





# REPORT OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant By-elections



#### **Report of the Chief Electoral Officer**

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December 20, 2023

Honourable Raj Chouhan Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Province of British Columbia Parliament Buildings Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I have the pleasure to present the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer and Statement of Votes for the 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant By-elections to the Legislative Assembly, in accordance with section 13(1)(b) of the *Election Act*.

Respectfully submitted,

**Anton Boegman** 

Chief Electoral Officer British Columbia



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### **SUMMARY**

Elections BC administered two concurrent provincial by-elections in 2023, in the Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant electoral districts. These by-elections marked the third opportunity to test the new voting model enabled by the *Election Amendment Act, 2019*, following by-elections in <u>Vancouver-Quilchena and Surrey South in 2022</u>, and the first opportunity to implement the new model in concurrent by-elections.

The service improvements seen in the 2022 by-elections – better service for voters, close to real-time participation data for parties and candidates, and faster results reporting on election night – were again demonstrated in Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. Additional lessons learned in the 2023 by-elections will be incorporated into the planning for the next provincial general election, scheduled for October 19, 2024.

Although voter turnout in the 2023 byelections was low, and comparable to other mid-cycle by-elections, the voter response to the new voting model using electronic voting books and paper-ballot tabulators was extremely positive. Exit surveys indicated that most voters found the instructions from election officials clear and their voting experience easy. These results reinforced the service improvement aspects of this innovation. Elections BC will continue to focus on reducing administrative barriers to participation, providing accurate information and making sure the voting process as accessible as possible for voters who choose to exercise their democratic rights.

#### Langford-Juan de Fuca

On March 31, 2023, John Horgan resigned as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for the Langford-Juan de Fuca electoral district. Pursuant to section 35 of the Constitution Act, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly informed the Chief Electoral Officer of the vacancy through a warrant. The last possible date for calling the by-election was September 30, 2023, as the writ for a by-election must be issued within six months after the warrant is received. The by-election was called on May 27, 2023. On June 24 (Final Voting Day) there were 52,019 registered voters in Langford-Juan de Fuca. There were five candidates in the by-election representing five registered political parties. At the conclusion of final count on June 28, BC NDP candidate Ravi Parmar was declared elected as the MLA for Langford-Juan de Fuca. Voter turnout was 26.2%, and the cost to administer the by-election was \$675,863, or \$12.99 per registered voter.

#### Vancouver-Mount Pleasant

On April 14, 2023, Melanie Mark resigned as the MLA for the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant electoral district. The last possible date for calling the by-election was October 14, 2023. The by-election was called on May 27, 2023. On June 24 (Final Voting Day) there were 45,533 registered voters in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. There were five candidates in the by-election representing five registered political parties. At the conclusion of final count on June 28, BC NDP candidate Joan Phillip was elected as the MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. Voter turnout was 17.7%, and the cost to administer the by-election was \$803,510, or \$17.65 per registered voter.

#### Calendar of events

Table 1: Event timeline

Day	Milestone	Date
0	Writ Day	May 27
7	Close of candidate nominations, 1 p.m.	June 3
18	Close of general voter registration, midnight	June 14
20-25	Advance voting	June 16-21
22	Deadline to request a vote-by-mail package	June 18
28	Final Voting Day	June 24
28	Initial count – preliminary results announced	June 24
32	Final count	June 28
41	Return Day	July 5
118	Election financing report filing deadline	September 22

### Statistics at a glance

Table 2: Statistics at a glance

Officials and voting places	Langford-Juan de Fuca	Vancouver-Mount Pleasant		
Election officials and district electoral office staff	119	177		
Voting areas	64	66		
Advance voting places	4	6		
Final voting places	11	11		
Voter registration and turnout				
Registered voters at election call	51,517	45,281		
New voter registrations	333	166		
Voters who moved into the electoral district	216	151		
Voters removed from the voters list*	47	65		
Registered voters at close of voting	52,019	45,533		
Registered voters who voted	13,637	8,074		
Voter turnout (as a percentage of registered voters)	26.2%	17.7%		
Candidates, political parties and advertising spons	sors			
Registered political parties that endorsed candidate(s)	5	5		
Candidates	5	5		
Registered third party advertising sponsors that filed disclosure reports	9	8		
Registered political party expenses limit	\$69,086.25	\$69,086.25		
Candidate expenses limit	\$69,086.25	\$69,086.25		
Third party advertising limit	\$3,573.43	\$3,573.43		
Results				
Total valid votes	13,633	8,053		
Rejected ballots	4	21		

<sup>\*</sup> Voters who moved outside Langford-Juan de Fuca or Vancouver-Mount Pleasant or who were deceased were removed from the voters list for each district.

### **CONDUCTING THE BY-ELECTIONS**

Since the last provincial general election in B.C. in 2020, Elections BC's model of electoral administration has changed significantly. The *Election Amendment Act, 2019* introduced the most significant changes to provincial election legislation in 25 years. This Act received Royal Assent in November 2019 and enabled a more efficient and accessible voting model by using secure and proven technology in voting places. This results in better service to voters, close to real-time participation information to candidates to help get out the vote efforts, and much faster results reporting on election night.

The new model of election administration was first put to the test in two by-elections in 2022, in which many of these benefits were demonstrated. More information about the 2022 by-elections is available in the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer – 2022 Vancouver-Quilchena and Surrey South By-elections.

The 2022 by-elections also provided valuable lessons that were applied to the 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-elections. In 2022, some voting places experienced slower than expected network connectivity; while these issues didn't prevent the transmission of voter participation data, voting place suitability reviews and testing procedures were updated in response. Testing in voting places for the 2023 by-elections was conducted under network usage conditions as close as possible to what was anticipated during voting. This provided a more accurate assessment of voting place conditions.

