

McCory concedes after counties finalize vote totals



BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Days after Forsyth County and several other counties finalized their election results, pushing Roy Cooper's lead out of state-wide recount range, Gov. Pat McCrory conceded defeat.

At a few minutes past noon on Monday, Dec. 5, McCrory ended the nation's longest governor's race. His campaign sent out a link to a YouTube video of the governor speaking about the election results.

"Despite continuing questions about the voting process, I personally believe that the majority of our citizens have spoken and we should now do everything we can to support the 75th governor of North Carolina, Roy

Cooper, who my administration team will assist in every way to help the new administration make a smooth transition," said McCrory.

Cooper declared victory and assembled a transition team weeks ago. After a narrow loss on election night, McCrory refused to concede. Instead, his campaign and N.C. GOP, filed protests in 52 counties alleging voters who were dead, felons or who moved out of their county voted. The vast majority of the protests were rejected by boards of elections (BOE) across North Carolina, which all currently have Republican majorities. This includes Forsyth BOE, which rejected all protests for this election.

All but one of North Carolina's 100 counties

finished their individual canvasses last week, which involve checking the accuracy of results and counting provisional and absentee ballots. This caused Cooper's lead over McCrory to grow to 10,263 as of last Friday. A statewide recount can be held if the candidates are separated by less than half a percent or 10,000 votes, whichever is smaller. A recount of Durham County, ordered by the N.C. State BOE, only widened the gap as of Sunday night, as Cooper actually gained three more votes.

After Cooper received a concession call from McCrory, he sent out a statement that said he was ready to make the state a "shining beacon" by "investing in our schools, supporting working fami-

lies and building a state that works for everyone."

"I'd like to thank all of the hardworking families in North Carolina, and I look forward to serving the greatest state in the country as your governor," he said.

Forsyth County Board of Elections certified its results on Wednesday, Nov. 30, adding hundreds of votes to Cooper's lead. BOE Chair Ken Raymond said the election ran smoothly and he was confident in the results. He said that was because of the hard work of the board's director, Tim Tsujii, and his staff.

"They were very meticulous in how they handled ballots," said Raymond. "Tim is a good person, he didn't let anything slip through the cracks, not one ballot, not one write-in,

nothing."

There were 1,850 provisional ballots in Forsyth with 901 being accepted. Voters not being registered was by far the most common reason for them to be discounted. Forsyth BOE Director Tsujii said that people who move into a county often assume their voter registration will automatically transfer, when it doesn't. He said that the provisional ballots will act as registration forms, so they will be qualified to vote in the next election.

A recent ruling by the N.C. State BOE prohibits county boards from discounting ballots without due process. This caused the local board to count three ballots that previous-

ly had been dismissed because the board believed they were double votes and had already counted the one cast by the registered voter.

Tsujii said he also had faith in the local results of the election. He said voting equipment was thoroughly tested and all poll workers went through training. A mix of volunteers from both parties were at all precincts and early voting sites. And the canvass thoroughly and rigorously made sure the results were accurate.

"From beginning to end, there are different safeguards in the procedures to maintain the integrity of the election," said Tsujii.



McCory campaign
Gov. Pat McCrory concedes defeat in this YouTube video released on Monday, Dec. 5.



Photo by Todd Luck

Stuart Russell points out something on a ballot to his fellow Forsyth County Board of Elections members Fleming El-Amin and Ken Raymond as they finalize the canvass on Wednesday, Nov. 30.

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