

# Physical Security Flaws In The Maricopa County Elections Process: A Call For Reform – **DRAFT #1**

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## Introduction

Obvious failures in the handling of critical election materials including precinct ballots and hand-auditable batches of mail-in ballots leads us to call for basic process reforms:

- 1) We demand that ballots selected by party chairs to be hand-counted for the audit two days post-election be selected **one hour prior to the hand-count**, instead of election eve leaving two days in which to tamper with ballot boxes known to be scheduled for hand-count.
- 2) We demand that extra seals be placed on the hand-audit boxes of mail-in votes before they're shipped out of the central tabulator room, to prevent manipulation of those paper ballots prior to the hand audit.
- 3) We demand that polltapes showing precinct vote totals be signed by pollworkers on election night. This is a national standard – see also the Secretary of State's procedures manual, October 2007 edition, page 143.
- 4) We demand that observers at the regional receiving stations be allowed cameras, and the ability to check the intact (or otherwise) state of the seals. See also Secretary of State's procedures manual, October 2007 edition, page 147. (The specific right to check seals means there is no “six foot back” rule for people with party observation credentials.)



*Bought at Fry's Electronics for \$12.99, this box is identical in maker and part number to what Maricopa County uses for precinct ballot boxes and "secure storage" for mail-in votes that will be hand-audited after election day. The centerpunch set was \$7.34 at WalMart. A tie-wrap simulates the security seals the county uses.*

*To call this box "unfit for secure purposes" is an epic understatement.*

## COUNTY PROCEDURAL FAILURE #1: BALLOT BOX SECURITY

The series of pictures throughout this document tell the tale. Probably as a cost-savings measure, the county has chosen a ballot box that was never meant for secure applications and is seriously inadequate. The contents are accessible in less than 10 seconds without leaving any trace and without breaking the security “seal”.

The same boxes are used to hold the batches of mail-in votes pre-selected for audits. These boxes are a “final barrier” against tampering with the mail-in votes, and as such are a prime possible target of manipulation.

**Altering these 30 or so boxes holding approximately 5,000 ballots would allow unlimited manipulation of up to 600,000 or more mail-in votes.**

## **COUNTY PROCEDURAL FAILURE #2: MAIL-IN AUDIT BATCH SELECTIONS**

The county asked party observers to select batches of ballots for hand-auditing later, totaling 5,000 ballots in about 30 boxes.

This matches the number to be pulled in the FIRST round of hand-counting.

However, the Secretary of State's procedures manual, Oct. 2007 edition, calls for 5,000 ballots to be selected out of four times that number out of four times as many boxes, for two reasons:

- 1) The counted boxes are thus “randomly selected” from a larger batch.
- 2) If anything is found wrong in that first batch of 5,000, more hand-counting can be done with additional ballots.



*The county's ballot boxes.*

*Note that the seals are just zip-ties with little serial number "flags".*



*Each side of the box has a single steel "hinge pin" which stays in place due to a "curl" on one end only.*

That means that the first hand-count is for “all the marbles” - while the law allows for a “plan B” if things look odd, the county has rendered that impossible.

If anything looks off with the initial batch of 5,000 ballots, only a hand-count of all 600,000ish early votes will tell us what really happened, and that won't be popular with anybody.

## **COUNTY PROCEDURAL FAILURE #3: OBSERVATION BARRIERS**

The county has established extreme limits on party observation at the regional ballot receiving stations, forcing us six feet back from pollworker materials and unable to check seal status. This is in direct contradiction to the Secretary of State's procedures manual, October 2007 edition, page 147.





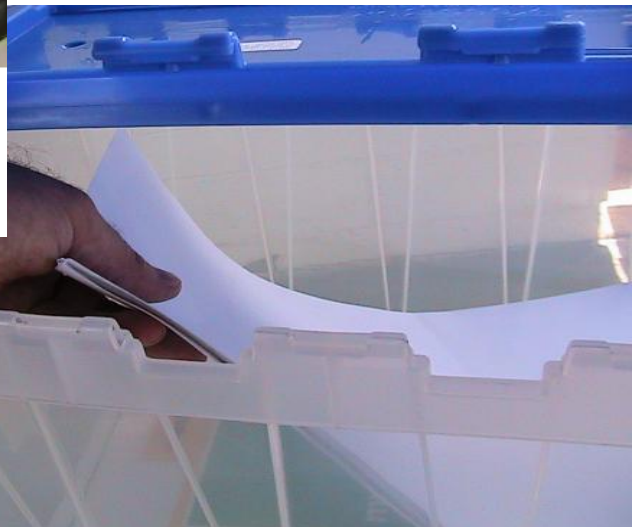
*Drive the steel hinge pin out from the end opposite the "retaining curve". The plastic is easily flexible enough to bend around the steel "bump" without leaving a mark.*

*This "well loved" hammer is worth maybe \$2...*

## CONCLUSION

The county has created specific points at which the election can be subverted. The ballot boxes are easily tampered with, the handcount has been subverted, observation has been limited and basic checks and balances either weakened or destroyed.

We feel there are strong grounds for basic reforms to keep this election in line with the legally mandated procedures manual.



*With the hinge-pin removed, it's ballot piracy ahoy, matey...*

*Note that the pin goes back in as easily as it came out, with zero evidence of tampering.*

*We've left the "Fry's" price tag intact in case Karen Osbourne tries to clap us in irons for "ballot box theft"...*



*Here we see dedicated volunteers checking seals on a ballot box, not realizing that a simple centerpunch and hammer renders their dedication absolutely useless.*

Doug Jones after extensive testing showed a failure rate of 1 ballot in 12 when using the type of ball-point pen the county had suggested. By re-branding everything "Sequoia" the county basically put lipstick on a pig, masking the fact that the same old junk was counting our vote. Is this why the hand audit process and ballot security are subverted today?

SEE ALSO:

<http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/2006-01-12/news/ballot-box-breakdowns>