Although Elections BC conducted voting simulations before the 2022 by-elections,

some aspects of the voting process, such as voter behaviour and the flow of traffic in a voting place, are best tested in an actual election. By observing actual voting proceedings, efficiencies, process improvements, and material enhancements can be identified. In the 2022 by-elections, for example, we learned that the secrecy folders used to feed ballots into tabulators occasionally caused jams, which can create a bottle-neck effect as the tabulator is cleared. In Langford-Juan de Fuca, we tested a new folder option that effectively eliminated this issue. In contrast, in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, where the original folder was used, the jamming issue reoccurred. This confirmed the source of the issue and the solution needed moving forward.

A significant benefit of the new voting model is the speed of results on election night. First results were reported within 15 minutes of polls closing in both Vancouver-Mount Pleasant and Langford-Juan de Fuca, with complete results available in 60 minutes. This is a profound improvement over past byelections, where preliminary results reporting did not begin until around 45 minutes after polls closed, and were note complete until late in the evening. We are continuing to target further improvements in this area. We are closely examining election official training and reporting processes as we prepare to scale up to the demands of general election. A priority will be on reporting results as soon as possible after voting closes.

Key differences between these events also represented an opportunity to test voting processes that will come into play in a general election. The 2022 by-elections were separate

events; in a single-district by-election, there is no opportunity to test out-of-district voting procedures or results reporting. The 2023 by-elections were held concurrently; election officials were trained in procedures to serve out-of-district voters at any voting place. Although no voters opted to cast their ballot at a voting place outside of their district, this experience will prove valuable as we prepare to conduct 93 concurrent elections in the upcoming 2024 Provincial General Election.

In some areas of the province network connectivity is uncertain. In these locations it is not possible to deploy the full technology footprint of the new voting model. Voting places will use the previous model to administer voting without electronic voting books or tabulators. Although only a small number of voting places in a provincial general election will operate under the previous model, it is important that those voting places provide the same level of service to voters as voting places operating under the new model. One voting place in Langford-Juan de Fuca was designated a "non-tech" voting place to test these processes in the context of a "full-tech" election. We learned that while manual processes and hand-counting are slower, the level of service to voters remained high.

Building on our experience administering the new voting model in 2022, the 2023 by-elections provided a valuable opportunity to pilot adjustments and updates to voting and counting processes ahead of the demands of a general election.

### Public information and communications

#### Voter's guide

Early in the campaign period for both events, Elections BC distributed a voter's guide to households in each electoral district. The guide



VOTER'S GUIDE FOR THE
2023 LANGFORD-JUAN DE FUCA
PROVINCIAL BY-ELECTION

Election Day is Saturday, June 24, 2023





**VOTER'S GUIDE FOR THE** 

2023 VANCOUVER-MOUNT PLEASANT PROVINCIAL BY-ELECTION

Election Day is Saturday, June 24, 2023



included information about voter eligibility and ID requirements, voting opportunities, a map of the electoral district and information about services for voters with health concerns and voters with disabilities.

The guide was designed to meet Canada Post standards so it could be sent economically as unaddressed mail. Elections BC worked with BC Mail Plus and Canada Post to target only residential points of call within each electoral district's boundaries, reducing "spillage" into neighbouring districts as much as possible. In recognition of the demographics of each electoral district, the voter's guide for Langford-Juan de Fuca was translated into eight additional languages (traditional and simplified Chinese, French, German, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese), and the guide for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant was translated into 12 additional languages (traditional and simplified Chinese, French, Italian, Korean, Polish, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish and Tagalog). Translated versions of the guides were available on Elections BC's website.

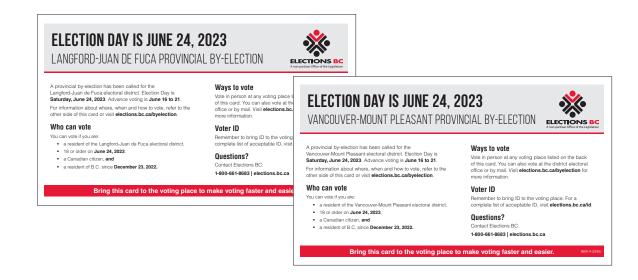
In total, 29,276 voter's guides were delivered in Langford-Juan de Fuca and 33,409 guides were delivered in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant.

#### Where to Vote cards

Where to Vote cards were mailed to registered voters in each district before the start of advance voting. Each voter's card showed the dates and locations for advance voting, the voter's assigned voting place on Final Voting Day, information about voter identification requirements and where to find more information about voting options. Where to Vote cards were also accepted as one of two documents used for voter identification, for those voters without a single piece of government issued photo ID.

Elections BC sent out two mailings of Where to Vote cards. The main Where to Vote card mailing included voters registered as of the election call and was delivered before advance voting started. The second, much smaller mailing, was delivered after the voters list closed. This second mailing allowed voters with late registrations or information updates to receive a card.

Within the tight timeframe of a 29-day campaign period, delivery of this second round of Where to Vote cards may not be guaranteed before the start of advance voting, particularly in more remote areas of the province. While this was not an issue in Langford-Juan de Fuca or Vancouver-Mount



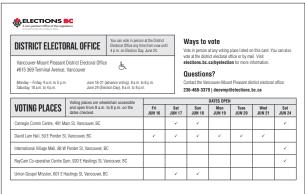
Pleasant, which are located on the south coast near Elections BC headquarters and Canada Post distribution centres, Elections BC is continuing to look for ways to improve how essential election information is shared with voters. This may include exploring electronic or other options for Where to Vote cards in future elections.

#### Outreach

As part of the public awareness campaign for an election or by-election, Elections BC conducts targeted outreach to groups that may face barriers to participating in the election. Elections BC HQ staff work with district electoral officers to identify and connect with organizations that have existing relationships with these groups in order to best meet these voters where they are. For the by-elections, outreach efforts were of particular concern in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, where there were a high number of voters experiencing homelessness or for whom English was not their first language.

In Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, outreach activities and resources were targeted to voters in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) neighbourhood. Early in the election period, the District Electoral Officer connected with the Vancouver Downtown Fastside Community Response Network, an association of organizations that provide services to vulnerable, low-income and at-risk individuals in the DTES. The DEO and DDEO were invited to join the network's weekly meetings, during which service providers gave feedback and advice on voting place locations and identified potential barriers to the electoral process. These weekly meetings also provided an opportunity to share timely messaging and address specific concerns. For example, many people living homeless in the area believed that photo ID was a requirement to vote; many of these voters do not have photo ID, and therefore thought that they couldn't vote. The DEO and DDEO were





able to provide information about alternative forms of ID and the vouching process. The DEO and DDEO also used these opportunities to ensure that service providers were familiar with the confirmation of residence process by which a voter can use the address of a facility (e.g. a shelter) where they ordinarily receive services as their residential address for the purpose of voting.

Informational resources were also provided to network organizations for distribution at their facilities. These resources included posters and voter's guides, as well as an information card modeled after the Where to Vote card that included the dates and times for voting opportunities in the DTES. The card also included messaging addressing feedback from the Vancouver Downtown Eastside Community Response Network, such as information about alternative forms of voter ID and the vouching process.



Outreach in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant also targeted voters who spoke Chinese as their first language. Print, radio and digital advertising in traditional and simplified Chinese was targeted within the electoral district and on social media and news, entertainment and community websites. Translated posters with information about eligibility criteria and when and where to vote were also available and distributed to service providers and community gathering places such as libraries.

Outreach efforts in the by-election provided an opportunity to forge community connections and relationships that will serve as an example for other electoral districts and a valuable resource for the next provincial general election.

#### Website

Elections BC's website is the central source of information about the electoral process in B.C. A dedicated event page for the by-elections contained answers to the most frequently asked questions from voters, as well as key dates, candidate information, voter eligibility and ID

requirements. A notice of voting administration tools, including information about election official roles and the tools they use at voting opportunities (such as ballot printers, electronic voting books, and tabulators), was posted to the Elections BC website in accordance with section 79.01 of the *Election Act*.

The Elections BC website also provided a Where to Vote application that allowed users to enter their address to find their assigned voting place. Users could also find voting places near them based on their location, and the application provided directions. Voting places, the district electoral office and electoral district boundaries were displayed on a Google Map. If the voter entered a home address that was outside of either electoral district, an error message informed them that they were not eligible to vote in the by-elections.

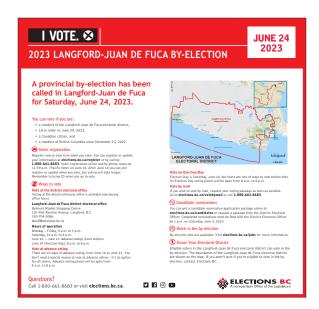
On election night, results were determined in voting places, and telephoned into the election offices, from which they were reported online, starting when polls closed at 8 p.m. Results were updated every three minutes as counting progressed. More information about results reporting on election night is available on page 17.

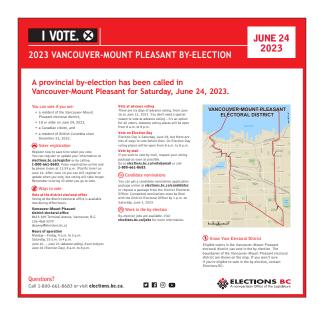
#### Digital advertising and social media

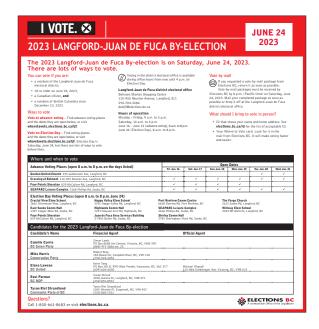
In addition to the statutory newspaper ads required by legislation, Elections BC used digital and social media advertising to raise public awareness of the by-elections and direct voters to the Elections BC website for more information. Online ads in English and other languages were targeted to each electoral district to reach eligible voters.

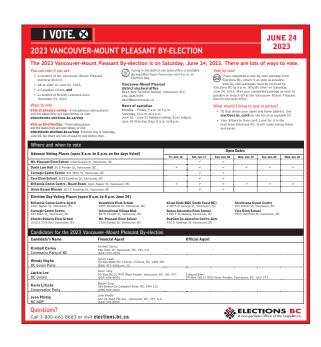
#### Statutory advertising

In accordance with the *Election Act*, Elections BC placed two statutory advertisements in local newspapers for each by-election. The first ad included information about voter eligibility requirements, voter registration, voting opportunities and candidate nominations, as well as a map of the electoral district boundaries and the district electoral office address and contact information. The second ad included the list of candidates, a list of voting places and the dates they were open, and information about eligibility and voter identification requirements. The Vancouver-Mount Pleasant advertisements were translated into traditional Chinese for placement in ethnic community newspapers.









#### Election officials and office staff

The Chief Electoral Officer appoints a District Electoral Officer (DEO) to administer elections in each electoral district. One or more deputy district electoral officers (DDEOs) are also appointed to provide assistance, and to replace the DEO if the position becomes vacant. The DEO for the Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election was Cindy Vance and the DDEO was Jane Stewart. The DEO for the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election was Stanley Narayan and the DDEO was Thom Gallagher. DEOs hire election officials to register voters, supervise voting places, issue ballots and maintain ballot boxes, provide information to voters and perform other duties at voting places. DEOs also hire staff to provide services at their district electoral office.

Table 3: Number of election officials

	Number of officials		
Position	Langford-Juan de Fuca	Vancouver-Mount Pleasant	
Information Officer / Tabulator Officer	32	48	
Supervisory Voting Officer	17	21	
Technical Supervisory Voting Officer	13	16	
Ballot Issuing Officer	43	78	
District electoral office staff	14	14	

The by-elections represented an opportunity to give DEOs and DDEOs first-hand experience with the new model of voting; many appointees for the 2024 Provincial General Election were hired as office staff and election officials, with proportionally more in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant due to the density of population and number of electoral districts in the Vancouver area. More election officials were also hired in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant to meet the distinct needs of the community. This district includes several special voting areas, such as care facilities, which were served by mobile teams of Ballot Issuing Officers. This district also had more voting locations and days of voting than in previous elections in an effort to increase accessibility in the Downtown Eastside, based on information provided by the Vancouver Downtown Eastside Community Response Network.

