

Testimony Prepared for the
House Political Subs

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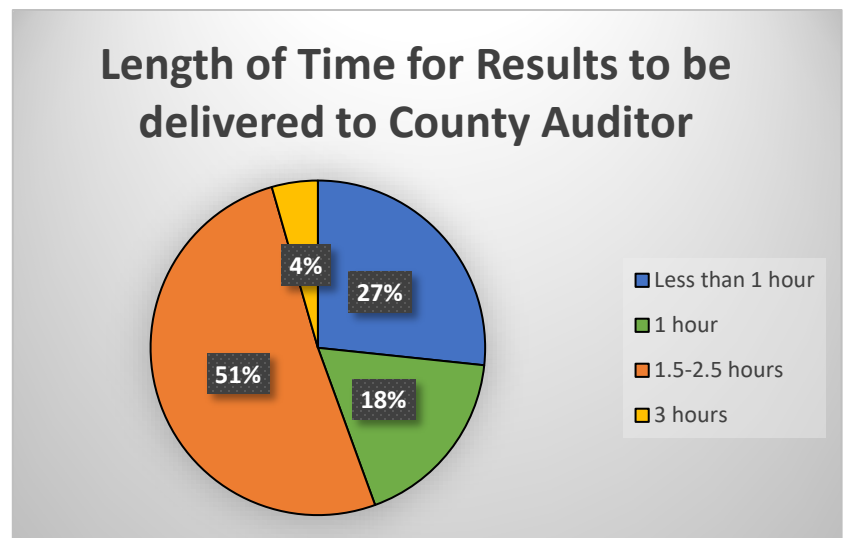
By: Donnell Preskey, NDACo



RE: Opposition to HB 1189 – Time limit to deliver results from polling location

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, I'm Donnell Preskey with the North Dakota Association of Counties. One of my roles at NDACo is serving as the executive director for the North Dakota County Auditors Association. Our county auditors stand in opposition to HB 1189.

We queried the auditors regarding the length of time for all the results to be delivered to the County Auditor during the General Election in 2020. 45 of our counties responded and their responses are indicative of why we stand in opposition to this bill. Under HB 1189 - 55% of the counties would be in violation as in those 25 counties it took 90 minutes or more to return the results to the auditor on election night.



Just look at the vast coverage area of some of our counties and you can understand how travel time is a large part of the reason why in some counties it can take up to 3 hours to get results turned in. McLean County for example, has a polling location 60 miles away from the courthouse. Benson, Billings and Hettinger counties also have polling locations 45-55 minutes away from the courthouses.

Aside from the travel time, the 90 minutes is problematic due to the process followed to close a poll. It's not as simple as pulling a memory card from a machine and shutting it off. Election workers follow several steps to closing a poll.

Ballot Certification

After the polls close, the inspector and judges verify the total number in the DS200 equals the amount of voters checked-in on the Poll Pads. They print the total results report and sign-off certifying the totals. They also verify the number of voted ballots, unvoted ballots, void ballots, spoiled ballots, and set-aside ballots equal the number sent to the location. This information is entered on a ballot certification sheet that is delivered to the County Auditor.

Closing Polls – Tabulators

The official action to “close the polls” is taken when the inspector and or judge using a special key close the polls, print the total results report and access the election USB from the tabulator. The inspector and judges transport the ballots along with an envelope containing the results USB, seal from the tabulator (code is indicated on the certification sheet), and the total results report to the county auditor.

Before the election workers can leave, they also need to pack up the election site. By doing the following:

1. Shut down and pack up Express Vote (voting assistance device)
2. Lock up tabulators
3. Tear down voting booths
4. Remove election related signs
5. Pack up other materials (sample ballots, pens, instructions, tape)

It’s also very important to remember that most of these workers are paid volunteers who have stepped up in their community to serve as election workers. Adding a time limit will only exasperate the level of stress with closing the polls at the end of a 13 hour day.

Mr. Chairman committee members, closing a poll is an important part of the process to ensure the integrity of our election. It is not a process that should be rushed.