December 2, 2019

The Honorable Ruth R. Hughes
Secretary of State
P.O. Box 12887
Austin, Texas 78711-2887

Dear Secretary Hughes,

Harris County is pleased to report the positive impact created by the Countywide Polling Place Program for the November 5, 2019 Joint General & Special Election. This report gives more details regarding Countywide Polling for this election, and addresses the requested points from the August 2nd letter granting Harris County Successful Status.

Our data indicates that approximately half of voters opted to vote at a polling location other than their home precinct, showing that Harris County voters utilized Countywide Polling as a way to cast a ballot in a location most convenient for them. The county also saw a 90% decrease in the amount of provisional ballots cast compared to November 2018.

The office of the Harris County Clerk feels confident in the implementation of the Countywide Polling Place Program, and looks forward to its continued use in Harris County.

Polling Locations

Harris County abided by the guidelines set by the Texas Election Code regarding having at least one polling location in each commissioner’s court precinct, and ensuring the number of countywide polling places in each commissioner precinct did not exceed more than twice the number of countywide polling places in any other commissioner’s precinct.

This election included a 2.5% increase in polling locations from November 2018, in an effort to allow us to study voting patterns while ensuring access to the polls for voters.
Technology Requirements and Security Assurance

Harris County conducted its election using the e-Slate DRE voting system developed by Hart InterCivic. This election system has been in use in Harris County since 2001. It fully complies with the federal Help America Vote Act accessibility requirements and provides full access to all ballot styles required throughout the county. A total of 1,012 precincts and 133 ballot styles were required for the November 5, 2019 election.

To qualify voters, election workers used e-poll book workstations that contain the voter registration database. Harris County partnered with the local First Responders Network and Universal Services to ensure proper connectivity at each site. Transmission was field-tested prior to the election and performed satisfactorily on Election Day.

Overall in Harris County, the average time an e-poll book took to completely sync from a voter check-in was three minutes as a maximum average, and under a minute for most typical locations. Two polling locations had iPads turned off while the location was coming online, and that anomaly has been excluded from the general average.

Election Equipment

Each Election Day polling location had three e-poll books. Election Day polling locations within the City of Houston limits had a minimum of ten e-slate machines and two DAU units, while polling locations inside Harris County but outside city limits had a minimum of six e-slate machines and two DAU units. In total, Harris County deployed 6,418 e-slate machines and 1,514 DAU units.

Election Officials and Worker Training

Standard procedures specified in the Texas Election Code were followed in appointing election judges and alternates. A meeting with Democratic and Republican party representatives was held in mid-February to review these procedures, and periodic updates were provided to the parties concerning deadlines and poll worker recruitment status as the election neared.

Election workers were trained on the computerized voter check-in equipment and were instructed on the changes involved in qualifying voters. Training included a 3.5 hour in-person, hands-on course for election judges and alternate judges and online training was available for election clerks. In Harris County, alternate judges typically serve as the e-poll book operators and, as such, were responsible for voter qualification procedures.

Election Day Support

During the election the Harris County Clerk’s office provided fully staffed call centers available for voters and election judges who may have had questions regarding any aspect of election procedure, including the Countywide Polling Place Program, e-poll books, language assistance, and voting machines.
Voter Outreach

The Harris County Clerk’s office deployed a new campaign to spread awareness regarding Countywide Polling, encouraging voters to “Vote Your Way” at any one of more than 700 locations. This campaign included digital assets and printed materials, billboards, and digital advertising. The addition of Countywide Polling was added to the homepage of our website, HarrisVotes.com.

As required by law, all ballots and elections related materials were provided in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese. Election Day language interpreters were placed at polling locations based on registered voter surnames, as well as historical analysis of surname voting at each Election Day polling location.

Turnout Results

A total of 231,211 people cast a ballot in person on Election Day. This is a higher percentage of Election Day voters than similar elections dating back to 2009. In previous elections, Harris County has seen a trend of more voters casting a ballot during Early Voting than on Election Day, but that was not the case when Countywide Polling was implemented.

![Election Day Vote Totals for Odd-numbered Year Countywide Elections held in Harris County since 2009](chart)
Additional Support

Harris County also provided additional resources to voters in order to maximize the use of the Countywide Polling Place Program. A “wait time” feature was made available on HarrisVotes.com, allowing voters to see the potential line length at all polling locations. The Harris County Poll Finder, a text based location finder, allowed voters to text an address and receive directions to the nearest polling location.

Exit Polling

A study conducted by Robert M. Stein, Lena Gohlman Fox Professor of Political Science, Rice University, and Elizabeth F. Vann, Director, Center for Civic Leadership, Rice University showed that three quarters of Election Day voters knew about the new countywide voter system, and a majority of all Election Day voters took advantage of new Election Day voting opportunities offered through that system. Interestingly, awareness of countywide Election Day voting was undifferentiated across partisan affiliation, age, race and ethnicity.

Additionally, more than a third of Election Day voters chose to vote at one of 51 early voting centers that were open on Election Day. Fifteen percent of respondents reported that they voted

Regardless of whether they voted--close to their home or at a polling place convenient to their work or other destination--voters of all ages positively evaluated their voting experiences in both the May and November 2019 elections. Voters reported that their polling locations were easy to find and conveniently located, with ample parking. They found the poll workers at their voting locations helpful and spent little to no time waiting to vote.
Election Day Travel, by Precinct

Percent of voters who traveled outside of their home precinct poll to vote.

Countywide Average:
Voters who Stayed: 52%
Voters who Traveled: 48%

5 Nov 2019 Unofficial Results
Countywide Average:
Turnout of Registered Voters: 16.6%
5 Nov 2019 Unofficial Results