

ELECTION CENTRAL



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College precincts saw success in Same Day Registration provisional ballots.

With three vibrant universities in the City of Richmond, our office has been gearing up to support the high volume of Same Day Registration (SDR) applications for this Presidential election.

Back in the 2022 midterm election, when SDR was first implemented in Virginia, VCU Student Commons (precinct 214) received nearly 200 SDR provisional ballots, but only 11 could be counted due to limited student awareness about SDR.

This experience taught us that college students are a major demographic for SDR, and we set out to help them understand SDR by partnering with VCU, University of Richmond, and Virginia Union University. Together, we distributed resources like College Student Voter Guide to help students confidently navigate their first election.

Fast forward to this year's presidential election: precinct 214 saw 572 SDR provisional ballots, with an impressive 431 counted - a significant improvement! The university of Richmond's precinct 101 saw 333 SDR ballots with 313 counted, and VUU's precinct 306 had 181 SDR ballots with 171 counted. These results showcase the success of our outreach initiatives and the impact of university and election office collaboration.

On Election Day, our team observed longer lines for SDR than for regular ballots across the college precincts, showing just how popular SDR has become among students.

"Same Day Registration at a college precinct can be pretty intense because so many students use SDR on Election Day," Registrar Balmer said.

Virginia is among a few states offering SDR, and while we're dedicated to supporting college students through the electoral process, we also want to help them transition to registering ahead of time. This makes voting even



smoother for them and lightens the load on election officials, ensuring their ballots are counted without delay.

Overall, 5911 people cast a provisional ballot for this election. Over 90 percent were due to Same Day Registration. 5199 ballots were counted.

Let's continue to make Same Day Registration a success story in Richmond!

What is a Risk-Limiting Audit?

Virginia requires all local election offices to perform a Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA) after a presidential election. So what exactly is RLA?

RLA is a form of quality control. Instead of counting all the ballots and making sure that the election results are accurate, RLA is the process of checking random paper ballots, giving statistical evidence to support the election results.

Virginia offers two approved ways to do RLA: ballot-polling and batch comparison.

Ballot polling is randomly picking large number of ballots and checking them by hand to see if the overall election result was right.

Batch comparison involves selecting groups of ballot from a precinct, hand counting them, and compare the results with the reports from the machine. This form of audit method allows election officials to audit more ballots in short amount of time.

In this past election, our office was required to do a batch comparison audit for the U.S. Senate race. Here's how it worked:

1 **Creating a ballot manifest:** The ballot manifest is an inventory of every ballot cast in a locality for a particular race. It includes all provisional, early voting, absentee, and Election Day ballots.

| | A | B |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Batch Name | Number of Ballots |
| 2 | 107 - LITTLE RIVER | 1086 |
| 3 | 114 - DULLES SOUTH | 674 |
| 4 | 123 - CARDINAL RIDGE | 634 |
| 5 | 209 - POTOMAC FALLS | 1222 |
| 6 | 210 - CASCADES | 1120 |
| 7 | 214 - SUGARLAND NORTH | 984 |
| 8 | 215 - SUGARLAND SOUTH | 1070 |
| 9 | 216 - LOWES ISLAND | 1068 |
| 10 | 217 - SOUTH BANK | 1180 |
| 11 | 220 - MIRROR RIDGE | 922 |
| 12 | 221 - SENECA | 841 |
| 13 | 701 - SULLY | 748 |
| 14 | 702 - PARK VIEW | 746 |
| 15 | 703 - ROLLING RIDGE | 881 |
| 16 | 705 - FOREST GROVE | 880 |
| 17 | 710 - STERLING | 515 |
| 18 | 711 - GUILFORD | 362 |
| 19 | 713 - CARTER | 233 |
| 20 | 715 - OAK GROVE | 352 |

2 **Creating a Candidates Totals by Batch File:** Outline each batch of ballots and how many ballots were casted for each candidate.

| | A | B | C | D |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------|
| 1 | Batch Name | Chris K. Harnisch | Atoosa R. Reaser | Write-In |
| 2 | 107 - LITTLE RIVER | 526 | 537 | 7 |
| 3 | 114 - DULLES SOUTH | 319 | 335 | 10 |
| 4 | 123 - CARDINAL RIDGE | 311 | 317 | 0 |
| 5 | 209 - POTOMAC FALLS | 521 | 682 | 10 |
| 6 | 210 - CASCADES | 462 | 643 | 6 |
| 7 | 214 - SUGARLAND NORTH | 414 | 557 | 7 |
| 8 | 215 - SUGARLAND SOUTH | 442 | 614 | 1 |
| 9 | 216 - LOWES ISLAND | 509 | 547 | 3 |
| 10 | 217 - SOUTH BANK | 539 | 614 | 15 |
| 11 | 220 - MIRROR RIDGE | 380 | 508 | 14 |
| 12 | 221 - SENECA | 384 | 441 | 3 |
| 13 | 701 - SULLY | 341 | 392 | 5 |
| 14 | 702 - PARK VIEW | 333 | 388 | 10 |
| 15 | 703 - ROLLING RIDGE | 305 | 546 | 22 |
| 16 | 705 - FOREST GROVE | 386 | 476 | 6 |
| 17 | 710 - STERLING | 271 | 230 | 2 |
| 18 | 711 - GUILFORD | 127 | 233 | 0 |
| 19 | 713 - CARTER | 92 | 132 | 4 |
| 20 | 715 - OAK GROVE | 113 | 231 | 2 |

3 **Retrieving and tallying ballots:** By using the sort-and-stack method, the audit board create stacks based on the vote on the ballot.

4 **Entering batch tallies into Arlo:** After the ballots are properly retrieved and tallied, the data will be entered into a system called Arlo.

5 **Completion of the RLA:** Once RLA is completed, Dept. of Elections will submit a report to the state board of elections regarding the RLA.

Registrar Balmer said the easiest way to understand RLA is thinking of it like making soup.

“If you are cooking a pot of soup, to taste test the soup, you would use a spoon and taste a tiny portion of the soup instead of tasting the whole port of soup,” Registrar Balmer said.

Risk-limiting audit is done to ensure the accuracy of the election results