

1. New Initiatives for the 2022 Elections

A. We used the factors adopted by the General Assembly in 2021 to select ballot drop boxes and early voting centers. To help the local boards find locations that met these factors, we contracted with a vendor to map: (1) the proposed early voting center(s); (2) for each precinct, whether the precinct was above or below the county's average turnout and above or below the county's average minority population; (3) the maps showed a range of below average voter turnout and a range of above average minority population; and (4) we provided the local boards with the maps and used the maps when presenting the early voting centers for State Board approval

B. Permanent Mail-In Voting

1. Over 325,000 voters joined the permanent mail-in ballot list before the primary election. By the time the general election arrived, over 72,000 more voters joined the list for a total of over 398,000 voters.

a. Voters on the permanent list were 62% of the requested mail-in ballots.

2. The percentage of ballots returned by these voters was 1.2% higher than the return rate for all mail-in voters.¹ The acceptance rate was slightly higher (0.1%) than all mail-in voters.²

3. There's still some education that needs to be done. Over 13,400 voters (or 3.9%) on the permanent mail-in ballot list **only** voted a provisional ballot. [Note: The wrong number was provided at the briefing. The correct number is 13,430.] This percentage is lower than the primary election - 5.1%

C. Cure by Text Pilot

1. In the 2022 Primary Election, we conducted a pilot project with the Montgomery County Board of Elections to offer voters who did not sign the oath for their mail-in ballot the ability to provide a signature via text

2. We used a software solution - used by many jurisdictions around the country - offered through our contract with the mail house producing and mailing ballot packets

3. 17 out of 78 voters (22%) provided their missing signature via text used this option

2. Overview of 2022 General Election

A. [Turnout - In General](#)

1. Over 2.03 million voters voted in this election - 49% turnout.

¹ The return rate for permanent mail-in voters was 85.92%, and the return rate for all mail-in voters was 84.78%. In the 2022 Primary Election, the percentage of ballots returned by permanent mail-in voters was 0.7% higher than the same rate for all voters. The return rate for permanent mail-in voters was 67.94%, and the return rate for all mail-in voters was 67.26%.

² The acceptance rate for permanent mail-in voters was 99.66%, and the same rate for all mail-in voters was 99.54%. In the 2022 Primary Election, the acceptance rate for permanent mail-in voters was the same as the rate for voters - 99%.

- a. This is lower turnout than the 2018 General Election (59.06%) but higher than the 2014 General Election (47.14%).
2. In-person voting continues to be the primary way voters vote
 - a. 1,427,027 voters (70.24% of the participating voters) voted in person.
 - b. Most voters (1,046,153 voters or 51.49%) voted on election day with 380,874 voters (18.75%) voting during early voting.
 - c. Early voting turnout increased by 3% from the 2022 Primary Election.
3. When voters voted is nearly equally divided between before election day and on election day.
 - a. 47% of voters who participated voted before election day (either during early voting or by mail)
 - b. 53% of participating voters voted on election day.
 - c. Breakdown is almost identical to what we saw in the 2022 Primary Election
4. When voters voted during early voting mirrored prior elections. The busiest days were the final two days when over almost 150,000 voters voted. The slowest days were Saturday and Sunday.
5. [By Mail](#)
 - a. Before the 2020 elections, turnout by mail was around 6-8% of total turnout.
 - i. 26.68% of voters who voted in the 2022 General Election voted by mail. Almost 640,000 ballot packets were sent. Over 84.78% of those sent were voted and returned.
 - ii. Turnout by mail decreased by 7% from the 2022 Primary Election
 - b. Timeline of ballots returned
 - i. 44% of all ballots returned were “processed” by the local boards from Oct 30 - Nov 12³ - the week before election day and the week of election day
 - ii. 64% of all ballots returned were “processed” by the local boards from Oct 23 - Nov 12 - the 2 weeks before election day and the week of election day
 - iii. When compared to the primary election, more voters returned their ballots earlier
 - 30% of general election ballots were processed 3 or more weeks before election day
 - 17% of primary election ballots were processed 3 or more weeks before election day.

³ Early voting was available from Oct 27 - Nov 3. Election day was Nov 8.

- c. More voters used the ballot boxes to return their ballots than they did in the primary election (44% of mail-in voters returned the ballots at ballot box in the primary election)
 - i. 50% of mail-in voters used a ballot box in the general election. The percentage varies by county - 25% in Worcester to 62% in Howard.⁴
 - ii. Voters who used a ballot box to return their ballots returned their ballots closer to election day than all mail-in voters
 - 59% of ballots returned at a ballot box were “processed” by the local boards from Oct 30 - Nov 12⁵ - the week before election day and the week of election day. (This compares to 44% of all mail-in ballots.)
 - 79% of ballots returned at a ballot were “processed” by the local boards from Oct 23 - Nov 12 - the 2 weeks before election day and the week of election day. (This compares to 64% of all mail-in ballots.)

