



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, October 21, 2020

STATEMENT ON VIDEO OF THE CANVASS PROCESS

The Montgomery County Board of Elections is aware of a video circulating on the Internet that shows an Election Judge writing on a ballot. Specifically, the video shows a process referred to as the “canvass”, where Election Judges review voted ballots to ensure that the intent of the voter will be accurately captured by our ballot scanning equipment. In order for the voter’s ballot to be read by our scanning equipment, the ovals on the ballot must be filled with a dark pen.

There are instances when a voter does not use a dark pen. Under those circumstances, a canvass worker darkens the voter’s selections with a black pen. This has been a regular part of the canvassing process for many years and is necessary for the voter’s ballot to be scanned and thus counted. The Board of Canvassers has an obligation to ensure that each ballot reflects the intent of the voter to make sure every vote counts.

After investigation, the Board attorney determined that what was pictured in the video was in fact consistent with the normal canvass process. The Board attorney found no evidence of fraud or improper conduct. However, for the purpose of transparency and to assure voters who may be watching via the livestream of the integrity of the process, in the future canvassers will only darken ovals while being observed by an Election Judge of another political party.

The public is welcome to observe the canvass process via livestream or in person at the Plum Gar Recreation Center. The calendar of canvassing dates and locations is at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/2020PrimaryElection/primary-ballot-canvass.html>

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