

Checks and Balances in Nevada: The Post-Election Day Process

American elections are run by local and state officials alongside tens of thousands of our friends and neighbors from both political parties. These bipartisan teams count, canvass, and audit every ballot — whether in person or by mail — verifying identities, inspecting ballots, and ensuring each is counted as intended. This rigorous process leads to the final step: certification. This is the straightforward phase of the process, in which election officials declare the winners.

This memo outlines the checks and balances in Nevada that ensure all state and local rules are followed. Importantly, this is nonpartisan educational research intended for 501(c)(3)-compliant purposes only. It is not to be used for any partisan, political, or electioneering activities by any organization.

Counting: Technology and Bipartisan Oversight Work to Triple-Check Results for Accuracy

Nevada ballots are counted using automatic tabulation equipment/a mechanical voting system.¹ Nevada law mandates specific processes for the counting of votes. The process requires participation by a team of bipartisan election officers and includes equipment testing and periodic reconciliation of results.²

Quality-Tested Technology Leads to Trustworthy Results

The Nevada Secretary of State must approve all voting systems in Nevada and must meet or exceed standards set by the United States Election Assistance Commission.³ Nevada law requires that all voting systems be tested by an Accuracy Certification Board (appointed by the local clerk), which must consist of three individuals; no more than two of whom may be from the same political party.⁴

To ensure all tabulation equipment is working appropriately before the election, the county clerk or registrar of voters must conduct logic and accuracy tests on automatic tabulating

¹ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293B.033](#)

² [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293.217](#)

³ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293B.063; 293B.104](#)

⁴ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293B.140](#)

equipment/mechanical recording devices within the two weeks before early voting.⁵ Local election officials use test ballots to test the voting system and all its components. If there is an error, it must be immediately disclosed to the secretary of state. Testing is open to representatives of the political parties, the press, and the public.⁶

Transparent Processes Instill Confidence

Nevada law also requires its voting system to allow each voter to privately and independently verify the votes they selected before their ballot is counted.⁷ Voters will have the opportunity to correct any error. Counting of early in-person ballots begins after 8 a.m. on Election Day, and votes cast on Election Day are counted after the close of polls.⁸ Clerks must allow members of the public to observe the counting of ballots at the central counting place, but watchers are prohibited from interfering with the counting process.⁹ For added transparency, clerks are permitted to photograph or record the counting process. Any registered voter can submit a written request to receive a copy of the photo or recording.

Audits Verify Accuracy of Results

To ensure the accuracy of the tabulated results, county clerks or registrars must publicly conduct post-election audits, including risk-limiting and certification audits of election tabulators.¹⁰ The risk-limiting audits, required by each county, cover one randomly selected race for state or federal office and one race for county office. The certification audits confirm that the paper records produced by a voter-verified paper audit trail accurately record all votes cast by voters on the mechanical recording device.

In counties with populations of at least 100,000 people, county officials randomly select and audit 2% of the electronic tabulators, or at least three tabulators. Counties with populations below 100,000 people must also test 2% of electronic tabulators used in the election, or at least one. In any case, if a discrepancy exists, the clerk must notify the secretary of state and investigate the cause of the discrepancy.

Canvassing: Elected Officials Ensure Totals Are Correct

County Canvass: Public meeting of the Board of Commissioners

⁵ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293B.033](#). Early voting in Nevada begins on the third Saturday before Election Day. [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293.3568](#)

⁶ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293B.145](#)

⁷ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293.2696](#)

⁸ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293.3606](#)

⁹ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293B.353](#)

¹⁰ [NAC § 293.481](#); [NAC 293.490](#)

In Nevada, the board of county commissioners meets to conduct the canvass once the returns from each precinct and district within the county are received.¹¹ They must complete that canvass, certify the results, and send an electronic version of the count (“abstract”) to the secretary of state by the tenth day after Election Day. The canvassing process must be open to the public.

State Canvass: State Officials Confirm and Compile County Results

For the state canvass, the justices of the Supreme Court (at least a majority) meet with the secretary of state on the fourth Tuesday of November after the election to canvass the certified county abstracts for statewide, federal, and multi-county election results.¹²

Certification: The Voters Have Spoken

The county clerk is required to issue a certificate of election for individuals who have the highest number of votes in races for district, county, and township offices.¹³

For state, federal, and multi-county elections, almost immediately after the canvass by the Supreme Court and the secretary of state, the governor issues certificates of election and proclaims the results.¹⁴

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¹¹ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293.387](#)

¹² [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293.395](#)

¹³ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 293.393](#)

¹⁴ [Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann § 293.395](#)