6. Voter education

- i. As we did before the primary election, we had a statewide voter education campaign to share information about (1) registering to vote; (2) the three ways to vote - early, by mail or drop box, or on election day - and the various deadlines associated with each; (3) the redistricting process; (4) updating voter information, and (5) finding polling locations.
- b. The campaign drove users to our 2022 elections webpage where we used the same images and icons as the paid media campaign.
- c. Highlights from the campaign are:
 - i. Statewide, we ran 101 TV spots, over 610 radio spots, and print ads in 11 publications.
 - ii. The digital ads garnered over 15.2 million impressions.
 - iii. The digital campaign drove over 182,000 users to and over 226,000 views of our webpage
 - iv. Throughout the campaign, Google Search drove the greatest volume, and most engaged traffic to the site.
 - v. The majority of impressions occurred on social channels (Facebook & Instagram).
- d. A report on the voter education campaign is available [here](#).

7. There were no recounts in the 2022 General Election.

B. Post-Election Audit and Verification

⁴ Counties in which more than 50% of mail-in voters used a ballot box were: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s, St. Mary’s, and Talbot Counties.

⁵ Early voting was available from Oct 27 - Nov 3. Election day was Nov 8.

1. Post-election audit and verification process is extensive and includes reviewing a variety of different tasks and data from an election. Local boards provide data on the audits they perform, and SBE uses other data to audit the election.⁶
 2. To verify the accuracy of the voting system, we have a vendor re-tabulate 100% of all ballot images and compare their results against the voting system's results
 - a. Confirmed that the voting system accurately counted ballots.
 - i. Early voting and election day results were confirmed before the local boards of elections certified election results
 - ii. All results (including mail-in and provisional results) were confirmed before the Board of State Canvassers certified results
 - b. Audit results and the audit database are available on our [post-election automated ballot tabulation audit webpage](#)
 3. The local boards will also conduct a manual audit of a random sample of paper ballots. During this audit, the local boards will hand count voted ballots and compare the results of their hand counts against the voting system's results. These audits started on Jan 10 and must be completed by March 8. We will produce a report of the manual audit and post it on our [post-election manual tabulation audit webpage](#) once the local boards have finished their manual audits
 4. As we did after the 2022 Primary Election, we'll issue a report on the general election. We expect that the report will be completed this month and once it is done, it will be posted in our [online Press Room](#). Election data, including precinct level results, is posted on our online Press Room
- C. Enforcement Actions
1. SBE has limited enforcement powers for certain offenses.
 - a. For the 2022 election, we received 418 complaints. 213 of them went to a civil settlement, and we collected \$59,250.00 in civil penalties.
 - i. We collected nearly \$240,000 in late fees - \$169,035.28 from late filing of campaign reports and \$69,105.80 from businesses with State contracts exceeding \$200,000 filing or employing a State lobbyist
 - 1,594 active businesses registered in the system.

⁶ Examples: Compare the number of ballots cast against the number of voters who checked in to vote, and review mail-in and provisional voting records to verify that the ballot was correctly issued and that canvassing decision was correct.

- 290 new businesses registered in the system with the enactment of SB 15/HB 340 from the 2022 Legislative Session
- b. All of the funds collected go to the Fair Campaign Financing Fund
- D. State Public Financing Program: 1 gubernatorial candidate used the program in the 2022 Primary Election. The candidate received \$874,648.76 from the fund. This was the 3rd consecutive gubernatorial election in which a gubernatorial ticket sought and qualified for public fundings - first in Maryland's history. As of Dec. 9, 2022, there is currently \$7,833,459.04 in the fund
- E. County Public Financing Programs
1. Montgomery and Howard Counties used a public financing program to elect the County Executive and County Council in the 2022 elections. This was the first time in Howard County.
 - a. Montgomery County: 20 candidates participated in the program. 8 were elected, and all candidates that filed a notice of intent to participate met the requirements
 - i. In the primary election, the county disbursed \$3,458,572
 - ii. In the general election, the county disbursed \$233,514
 - b. Howard County: 5 candidates participated in the program. 3 were elected, and 2 candidates failed to meet the requirements
 - i. In the primary election, the county distributed \$724,766.79
 - ii. In the general election, the county distributed \$193,082.00
 2. Baltimore City will have a public financing program for their 2024 election cycle, and Baltimore County and Prince George's County have passed similar public financing programs for future elections.
- F. Looking to 2023 and the 2024 elections
1. We will implement new electronic pollbooks for the 2024 election. The vendor is customizing its software to meet our needs. We expect to start receiving equipment in the coming months and plan to conduct mock elections later this year to verify functionality and learn how to use them in an election
 2. Procure software solution to offer texting as a solution to voters who did not sign the oath for their mail-in ballot statewide
 3. Federal Funds: The federal government's FY 2023 omnibus bill includes \$75 million available for states. The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) will distribute funding based on a formula, and Maryland's share is \$1.2 million. We need to provide - within 2 years - a 20% match of the funds we receive and understand that these funds can be used for elections administration, election technology and election security.
- G. Recounts in the 2022 Primary Election
1. There were 4 recounts for the 2022 Primary Election