#### Candidate nominations

The *Election Act* provides two methods for nominating candidates: standing nominations and ordinary nominations. For a by-election, standing nominations may be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer at any time until 4:30 p.m. on Day 2 of the election calendar. Ordinary nominations may be submitted to the district electoral officer during the ordinary nomination period, between 9 a.m. on Day 3 and 1 p.m. on Day 7.

New for the 2023 by-elections, Elections BC accepted candidate nominations online through the Elections BC Services Portal. The portal includes a Candidate Nominations Application

System (CNAS) which allows candidates to complete forms electronically and pay their nomination deposit using a credit card. Political parties may also complete their endorsement of candidates through CNAS. Two candidates in each electoral district completed their nomination application using CNAS.

Candidate nominations closed on June 3, 2023. Five candidates filed nominations in each district.

Table 4: Langford-Juan de Fuca candidates

Candidate name	Political party
Camille Currie	BC Green Party
Mike Harris	Conservative Party
Elena Lawson	BC United
Ravi Parmar	BC NDP
Tyson Riel Strandlund	Communist Party of BC

Table 5: Vancouver-Mount Pleasant candidates

Candidate name	Political party
Kimball Cariou	Communist Party of BC
Wendy Hayko	BC Green Party
Jackie Lee	BC United
Karin Litzcke	Conservative Party
Joan Phillip	BC NDP

#### Voting

British Columbia has the most accessible voting legislation in Canada. This provides voters with many ways to cast their ballot in provincial elections and by-elections. In addition to advance and final voting, the *Election Act* establishes special and absentee voting opportunities, providing for an accessible and inclusive electoral process.

Because the two by-elections were held concurrently, voting places needed to be able to serve voters from both electoral districts. For example, a voter who resided in Langford-Juan de Fuca could attend a voting opportunity in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, where an ordinary ballot listing the candidates for Langford-Juan de Fuca would be printed for the voter. This absentee ballot could then be counted and reported on election night. The "vote anywhere" model provides a high level of service for voters, but does add complexity to the administration of the electoral process. Testing these processes in concurrent by-elections was a valuable experience as we prepare to conduct 93 concurrent elections in the upcoming 43rd Provincial General Election.

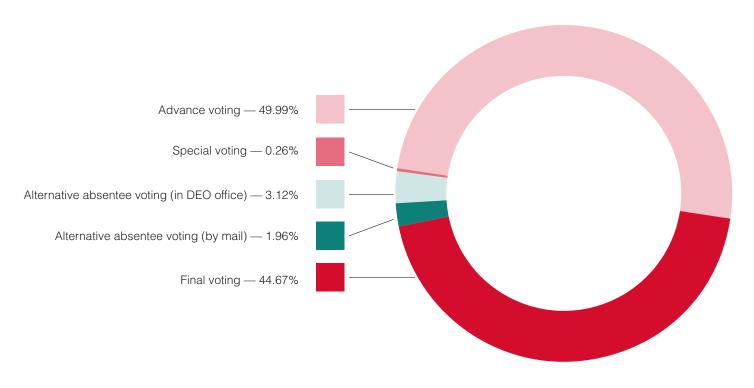
In Langford-Juan de Fuca, Elections BC conducted voting at four advance voting places and 11 final voting places. Special voting opportunities were also available in hospitals and long-term care facilities. Starting on Writ Day, all eligible voters could vote in the Langford-Juan de Fuca district electoral office or by mail. Voters with disabilities were also offered the opportunity to vote by telephone.

Table 6: Votes cast by voting opportunity, 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election

Voting opportunity	Valid votes	Rejected ballots	% of ballots rejected	Votes considered	% of popular vote
Final voting	6,090	3	0.05%	6,093	44.67%
Advance voting	6,815	1	0.01%	6,816	49.99%
Special voting	35	0	0.00%	35	0.26%
Alternative absentee voting (in DEO office)	426	0	0.00%	426	3.12%
Alternative absentee voting (by mail)*	267	0	0.00%	267	1.96%
Total votes considered	13,633	4	0.03%	13,637	100.00%

<sup>\*</sup> Assisted telephone voting and voting by mail figures ombined

Figure 1: Votes by voting opportunity, 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election



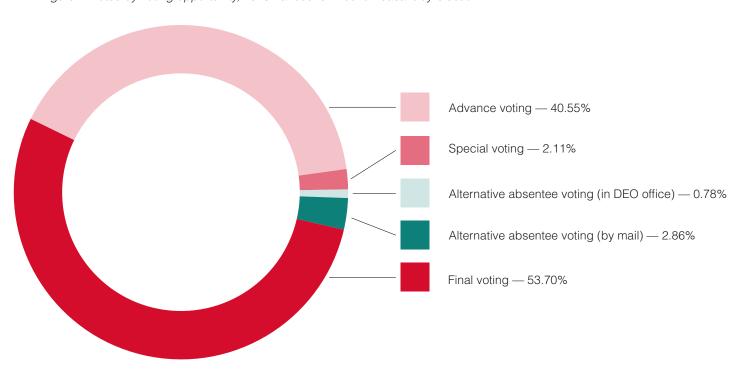
In Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, Elections BC conducted voting at six advance voting places and 11 final voting places. Special voting opportunities were also available in hospitals and long-term care facilities. Starting on Writ Day, all eligible voters could vote in the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant district electoral office or by mail. Voters with disabilities were also offered the opportunity to vote by telephone.

Table 7: Votes cast by voting opportunity, 2023 Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election

Voting opportunity	Valid votes	Rejected ballots	% of ballots rejected	Votes considered	% of popular vote
Final voting	4,324	9	0.21%	4,333	53.70%
Advance voting	3,266	5	0.15%	3,271	40.55%
Special voting	170	7	3.95%	177	2.11%
Alternative absentee voting (in DEO office)	63	0	0	63	0.78%
Alternative absentee voting (by mail)*	230	0	0	230	2.86%
Total votes considered	8,053	21	0.26%	8,074	100.00%

<sup>\*</sup> Assisted telephone voting and voting by mail figures combined

Figure 2: Votes by voting opportunity, 2023 Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election



#### **Advance voting**

Elections BC published advanced voting places and the dates they were open for both byelections on the Elections BC website, the Where to Vote application, on Where to Vote cards for registered voters, and in print and digital advertising in both electoral districts. All advance voting locations were wheelchair accessible.

