COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLAND
COMMONWEALTH ELECTION COMMISSION

Official Commonwealth Election Commission Statement Regarding the Precinct 1A and 1B Runoff Election Ballot Tabulation Procedures

The Commonwealth Election Commission ("CEC") issues this statement to clarify errors that occurred, and that were then immediately and completely corrected, during ballot tabulation for Precincts 1A and 1B in the recent Gubernatorial and Attorney General runoff election.

During tabulation, the CEC learned that the Precinct 1A election day ballots were run on the same machine that had counted the absentee ballots received on election day. The CEC had not yet caused DS-400 tabulation machine to export its absentee ballot data to the "master stick," where all voting data from the CEC's DS-400 tabulation machines is stored. As a result, the Precinct 1A totals were added to the overall absentee ballot totals, which would have mixed the two sets of results had this been allowed to stand.

Likewise, the Precinct 1B election day ballots were run on the same machine DS-400 as the overall early voting ballots, and Precinct 1B totals were added to the existing early voting results. Had this not been corrected, Precinct 1B election day results would have been mixed with the overall early voting results.

Upon discovering these errors, the CEC immediately paused tabulation and caused the separation of the Precinct 1A and 1B election day ballots.

It is important for the CEC to emphasize here that by this time mixing occurred, the overall absentee and early voting ballots had already been tabulated and publicly announced, so those results have never been in question.

The CEC then had staff clear all earlier calculations from the DS-400 machines and re-run the Precinct 1A and 1B election day ballots. Those are the results that were subsequently announced

for Precincts 1A and 1B.

The CEC and its staff are confident that the extraction and reconciliation process produced accurate results. Although the Precinct 1A and 1B election day results were initially mixed with the absentee and early voting totals, those absentee and early voting totals had already been established and announced, so they were relatively simple to back out. Re-running the Precinct 1A and 1B ballots and publishing the results was also a straightforward process.

We understand that these initial mistakes may have confused some of the tabulation observers and members of the public. Ballot counting should be straightforward and verifiable, with results clearly presented and each step of the process viewed and understood. The CEC takes responsibility for these mistakes and sincerely regrets any confusion or concern these mistakes caused.

We are confident that all steps necessary to back out the affected Precinct 1A and 1B ballots and to accurately recount and reconcile the results, and then to finalize overall tabulation, were taken. Although the count could have been handled better, we are confident that the results announced so far are 100% accurate. We look forward to a successful and transparent conclusion of this entire election next week.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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