2. The margins of difference between the candidate with the most votes and the candidate with the second most votes were all less than 0.25%.
 - a. This meant that all of the recounts were “free” for the requesting candidate. Local governments absorbed the cost of the recounts.
 3. Prince George’s County conducted the only recount for a State office - the Democratic nomination for Legislative District 23
 - a. The margin of difference was 0.02% - 19 votes out of over 64,000 votes cast. The margin of difference decreased from 19 votes to 16 votes.
 - b. The recount took 2.5 days plus 2 weeks to prepare and cost \$31,000.
 4. Montgomery County conducted a recount for the Democratic nomination for County Executive
 - a. The margin of difference was 0.04% - 35 votes out of over 141,000 votes cast. The margin of difference decreased from 35 votes to 32 votes.
 - b. The recount took 4 days plus over 1 week to prepare and cost \$154,556.
 5. Frederick County conducted a recount for the Democratic nomination for County Council District 3
 - a. The margin of difference was 0.02% - it was a 1 vote difference out of almost 4,600 votes cast. The vote totals for the recount were the same as the initial certified results.
 - b. The recount took 1 day (8 hours) to conduct plus 3 days to prepare and cost \$13,075.
 6. Harford County conducted a recount for the Republican nomination for County Council District D
 - a. The margin of difference was 0.19% - 11 votes out of over 7,000 votes cast. There was no change in the vote totals.
 - b. The recount took 4 hours to conduct plus about 25 hours to prepare and cost \$22,547.50.
- H. Municipalities on State ballots: Municipal nonpartisan contests for Cumberland and Hagerstown are currently on the State ballot. We’ve received general inquiries from other municipalities, but conversations didn’t move beyond the initial questions.

During the briefing, we were asked to provide additional information on several topics.

1. Delegate Wilkins requested an update on the two additional positions for the Candidacy and Campaign Finance Division. We are happy to report that these positions were included in the Governor’s FY24 budget.

2. Delegate Barnes requested the number of voters who voted during early voting and the costs associated with early voting. [This table](#) shows the number of voters who voted early by county. Additional early voting turnout data (example, by location, by party, by district) are posted on our online Press Room under “2022 Gubernatorial General Election Reports” and “Early Voting Turnout.” Since most of the costs associated with conducting early voting are incurred by the counties, we asked the Maryland Association of Election Officials to collect these costs. We will share the costs once we receive them.
3. Delegate Ebersole requested data on (1) mail-in voters who didn’t return their mail-in ballots and voted a provisional ballot and (2) how many of these provisional ballots were rejected and for what reasons.

The table below shows the number of voters who were issued a mail-in ballot but didn’t return the mail-in ballot and instead voted a provisional during. These voters represent 40% of the total number of [provisional ballots cast in the 2022 General Election](#), and 13,430 of these voters (53%) are voters on the permanent mail-in voting list.

County	Number of Voters
Allegany	116
Anne Arundel	2,674
Baltimore City	2,336
Baltimore County	2,949
Calvert	281
Caroline	52
Carroll	500
Cecil	276
Charles	521
Dorchester	60
Frederick	1,195
Garrett	41
Harford	753
Howard	1,683
Kent	65
Montgomery	6,851
Prince George's	3,598
Queen Anne's	141
Saint Mary's	264
Somerset	41
Talbot	76
Washington	342
Wicomico	212
Worcester	213
Statewide	25,240

Of these 25,240 provisional ballots cast, 25,147 of them (99.6%) were counted and 93 of them were rejected (0.4%). The most common reason why these ballots were rejected was that the voter didn't sign the provisional ballot application.