

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

October 2025

AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY'S BALLOT RECONCILIATION WORKSHEETS FROM THE NOVEMBER 2022 GENERAL ELECTION

The mission of the South Carolina State Election Commission (SEC) is to ensure every eligible citizen can register to vote and participate in fair and impartial elections, knowing that every vote counts and every vote matters.

Pursuant to S.C. Code §7-3-20(D)(3), the SEC is authorized to conduct audits of county boards of voter registration and elections to ensure those boards' compliance with applicable state or federal laws or SEC policies, procedures, or standardized processes regarding the conduct of elections or the voter registration process by all persons involved. These audits are conducted by the SEC's Audit Division.

Additionally, S.C. Code §7-3-25(A) authorizes the SEC to identify any compliance failures and establish and implement a corrective action to remedy such failures. Recommendations in this report will require implementation of a corrective action plan that is developed by the county and approved by the SEC's Audit Division.

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

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Summary of Results

For Orangeburg County's ballot reconciliation worksheets from the November 2022 General Election, 64% were completed, and 39% were reconciled. For all except two of the county's worksheets that were partially completed, this was likely due to the lack of a requirement from the State Election Commission (SEC) to fill every field, even if zero. Additionally, two partially completed worksheets were missing values for most of the worksheet. For the 61% of the county's worksheets that were not reconciled, this was due to ballot accounting issues, data entry issues, and incorrect addition. Adequately completing and reconciling the ballot reconciliation worksheets for each polling location may give greater assurance that the results include all valid ballots cast.

Background

As defined by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, ballot reconciliation is the method in which election officials keep track of each ballot that has been printed or issued to a voter. Tracking the number of ballots printed, used, and unused during an election cycle ensures election officials have accounted for every ballot created and the election results include every valid ballot cast.

In South Carolina, printed paper ballots were not common until the state's current voting equipment was implemented in all 46 counties in 2020. Prior to then, the state used a direct recording electronic, or DRE, as part of its voting system. A DRE is a vote capture device in which ballots are displayed, selections are made, and results are stored all via electronic format. The exceptions to this were the ballots printed for voters whose right to vote had been challenged at the precinct or who had moved but were still allowed to vote and the printed ballots used in emergency situations. Since these ballots were the only ballots in paper form, these were the only ballots that could be accounted for at the time.

South Carolina's transition in February 2020 to a paper-based voting system, with 100% printed paper ballots, significantly altered the process of accounting for ballots. In preparation for the change to this new system, the SEC's developed a ballot reconciliation worksheet in September 2019 to account for and reconcile ballots supplied, used, not used, and lost as well as the number of voters who voted. Over the last five years, there have been minor updates to the worksheet, but it remains generally the same as the September 2019 version. Figure 1 below is an image of the ballot reconciliation worksheet used during the 2022 November General Election. It is important to note that a description of the worksheet and the terms used within are included in the analysis that follows.

Figure 1: S.C. State Election Commission's Election Day Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet

County _____ Precinct _____ Date _____

Ballots Supplied		
A	Ballot Cards (Completed by County Office)	
B	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Completed by County Office) (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
C	Additional Ballot Cards	
D	Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
Total 1		

Ballots Used		
E	Ballots Scanned (Ballot Cards and Emergency Ballots) (Number displayed on the Scanner/DS200)	
F	Provisional Ballots (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots/Envelopes)	
G	Spoiled Ballots (Ballot Cards + Hand-Marked Paper Ballots)	
Total 2		

Ballots Not Used		
H	Ballot Cards	
I	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
Total 3		

Voters Checked In		
J	Electronic Poll Book (EPB)	
K	Paper Poll List (Include Provisionals NOT entered in the EPB) (DO NOT Include Curbside Poll List)	
Total 4		

Total 2 + **Total 3** = (Should equal Total 1)

Total 4 + **G** = (Should equal Total 2)

Explain any discrepancies:

Are you returning any Emergency ballots that have not been scanned? Yes ☐ No ☐
(Do NOT include Provisional or Failsafe Provisional ballots)

SEC FRM 1150-202208

every vote matters.
every vote counts.

