's Web site keep changing?**

On Election Night, county election officials enter *unofficial* election results on the Office of the Secretary of State office's Web site. Over the week following Election Day, county election officials proof their work and make corrections, as necessary. It is routine for election officials to discover a number of small errors, including improper data entry, transposition of digits (e.g., entering the number 48 instead of 84), and other items that affect the reported outcome. In 2006, for example, the difference between the number of votes for U.S. Senate candidates Mark Kennedy and Amy Klobuchar changed by more than 2,100 votes between the first unofficial results reported on this office's Web site and the final official results.

As corrections are entered on the Web site by the local election officials, the statewide unofficial results are updated to reflect the changes. By November 10, each county auditor will present their final tallies to their County Canvassing Board for approval. These reports are sent to the Office of the Secretary of State where they are carefully reviewed and incorporated into a statewide canvass report.

#### **When are the results official?**

Results of statewide and multi-county races are not official until they have been certified by the State Canvassing Board, which in accordance with state statute meets two weeks after the general election, in this case on November 18. The State Canvassing Board, by statute consisting of two Minnesota Supreme Court justices, two district court judges, and the Secretary of State, reviews and certifies the consolidated statewide canvass report.

#### **When will the recount begin?**

Under state law, the recount cannot begin until the official results have been certified by the State Canvassing Board, which meets on November 18. The recount will begin in locations across the state the next morning on November 19.

**Where will the recount occur?**

The official recount will be conducted in approximately 110 locations throughout the state, generally in every county courthouse and in the city halls of major cities. In some locations more than one recount “station” will be used depending on the size of the jurisdiction. A preliminary list of the dates, times and locations will be available by the end of the day on Wednesday, November 12.

**Is the recount open to the public?**

Yes. The public is allowed to view the recounting of the ballots and to attend all county and state canvassing board meetings.

**What is the process for recounting the ballots?**

The process is detailed in Minnesota statute. All eligible ballots are assembled. All ballots are examined by an election official to determine the voters’ intent, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 204C.22. Each candidate is allowed to have a representative observe the counting, and a candidate’s representative may challenge the decision of the election official.

Ballots are separated into piles — one for each candidate involved in the recount, and one for other ballots, including those cast for other candidates, those for which the voter’s intent cannot be determined, and/or those declared ineligible due to markings or other problems.

If there is any objection to the decision being made by the election official by either one or both of the candidates’ representatives, the ballots in dispute become “challenged” ballots that will go to the State Canvassing Board for review and decision.

**How long will the recount take?**

Local election officials have until December 5 to complete their portion of the recount and to forward their results and any challenged ballots to the Office of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State’s Office then has until the State Canvassing Board reconvenes on December 16 to assemble a consolidated report from the local election officials. The State Canvassing Board will review each challenged ballot to decide whether the voter’s intent can be determined and, if so, for whom the voter cast their vote.

The Board hopes to conclude their work by December 19, but will take as long as they need to in order to review all of the challenged ballots. When this process has been completed, the challenged ballots for which the voter’s intent could be determined are added to the appropriate candidate’s total and the candidate with the most votes will be declared the winner.

**Is the recount in the U.S. Senate race the only recount occurring?**

No, the Secretary of State will work with local election officials to conduct four recounts: the U.S. Senate, State Senate District 16, and State House Districts 16A and 12B.