

EXCLUSIVE: Milwaukee County Election Commission Certifies Inaccurate Results From August Election; Same Problem Happens In Other Counties

I have learned that the Milwaukee County Election Commission Board of Canvassers Officials Certified inaccurate results for some races in the August 14 primary election and that similar problems may have occurred elsewhere in the state. The results have since been "corrected."

Reid Magney, the spokesman for the Wisconsin Election Commission, tells me a new program established for counties to report their election results misfired and a number of counties ended up reporting duplicate vote totals in some races. Magney says he believes all of the mistakes were caught. But in Milwaukee County, the staff of Election Commission Chief Julietta Henry did not catch the errors and the county's official canvass certified inaccurate results in the Democratic primary for Milwaukee County Sheriff. Essentially, the system double-counted all votes. The mistake should have been caught easily since the sheriff race ended up, on paper at least, with 100,000 more votes than the Democratic primary for governor. But Henry's staff missed the foulup.

Magney, of the state commission, says Milwaukee County was told to have its board of canvassers sign off on the corrected numbers, Henry blames the whole problem on a "glitch" with the new state system. Magney says state election officials are closely monitoring the new system and that any errors will be caught. The inaccurate results originally certified in Milwaukee County didn't change any winners or losers but merely misreported the margin of victory for Earnell Lucas. The numbers are now correct on the county's website. The individual ward by ward vote totals were always correct.

But the mistake never would have been caught had Henry's office not been notified by a sharp-eyed citizen who checked out the numbers on the county's website. The state commission won't be certifying state results until tomorrow. Magney says the new state system will continue to be tested to make sure it works. One would hope so. The November general election is barely over two months away.

Mark Belling
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