Advance voting was held at four advance voting places in Langford-Juan de Fuca, and six advance voting places in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on June 16 to June 21.

Advance voting turnout in both by-elections continued the trend of increased voter participation at advance voting compared to Final Voting Day. 50% of the total valid votes in Langford-Juan de Fuca were cast at advance voting; 41% in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. In comparison, during the 2020 Provincial General Election<sup>1</sup>, advance votes represented 39% of the total valid votes in Langford-Juan de Fuca and 25% in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant.

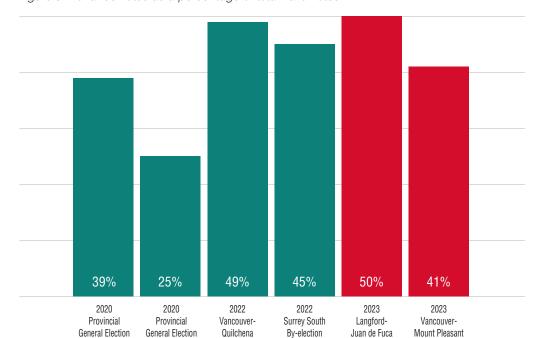


Figure 3: Advance votes as a percentage of total valid votes

(Langford-Juan de

Fuca)

(Vancouver-Mount

Pleasant)

By-election

By-election

By-election

<sup>1</sup> Although there was an unprecendented increase in voting by mail and corresponding decrease in the use of in-person voting opportunities in 2020, advance turnout in Langford-Juan de Fuca (LJF) and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant (VMP) during that election was similar to advance turnout in 2017 (38% LJF / 27% VMP); the significant increase in voting by mail in 2020 (36% LJF / 25% VMP) was largely accounted for by a decrease in voting on General Voting Day (20% LJF / 27% VMP). In 2017, turnout at general voting was 54% in LJF and 59% in VMP. Voting by mail accounted for less than 1% of valid votes in LJF and VMP in 2017.

#### **Final voting**

Elections BC assigns voters to a final voting place based on their address, but they can vote at another voting place if it is more convenient for them. Under the previous voting model, voters who attended a voting place other than their assigned final voting place cast absentee ballots that were counted at final count. At full-tech voting places under the new model, all voters used the same process whereby they received an ordinary ballot for their electoral district, were "struck-off" through the networked electronic voting book, and had their ballot counted by a tabulator on election night. This new process was used for these voters, regardless of wherever they voted on Final Voting Day.

Final Voting Day was June 24, 2023. Voting was available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 11 final voting places in each electoral district.

#### **Special voting**

Special voting opportunities are usually established for voters who are unable to vote by other means because they will be absent or are in a hospital, mental health facility, care facility, provincial correctional centre, or remote community or work site. Special voting opportunities can be held at any point in the election period until the close of voting on Final Voting Day.

Following the approach used in the 2020 Provincial General Election and the 2022 by-elections in Vancouver-Quilchena and Surrey South, both DEOs contacted administrators of care facilities in their electoral district to offer an in-person special voting opportunity, or to coordinate vote-by-mail packages for eligible voters in those facilities. Elections BC also communicated with BC Corrections and Correctional Services Canada to ensure that any eligible voters at those facilities were aware of the by-elections and had the opportunity to participate using vote-by-mail. In Langford-Juan de Fuca, 35 voters cast their ballot at these special voting opportunities. In Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, 170 voters voted at a special voting opportunity.

#### **Absentee voting**

One of the benefits of using technology in the voting place is that voters who vote on Final Voting Day at a voting place other than their assigned voting place no longer vote under absentee provisions. This means that these voters experience the same level of service whatever voting place they vote at. It also means their votes are counted on election night, instead of being placed in a certification envelope and counted at final count.

Votes cast at the district electoral office are considered absentee votes. Voting in the district electoral office was available from when the by-elections were called on May 27, 2023 until 4 p.m. on Final Voting Day. 426 absentee votes were cast in the Langford-Juan de Fuca district electoral office and 63 absentee votes were cast in the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant district electoral office.

#### Voting by mail

While the 2020 Provincial General Election saw an unprecedented increase in the number of voters choosing to vote by mail, that experience has not been repeated in subsequent by-elections. Circumstances that drove the high rates of voting by mail in 2020 – namely the

COVID-19 pandemic – have significantly changed. While public awareness of this voting option remains high, voter behaviour has shifted back towards in-person voting opportunities.

In Langford-Juan de Fuca, Elections BC received 334 requests for vote-by-mail packages. Every request for a vote by mail package was fulfilled, but not all packages were returned by voters. Of the 334 packages mailed out, 267 were received by Elections BC before 8 p.m. on Final Voting Day. 16 voters who requested a vote-bymail package opted to vote at an in-person voting opportunity instead. In Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, 288 voters requested packages, and 230 packages were returned by the deadline. Ten voters who requested a package voted in-person instead. Voting by mail represented approximately 2% of the total votes considered in each by-election.

#### **Assisted telephone voting**

Elections BC has offered assisted telephone voting as an accessible voting option since the 2017 Provincial General Election. This voting option was originally available to a limited number of voters living with vision loss or a permanent disability that prevented them from voting independently at another voting opportunity. For the 2020 Provincial General Election, we significantly expanded access to this option due to the pandemic and the unscheduled election call. The option was made available to all voters living in care facilities and to patients in acute care hospitals experiencing an outbreak. For the 2020 election, it was also made available to voters from a First Nations community that had instituted community guarantine measures, voters who were self-isolating during the last week of the campaign period and Canadian Forces members deployed overseas. We have maintained this expanded eligibility criteria for by-elections held since 2020.

