

PRESS RELEASE IN RESPONSE TO BALLOT SHORTAGES IN OAKLAND COUNTY

We, the city and township clerks of Oakland County, extend our sincerest apologies to all the voters in our municipalities who experienced difficulties in voting due to ballot shortages on August 7th.

The voter turnout throughout the county was tremendous and record breaking, and in some precincts, it was overwhelming. We want to assure all voters that we hold the right to vote dear to our hearts. We have spent our careers striving to provide fair and accessible elections to all voters.

On Tuesday, August 7th, each and every one of us was frustrated by the ballot shortages that occurred throughout Oakland County. The one thing that could have prevented this entire ordeal was not within our control: the number of ballots purchased for our municipalities.

We could tell weeks before the election that our ballot orders would not be sufficient, however, we were not allowed to increase ballot quantities due to the fact that county clerks control ballot ordering for elections such as the August Primary. When the county did increase ballot quantities the week before the election, it was by a very small percentage and still not sufficient for most of our communities.

Recently, the Oakland County Clerk has commented in the media that the ballot shortages were due to municipal clerks not being prepared for a large turnout, but that is simply not true. The single best way we could have prepared for a large turnout would have been by ordering larger quantities of ballots as we requested.

The County Clerk's statement that local clerks could have solved the ballot shortages by sending larger paper to the precincts is not accurate. The machines attached to the printers have an important and specific purpose: to allow voters who request or require assistance to vote with necessary accommodations. These machines are not intended for mass production and the process of voting on the system takes 5 to 8 minutes per ballot. That proposed solution would have only slightly lessened the impact. The only effective solution would have been a sufficient number of ballots.

Additionally, the County Clerk's assertion that local clerks were withholding ballots from precincts while crowds of voters demanded to vote is both disheartening and untrue. We want to assure all our voters that we did everything within our authority to make ballots available to all the precincts in our jurisdictions.

Whether the solution is a change in law or a financial agreement with the county, we will make sure that we have the final say on ballot quantities for future elections. Please know that we will not rest until we know that the shortages that occurred on August 7th will not happen again.

Aileen Dickson, City Clerk, City of Troy, OCCA Past President
Tina Barton, City Clerk, City of Rochester Hills
Cortney Hanson, City Clerk, City of Novi
Leanne Scott, Deputy Clerk, City of Rochester Hills, OCCA President
Deana Mondock, Deputy Clerk, Bloomfield Township, OCCA Vice President
Sherikia Hawkins, City Clerk, City of Southfield, OCCA Treasurer
Cheryl Printz, City Clerk, City of Madison Heights, OCCA Secretary
Jan Roncelli, Township Clerk, Bloomfield Township
Mike Smith, City Clerk, City of Clawson
Barb Pallotta, Township Clerk, Independence Township
Melanie Halas, City Clerk, City of Royal Oak
Pam Smith, City Clerk, City of Farmington Hills
Sharon Tischler, Township Clerk, Southfield Township
Ed Norris, City Clerk, City of Oak Park
Annette Boucher, City Clerk, City of Berkley
Michele Cash, Township Clerk, Lyon Township
Lee Ann O'Connor, City Clerk, City of Rochester
Curtis Wright, Township Clerk, Oxford Township
Amy Burton, City Clerk, City of Bloomfield Hills
Cathy Buck, City Clerk, City of Wixom
Sue Halberstadt, City Clerk, City of Farmington
Sheila Grandison, City Clerk, City of Pontiac
Debbie Binder, Township Clerk, West Bloomfield Township
Cherilynn Mynsberge, City Clerk, City of Birmingham
Laura Moreau, Township Clerk, Springfield Township
Missy Creech, Township Clerk, Commerce Township
Susan McCullough, Deputy Clerk, Oxford Township