Source: S.C. State Election Commission

State Law and SEC Requirements

While state law only requires ballot reconciliation for election day, the SEC’s standardized operating procedures mandate this process for absentee and early voting as well. However, the scope of our audit was limited to election day ballot reconciliation, specifically for the 2022 November General Election. Therefore, the following sections provide an overview of the legal requirements for ballot reconciliation and the SEC’s ballot reconciliation worksheet as they pertain to election day.

Overview

S.C. Code §7-13-1150 requires poll clerks—the lead poll managers—to account for all ballots delivered to them and return the number of ballots supplied, spoiled—ballots that were defaced or marked in error—unused, voted, and lost, if any. S.C. Code §7-13-1410 requires poll managers to count the number of individuals who voted as well as unused and spoiled ballots. Between the two sections of the law, a poll clerk must account for ballots supplied, ballots used—including spoiled and lost ballots—ballots unused, and voters who voted. This accounting of ballots is also referred to as ballot reconciliation.

By Voting Type and Election Type

In the abovementioned sections of state law, the use of the terms poll clerk and precinct suggest that ballot reconciliation is performed by a clerk at a precinct, which only occurs on election day. As for election type, Title 7 of the S.C. Code of Laws applies to all types of elections—primary, general, special, and runoff. As such, ballot reconciliation is required to be performed for all types of elections. Because these worksheets are intended to ensure all valid ballots in an election have been cast, they are to be completed prior to a county’s certification—a statement by the county’s board of canvassers that election results are a true and accurate accounting of all votes cast in a particular election.

Overview of the Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet

The SEC’s ballot reconciliation worksheet is intended to be used by poll clerks to document, by precinct, the total ballots supplied, used, unused, and voters who voted. This worksheet accounts for these required components and contains two formulas, which are meant to ensure the appropriate values reconcile with each other. The following describes each section of the worksheet and the terms used.

Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet Top Portion

The top three-fourths of the worksheet contains 11 rows labeled A–K to record ballots supplied, used, and not used and voters checked in. Note, the worksheet accounts for voters who voted in the section “Voters Checked In,” as only voters who voted are checked in at a polling location. Specifically, rows A–K include the following:

ROW	ACCOUNTS FOR	INCLUDES
A	Ballots Supplied	Ballot Cards
B		Hand-Marked Paper Ballots
C		Additional Ballot Cards
D		Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots
E	Ballots Used	Ballots Scanned
F		Provisional Ballots
G		Spoiled Ballots
H	Ballots Not Used	Ballot Cards
I		Hand-Marked Paper Ballots
J	Voters Checked In	Electronic Pollbook
K		Paper Poll List

Rows A–B are completed by county office staff, and rows C–K are completed by the poll clerk after the polls close. The terms used in the worksheet and referenced in the table above are defined below.

BALLOT CARD

The paper cardstock provided to a voter for the purpose of recording his vote selections using a ballot-marking device (definition below).

BALLOT-MARKING DEVICE

A piece of voting equipment that allows a voter to electronically select valid contest options and then produces a human-readable paper ballot. Ballots are not cast on this device.

HAND-MARKED PAPER BALLOT

A paper ballot marked by hand by a voter using a blue or black pen. A hand-marked paper ballot is used at the polling location for emergency voting, via an emergency ballot, and provisional voting, via a provisional or failsafe provisional ballot (definitions below).

EMERGENCY BALLOT

A hand-marked paper ballot used in the event the ballot-marking device is inoperable or otherwise unavailable. Generally, these ballots are cast at the polling location.

PROVISIONAL BALLOT

A hand-marked paper ballot used when a voter's eligibility to vote is challenged, which may occur, for instance, if he has already received a ballot in the mail but insists on voting at a polling location.

FAILSAFE PROVISIONAL BALLOT

A hand-marked paper ballot used when a voter has moved from one precinct to another within the same county and failed to update his address or has moved from one South Carolina county to another within 30 days of the election.

Provisional and failsafe provisional ballots are not counted on election day. Instead, they are stored in individual sealed envelopes and kept separate from ballots that have been cast; these are the envelopes referred to in row F on the worksheet. After the polls close but prior to certification, the voter’s eligibility is reviewed, and a determination is made to either accept or reject these ballots based on this review by the county board of canvassers. Accepted ballots are then counted.