Ensuring that voters who vote by telephone experience the same right to privacy and secrecy as any other voter is an important consideration for Elections BC. The telephone voting process was developed to ensure the provisions of the *Election Act* would be met while also creating an accessible voting opportunity.

First, each caller's identity and eligibility is confirmed. The call is then transferred to an election official who is not told the identity of the voter. The election official administers voting for the voter, including marking the ballot on their behalf. A second election official, who also does not know the voter's identity, monitors the call and ensures the vote is cast according to the voter's wishes.

For the Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-elections, telephone voting was available between June 16 and June 23, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m, and from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Final Voting Day, June 24.

### Voter participation and turnout

One of the key benefits of the new voting model is the ability to provide campaigns with close to real-time voter participation data to help them in their get out the vote efforts.

Candidates and parties who requested a voters list and submitted an approved privacy policy were given access to voter participation information (whether or not a registered voter had voted in the by-election) through the Secure Data Download Service (SDDS), the same process used to provide participation data since 2017.

Participation files were uploaded to the SDDS once a day, starting three days

before the start of advance voting. These files included participation information about voters who had voted by mail or in the district electoral office. Files were provided twice a day on advance voting days and every 30 minutes on Final Voting Day. This represents much more timely information than has ever been provided in previous general elections and by-elections. Participation files also included all voting opportunities for the first time. Previously, participation files only included advance voting.

In Langford-Juan de Fuca voter turnout was 26.2%, and in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant voter turnout was 17.7%. Voter participation in a by-election is typically lower than turnout during a provincial general election. Turnout in the by-elections was lower than turnout in both electoral districts in the 2020 Provincial General Election, but was in the usual range of previous provincial by-elections.

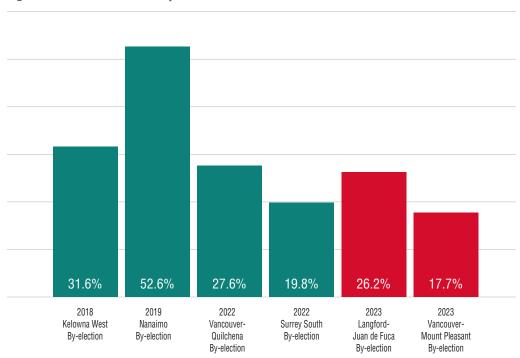


Figure 4: Turnout in recent by-elections

#### Counting

#### **Initial** count

Tabulators are a key piece of technology in the modernized voting model. Tabulators accurately count voter-marked paper ballots and provide faster results on election night. Tabulators can count ballots from more than one electoral district, so most absentee ballots can also be counted at initial count. Because voters are continuously struck off the voters list through the electronic voting book, in close to real-time, multiple voting is prevented and there is no need for a delayed count of absentee ballots to allow time for these integrity checks.

Our election laws, procedures and security standards ensure the integrity and security of the tabulators, which are not connected to the internet. A rigorous quality assurance process was in place to ensure accurate counts. This process included pre-election logic and accuracy testing, producing zero-tapes from each tabulator before any ballots were inserted, ballot reconciliation after voting closed, scrutinized hand-counts of ballots from randomly selected tabulators to verify results, and post-election logic and accuracy testing.

Rejected ballot rates were similar to the 2022 by-elections, which were in turn much lower than rejected ballot rates in previous by-elections held under the old voting model. The rejected ballot rate in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant was 0.26%; in Langford-Juan de Fuca, only four ballots, or 0.03% were rejected – the lowest ever in a provincial by-election or general election in B.C. The decreased rate of rejected ballots is a key benefit from the use of ballot tabulators, which notify voters if their ballot has been filled out incorrectly (e.g. the tabulator detects markings for two candidates). This gives voters an opportunity to correct their ballot such that it will not be rejected. Elections BC will continue to monitor ballot rejection rates closely in future elections.

At the close of voting, election officials produced a results tape from each tabulator and completed reconciliation procedures to ensure that the number of votes considered equaled the number of ballots issued. Results can be produced by electronic tabulators very quickly and accurately. Results from each voting place were reported by phone to the district electoral office, recorded in Elections BC's Voting Results System, and published on Elections BC's website.

In both by-elections, results began to be reported within 15 minutes of the close of voting. Complete preliminary results were known within an hour of polls closing. This was a marked improvement from past by-elections with manual counts. Typically in past by-elections results only started to be reported about 45 minutes after polls closed. Preliminary results reporting was usually not complete until late on election night. We are continuing to refine our procedures to ensure that rapid preliminary results reporting on election night can be maintained in a provincial general election.

Immediately following Final Voting Day, district electoral officers and Elections BC HQ staff conducted a hand count of a randomly selected ballot box to confirm the accuracy of results. The manual count validated the results produced by the tabulator. Candidate representatives were invited to observe the hand count.

#### **Recounts**

Under the *Election Act*, candidates or their official agents can request a recount of some or all of the ballots considered at initial count, within three days after Final Voting Day. Recount requests can only be made where:

- the difference between the top two candidates is close (defined in the *Election Act* as 100 votes or fewer); or
- votes were not correctly accepted or ballots were not correctly rejected, or a ballot account does not accurately record the number of votes for a candidate.

No recount requests were received in either the Langford-Juan de Fuca or Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election.

#### Final count

Under the previous model of election administration, absentee ballots were counted at final count, beginning 13 days after election night. The *Election Amendment Act, 2019* updated the timing of final count to a date specified by the Chief Electoral Officer, no earlier than four days following Final Voting Day. Under the new voting model, only a small number of votes will be counted at final count in concurrent by-elections or a provincial general election.

Final count for the by-elections took place on June 28, 2023. Fewer than 100 ballots were considered at final count for each district. At the conclusion of final count the winning candidate in each district was declared elected.

### **ELECTION FINANCING**

Under the *Election Act*, candidates, political parties and constituency associations involved in the election must file election financing reports within 90 days after Final Voting Day. Individuals and organizations that sponsor election advertising must be registered with Elections BC, and sponsors who sponsor election advertising with a value of more than \$500 must file an election advertising disclosure report within 90 days after Final Voting Day.

