

FAQs: Counting Votes, Breaking Ties & Filling Vacancies

Q: Justice of Supreme Court has three candidates for a “vote for one” office: Therefore only registered write-ins would count. Correct?

A: If none of the ballot candidates pass away before the election.

Q: Do the Touchscreen machines properly account for write-ins or is it possible we would have to correct the tape from on the Touchscreen?

A: Yes, touchscreen voting machines (i.e. DREs such as the Edge and Accuvote TSX) will not allow a voter to overvote a contest. The machines acknowledge write-in votes when determining how many candidates a voter can select in a particular contest. For example, in a ‘Vote for Not More Than One’ contest, the voting machine will not allow a voter to enter a write-in and select a ballot candidate in the same contest.

Q: Even though there are four candidates for three seats and now one is deceased, we automatically count all write-in votes, even though it meets the three names on the ballot for vote for not more than three?

A: If one or more ballot candidates pass away, count all write-in votes.

Q: And if one of the listed candidates dies before the election you would count all write-ins in the situation you are now discussing, right?

A: Yes. If one or more ballot candidates pass away before the election, count all write-in votes.

Q: If a candidate dies the day after the election, does that change the way we count ballots, including write-in votes at the election canvass certification?

A: No, you would still count the deceased candidate’s votes if he or she passed away after the election.

Q: I thought we didn't have to count votes for Donald Duck & Mickey Mouse because they couldn't hold office.

A: If you are required to count all write-in votes you must count any names.

Q: Just confirming. If an alderman position has no one on the ballot, but I have two registered write-ins for that position, I still have to count all write-ins, registered or not?

A: Yes, if there are no ballot candidates, count all write-in votes.

Q: In a vote for one: if the oval is filled in for candidate and the oval for write-in is filled in but no name listed, does the candidate vote count?

A: Yes.

Q: If no situation exists that would require poll workers to records write-ins (i.e. no registered write-in, there are enough ballot candidates, no one has passed away) do the poll workers still need to go through each ballot at the end of the night?

A: There will always be the scenario where a write-in vote for a ballot candidate should be counted. This situation would necessitate the review of all ballots even if you have no registered write-in candidates and enough candidates on the ballot that voters can vote for (and no one died).

Q: Is a tie broken on election night for a local municipal election or do we wait to contact the candidates so they could be present?

A: If you have one polling place, and no outstanding provisional ballots, the tie is broken by the MBOC on election night and is composed of the election inspectors. If you have more than one polling place, the MBOC, composed of the clerk and two other qualified electors, would break the tie when it meets after election night.