

PINAL COUNTY 2024 PRIMARY ELECTION
Analysis of Anomalies in Primary Returns

Brief Overview

As the 2024 Primary Election results came in, some candidates noticed that the percentage of EARLY ballots won and the percentage of LATE ballots won reported by the Election Night Reporting system were remarkably similar in each release. In one instance, a candidate who received 28.77% of ballots in his favor in the EARLY returns, also received 28.77% in the POLL returns. Having the EARLY and POLL percentages match for a candidate is unusual, even more unusual was that in Pinal County the matches occurred in seven races among competing candidates.

The Office of Pinal County Supervisor Kevin Cavanaugh then began a study to determine if this was a common occurrence. First, Pinal County election results were examined for similar races consisting of Supervisor, Sheriff, Attorney, Assessor, and any others where two or more candidates were in competition for a single seat. Races for State Legislator and Corporation Commissioner, and City Council were not considered because in those instances a voter may select more than one candidate.

The percentage of returns were calculated by dividing the respective POLL and EARLY vote totals by candidate by the POLL and EARLY totals for that race, giving the percentage. It is typical that there is more than 1% variation across many races examined, except in the Pinal County 2024 election. A histogram is attached for a visual reference of this anomaly.

An example of a 'normal' race is shown below, Supervisor District 2, Pinal County for the years 2016 and 2020.

2016 Pinal				
BOS DIST 2 - 2016				
	EARLY	POLL	PROVISIONAL	Total Votes
WAYNE BACHMANN	435	149	24	608
TISHA CASTILLO	482	244	37	763
CHERYL CHASE	786	243	21	1050
MIKE GOODMAN	796	398	76	1270
MANUEL VEGA	55	17	6	78
WRITE-IN	10	1	1	3769
TOTAL	2564	1052	165	7538
WAYNE BACHMANN	17%	14%		Diff
TISHA CASTILLO	19%	23%		4.40%
CHERYL CHASE	31%	23%		7.56%
MIKE GOODMAN	31%	38%		6.79%
MANUEL VEGA	2%	2%		0.53%
WRITE-IN	0%	0%		

As shown above in yellow, the DIFF, or variation for each candidate between EARLY and POLL ranges from ½ of 1% in the case of VEGA, all the way up to 7.56% for CHASE. This was in 2016.

The next 'Normal' sample is the same Supervisor District 2 race, Pinal County, 2020.

2020 Pinal

BOS DIST 2 - 2020

	EARLY	POLL	PROVISIONAL	Total Votes
MIKE GOODMAN	4810	1242	35	6087
CHUCK GRAY	3666	754	10	4430
				0
Write In	13	7	0	20
	8489	2003	45	10537
				Diff
MIKE GOODMAN	45.65%	62.35%		16.70%
CHUCK GRAY	34.79%	37.30%		2.51%
0	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%
Write In	0.12%	0.73%		0.61%

While there are only two candidates in this race, the ordinary differences range between EARLY and POLL of 2.51 and 16.7% respectively. Again, the histogram shown later will illustrate the data over a longer time period.

The race shown below on the LEFT is that of the 2024 contest between Doug Wolf, incumbent Assessor and Storm Cox, the Challenger. Highlighted in yellow are the differences between the votes captured in EARLY v. POLL. For both candidates there is virtually no difference, with COX having only 1/10 of 1% difference, and WOLF having only 3/10 of 1% difference. To have both candidates match in EARLY and POLL returns is highly unusual.

COUNTY ASSESSOR 2024					COUNTY ASSESSOR 2020				
PINAL COUNTY 2024					PINAL COUNTY 2020				
	EARLY	POLL	PROVISIONAL	Total Votes		EARLY	POLL	PROVISIONAL	Total Votes
STORM COX	7423	2930	0	10353	MICHAEL CRUZ	10571	3088	48	13707
DOUG WOLF	19145	7551	0	26696	DOUGLAS WOLFFE	20080	4341	84	24505
			0	0					0
Write In	29	55	0	84	Write In	43	15	0	58
	26597	10536	0	37133		30694	7444	132	38270
				Diff					Diff
STORM COX	27.91%	27.81%		0.10%	MICHAEL CRUZ	34.44%	41.48%		7.04%
DOUG WOLF	71.98%	71.67%		0.31%	DOUGLAS WOLFFE	65.42%	58.32%		7.10%
0	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%
Write In	0.08%	0.15%		0.07%	Write In	0.11%	0.04%		0.07%

The contest on the right is the ASSESSOR race of 2020, showing a more normal distribution of EARLY v POLL differences. CRUZ showed a 7.04% difference in the returns, and WOLF 7.1%.

Below is a race for Pinal County BOS District 2 in 2016. You can see the more 'normal' distributions represented.

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