The filing deadline for the by-election reports was September 22, 2023. All reports were received by the filing deadline for both by-elections. Scanned reports for political participants, including report summaries and contributions received, are available on Elections BC's website.

Under the *Election Act*, eligible parties and candidates can submit claims to have some of their election expenses reimbursed. Eligible parties and candidates can be reimbursed for up to 50% of their eligible expenses, up to a maximum of 50% of the election expenses limit. 50% of the estimated claim must be paid to the financial agent of a party or candidate within 15 days after the claim and supporting receipts are filed. The remainder is paid after Elections BC reviews the report and supporting records and receipts. The amount of the second payment is adjusted if the party or candidate has claimed amounts not eligible for reimbursement.

Parties are eligible to have expenses reimbursed if their endorsed candidate receives 10% or more of the valid votes in a by-election. Candidates are eligible if they received at least 10% of the valid votes in the by-election. For the 2023 by-elections, four political parties and six candidates received sufficient votes to qualify for election expense reimbursements. The tables below show the election expense reimbursements claimed by eligible candidates and parties in both by-elections.

Table 8: Amounts claimed for election expense reimbursement by candidates, 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election

Candidate name	Affiliation	Election expense reimbursement claimed
Camille Currie	BC Green Party	\$29,725.79
Mike Harris	Conservative Party	\$8,444.45
Ravi Parmar	BC NDP	\$27,809.37

Table 9: Amounts claimed for election expense reimbursement by candidates, 2023 Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election

Candidate name	Affiliation	Election expense reimbursement claimed
Wendy Hayko	BC Green Party	\$4,326.08
Jackie Lee	BC United	\$29,515.97
Joan Phillip	BC NDP	\$27,754.19

Table 10: Amounts claimed for election expense reimbursement by political parties

Political party	Langford-Juan de Fuca	Vancouver-Mount Pleasant
BC Green Party	\$14,376.30	\$667.02
BC NDP	\$29,451.13	\$31,214.39
BC United*	-	\$14,421.96
Conservative Party*	\$14,956.88	-

<sup>\*</sup> Party received less than 10% of the total valid votes in one of the by-elections, and therefore was not eligible for election expense reimbursement for that by-election.

### STATEMENT OF VOTES

#### Summary of results

Table 11: Summary of results, 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election

Candidate	Affiliation	Total valid votes	% of total valid votes
Camille Currie	BC Green Party	2,405	17.64%
Mike Harris	Conservative Party	2,702	19.82%
Elena Lawson	BC United	1,173	8.60%
Ravi Parmar	BC NDP	7,279	53.39%
Tyson Riel Strandlund	Communist Party of BC	74	0.54%
		13,633	100.00%

Table 12: Summary of results, 2023 Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election

Candidate	Affiliation	Total valid votes	% of total valid votes
Kimball Cariou	Communist Party of BC	167	2.07%
Wendy Hayko	BC Green Party	931	11.56%
Jackie Lee	BC United	1,101	13.67%
Karin Litzcke	Conservative Party	395	4.91%
Joan Phillip	BC NDP	5,459	67.79%
		8,053	100.00%

#### Results by voting place

The following pages contain summaries of the results of the 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-elections by voting opportunity and voting place. Registered political parties are listed in alphabetical order by the ballot name of their candidate.

	Camille Currie	Mike Harris	Elena Lawson	Ravi Parmar	Tyson Riel Strandlund	Total valid votes	Rejected ballots	Registered voters
	GP	СР	BCU	NDP	COMM			
Advance voting								
Crossing at Belmont	320	310	179	1,140	5	1,954	1	
Four Points Sheraton	193	276	125	814	6	1,414	0	
Gordon United Church	166	185	109	603	6	1,069	0	
SEAPARC Leisure Complex	376	505	160	1,325	12	2,378	0	
Sub-totals: Advance voting	1,055	1,276	573	3,882	29	6,815	1	
Final voting								
Crystal View Elem School	100	78	39	224	2	443	0	3,371
East Sooke Comm Hall	109	83	18	161	3	374	0	1,528
Four Points Sheraton	222	225	95	582	9	1,133	0	11,748
Happy Valley Elem School	178	225	121	541	4	1,069	0	8,503
Highlands Comm Hall	88	116	53	172	1	430	0	3,728
Juan de Fuca Area Services Building	53	83	30	165	4	335	1	2,440
Port Renfrew Comm Centre	6	4	2	20	1	33	0	230
SEAPARC Leisure Complex	243	283	84	634	10	1,254	2	11,277
Shirley Comm Hall	27	35	15	43	2	122	0	554
The Forge Church	112	102	58	271	4	547	0	6,454
Willway Elem School	64	71	28	185	2	350	0	2,103
Sub-totals: Final voting	1,202	1,305	543	2,998	42	6,090	3	51,936
Special voting	6	10	3	16	0	35	0	83
DEO office voting	75	75	28	245	3	426	0	
Mail-in voting *1	67	36	26	138	0	267	0	
Assisted telephone voting *1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Grand totals	2,405	2,702	1,173	7,279	74	13,633	4	52,019
% of valid votes	17.64%	19.82%	8.60%	53.39%	0.54%	10,000	-	0=,010
Summary								
Valid votes - Advance and final voting	12,905	94.66%		То	tal valid votes			
Special voting	35	0.26%		То	tal valid votes			
DEO office voting	426	3.12%		То	tal valid votes			
Mail-in voting *1	267	1.96%		То	tal valid votes			
Assisted telephone voting *1	-	-		То	tal valid votes			
Tatal valid vata	40.000							
Total valid votes	13,633							
Rejected ballots	4	0.03%			Ballots cast			
Registered voters who voted	13,637	26.43%		Rea	istered voters			

Candidate elected:	Ravi Parmar (BC NDP)			
Candidate elected:	Ravi Parmar (BC NDP)			
*1 Mail-in and assisted telephone voting result	ts are combined			
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For a map of Vancouver-Quilcehna, visit <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.1001/j.j.gov/">https://dx.doi.org/10.1001/j.j.gov/</a>	://elections.bc.ca/docs/map/redis	17/ED/LJF_ED.pdf		

