



King County

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Statement

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Logan statement on personnel investigation report

"In the spring, I initiated an independent investigation into the handling of absentee ballots following the mishandling of ballots in the April 26 Special Election. The focus of this independent investigation is not limited to the Special Election exclusively, but also addresses the mishandling of 735 "no signature on file" ballots discovered in December and the 96 uncounted ballots that were archived and found in archival boxes in late March.

As director of Elections in King County, my primary duty is to enfranchise all voters and safeguard the process to ensure all ballots are properly counted according to state law.

Since the historic 2004 General Election, we've made great strides in doing just that. We've added security measures to ensure provisional ballots can't go through vote counting machines. We're checking the voter rolls daily to remove deceased voters and felons. Most importantly, we've revamped procedures and increased our training, making it mandatory for all poll workers and staff.

The investigative report we received on Friday is one more effort to improve King County Elections and address mistakes that surfaced as a result of a record close gubernatorial race.

What is clear from this four month investigation is that there was no attempt to sabotage either the 2004 General Election or the April 26 Special Election.

The report shows a staff that was overwhelmed juggling a new primary, record turnout, and intense scrutiny in the closest gubernatorial race in Washington State history. It is with this backdrop that mistakes were made.

With that said, there are several issues in the report that are of great concern to me.

- In several cases procedures were either inadequate or not followed. Shortcuts were taken and there is evidence that a supervisor made a conscious decision not to follow procedures and failed to personally take responsibility for her actions.
- An attitude of distrust was perpetuated which caused staff to doubt the system in place to track ballots.
- Staff on all levels failed to raise serious issues to the appropriate level.
- Management level employees failed to further investigate or take serious issues raised by staff relating specifically to the 735 "no signature on file" ballots.

My goal in calling for this independent investigation was to ensure that anyone responsible for the failure to handle ballots properly is held responsible.

That is precisely what I've done.

As a result of early findings in this investigation, I removed Bill Huennekens from the Superintendent of Elections position in June and reassigned him to a project management position better suited to his skills and background. Although the report shows Mr. Huennekens made many sound decisions based on Washington State law, it also shows he lacked management skills necessary to supervise a complex organization.

I reassigned three lead employees from the mail ballot facility, restructured those functions associated with absentee ballots, and have proposed termination for the absentee supervisor who was responsible for those activities during the November and April elections.

In addition, I am proposing an unpaid, two week suspension for the Assistant Superintendent who oversees ballot processing and delivery. The suspension will be held in abeyance pending successful completion of a detailed performance improvement plan and satisfactory performance during the September Primary and the November General Election.

In addition to these actions, in March I issued all senior leads and Assistant Superintendents detailed performance improvement plans which among several requirements address workplace culture issues that must be addressed.

These steps are adequate to ensure the success of the upcoming September Primary. Additional staff have been hired and trained to fill vacancies to ensure a smooth transition.

In the weeks leading up to the Primary, my focus is on the fall election cycle and the important work that must be done to ensure a smooth election and improve King County Elections.”

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