	Kimball	Wendy	Jackie	Karin	Joan	Total valid	Rejected	Registered
	Cariou COMM	Hayko GP	Lee BCU	Litzcke CP	Phillip NDP	votes	ballots	voters
Advance voting								
Britannia Comm Centre - Board Room	15	135	58	38	783	1,029	0	
Carnegie Comm Centre	14	22	27	18	116	197	1	
David Lam Hall	9	50	213	33	277	582	3	
Mt. Pleasant Elem School	11	146	82	39	714	992	0	
Tyee Elem School	6	35	39	19	225	324	0	
Union Gospel Mission	2	8	27	9	96	142	1	
Sub-totals: Advance voting	57	396	446	156	2,211	3,266	5	
Final voting								
Britannia Comm Centre-Gym C	5	49	27	15	249	345	0	3,72
Carnegie Comm Centre	5	20	35	10	99	169	0	4,35
Charles Dickens Elem School	9	62	79	36	354	540	2	3,68
Grandview Elem School	16	44	25	14	274	373	0	2,57
International Village Mall	5	17	31	10	82	145	0	3,34
Kivan Club (BGC South Coast BC)	7	41	42	19	270	379	0	4,11
Mt. Pleasant Elem School	20	91	71	30	556	768	3	6,98
Queen Alexandra Elem School	11	69	49	29	415	573	1	5,41
RayCam Co-operative Centre-Gym	7	20	51	14	200	292	2	2,49
Strathcona Comm Centre	5	24	73	25	200	327	1	4,24
Tyee Elem School	4	44	70	14	281	413	0	4,16
Sub-totals: Final voting	94	481	553	216	2,980	4,324	9	45,09
Special voting	12	6	80	12	60	170	7	44
DEO office voting	0	9	5	3	46	63	0	
Mail-in voting *1	4	39	17	8	162	230	0	
Assisted telephone voting *1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Grand totals	167	931	1,101	395	5,459	8,053	21	45,53
% of valid votes	2.07%	11.56%	13.67%	4.91%	67.79%			
Summary								
Valid votes - Advance and final voting	7,590	94.25%		Total	valid votes			
Special voting	170	2.11%			valid votes			
DEO office voting	63	0.78%			valid votes			
Mail-in voting *1	230	2.86%			valid votes			
Assisted telephone voting *1	-	-			valid votes			
Total valid votes	8,053							
Rejected ballots	21	0.26%			Ballots cast			
riojootoa balloto	۷ ا	0.20/0			Danois Casi			

Registered voters	45,533			
Candidate elected:	Joan Phillip (BC NDP)			
*1 Mail-in and assisted telephone voting resu	Its are combined			
For a map of Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, visi	https://elections.bc.ca/docs/m	ap/redis17/ED/VMP_ED	).pdf	

### **ELECTIONS BC EXPENSES**

The following expenses were incurred by Elections BC in administering the 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca and Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-elections. Actual costs vary between events based on factors such as the number of registered voters and the locations of electoral district (e.g. voter notice postage/printing and office and voting place rental costs).

Table 13: Elections BC expenses, 2023 Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election

Central office expenses	Fiscal 2023/24
Salaries	\$26,934
Professional services	\$51,211
Travel	\$278
Information systems	\$109,605
General office expenses	\$12,574
Voter notice postage/printing	\$68,127
Ballot printing	\$10,452
Advertising and publications	\$83,662
Total	\$362,844

District electoral office expenses	Fiscal 2023/24
District electoral officer salary and benefits	\$33,292
Deputy district electoral officer salary and benefits	\$29,778
Election official fees	\$107,131
Support staff salaries	\$45,643
Travel	\$1,144
General office expenses	\$6,701
Voting place rental	\$21,318
Office rental	\$68,014
Total	\$313,019
Total election expenses	\$675,863
Number of registered voters on Final Voting Day	52,019
Cost per registered voter	\$12.99
Election expense reimbursements to candidates and political parties <sup>1</sup>	\$110,000

<sup>1 –</sup> Estimate based on the amount paid and number of eligible candidates and political parties from previous by-elections. Actual cost will not be known until Elections BC has audited the claims and associated receipts.

Table 14: Elections BC expenses, 2023 Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election

Central office expenses	Fiscal 2023/24
Salaries	\$31,604
Professional services	\$52,649
Travel	\$960
Information systems	\$112,960
General office expenses	\$34,708
Voter notice postage/printing	\$59,962
Ballot printing	\$9,749
Advertising and publications	\$105,232
Total	\$407,824

District electoral office expenses	Fiscal 2023/24
District electoral officer salary and benefits	\$33,595
Deputy district electoral officer salary and benefits	\$31,544
Election official fees	\$137,646
Support staff salaries	\$46,136
Travel	\$3,925
General office expenses	\$19,552
Voting place rental	\$33,288
Office rental	\$90,000
Total	\$395,686
Total election expenses	\$803,510
Number of registered voters on Final Voting Day	45,533
Cost per registered voter	\$17.65
Election expense reimbursements to candidates and political parties <sup>1</sup>	\$110,000

<sup>1 –</sup> Estimate based on the amount paid and number of eligible candidates and political parties from previous by-elections. Actual cost will not be known until Elections BC has audited the claims and associated receipts.

## APPENDIX: ORDERS OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Section 280 of the *Election Act* gives the Chief Electoral Officer the power to issue Orders to vary from the Act if necessary because of an emergency, mistake or extraordinary circumstance. Typically Orders of the Chief Electoral Officer are reactive, responding to issues that arise during an election. Errors made by voters or election officials may result in an Order being issued to rectify the mistake. The Chief Electoral Officer issued one Order in relation to the 2023 Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election. No Orders were issued in relation to the Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election:

#### EA-ORD001-2023

June 24, 2023

Election officials at the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant district electoral office erred in providing a voter with a replacement vote-by-mail certification envelope that did not bear his name and residential address. Using other information available to them, the election officials were able to match the certification envelope to the voter, and subject to this order, it was allowed to be considered during final count.

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