SCANNER/DS200

A piece of voting equipment used to read the voter selections from a ballot card or a hand-marked paper ballot. Ballots are cast on this device.

SPOILED BALLOT

A ballot that has been defaced or marked in error. For example, a voter may make a selection by mistake and then return the ballot to a poll clerk for a second ballot. The term “spoiled” is then written on the back of the ballot and retained for records. State law also refers to a spoiled ballot as a soiled, marred, and defaced ballot.

ELECTRONIC POLLBOOK

A piece of election equipment in the form of a tablet that contains the electronic version of the voter registration list, which is used to determine whether a person is eligible to vote in an election and in the precinct. These pollbooks also have the ability to capture a voter’s signature, which is evidence that a voter took the voter’s oath. Ballots are not cast on this device.

PAPER POLL LIST

A form containing the voter’s oath and signatures of voters who have taken the voter’s oath. Paper poll lists are used when the electronic pollbooks are not available or when voters must be checked in manually.

Ballot Reconciliation Worksheet Bottom Portion

The bottom one-fourth of the worksheet contains the reconciliation portion, which is also to be completed by the poll clerk. Line 1, as follows, is intended to reconcile the number of used and unused ballots with the total ballots supplied.

Line 1: Total 2 Total 3 Total 1
 (Ballots Used) + (Ballots Not Used) = (Ballots Supplied)

Line 2 below is intended to reconcile the number of voters checked in with the number of ballots used.

$$\text{Line 2:} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{Total 4} \\ \text{(Voters Checked In)} \end{array} + \begin{array}{c} \text{G} \\ \text{(Spoiled Ballots)} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \text{Total 2} \\ \text{(Ballots Used)} \end{array}$$

Beneath the reconciliation formulas, there is a space to address any issues, including ballots that were lost or unscanned.

Worksheet Color Coding

For ease of completion, ballot reconciliation worksheets are meant to be printed in color. Four different colors are used for Totals 2 through 4 as well as for spoiled ballots:

Color	Corresponds to	
None	Total 1	Ballots Supplied
Yellow	Total 2	Ballots Used
Blue	Total 3	Ballot Not Used
Orange	Total 4	Voters Checked In
Green	Row G	Spoiled Ballots

Each color at the top of the worksheet has a corresponding color at the bottom, where reconciliation is performed. These colors are meant to assist the user in transferring the data from the top to the correct field at the bottom. It is important to note the color yellow for Total 2 and the color orange for Total 4 can often appear similar in appearance when printed.

Sample and Results

We reviewed a random sample of ballot reconciliation worksheets from the November 2022 General Election for Orangeburg County to determine if they were adequately completed and reconciled. For this election, the county completed its worksheets by precinct, and all were available for review. Per S.C. Code §7-13-1150, ballot reconciliation worksheets are to be completed by precinct. However, since counties, at times, consolidate multiple precincts into a single polling location, we conducted our analysis by polling location.

For this election, the county had 45 polling locations. The random sample included 36 of these polling locations, and the results were calculated at a 99% confidence level and with a margin of error of ± 10 percentage points. Therefore, these results can be generalized about all of Orangeburg County's polling locations during the 2022 General Election.

For this review, the term "completed" meant rows C–K contained values. If a field in rows C–K was blank, zero was assumed unless zeros were used elsewhere on the worksheet. The total boxes for each section (Total 1, Total 2, Total 3, and Total 4) were not included within the definition of completed, as they were a separate method of counting ballots and voters to what was presented in rows C–K. Additionally, the term "reconciled" meant the addition in Line 1 and the resulting value in N equaled the value in Total 1 (Total Ballots Supplied), and the addition in Line 2 and the resulting value in Q equaled the value in Total 2 (Total Ballots Used).

Figure 2 below provides a diagram of what was considered completed and reconciled on the worksheet. Note, information in red was added to the diagram to distinguish otherwise unidentified fields and sections of the worksheet.

Figure 2: Worksheet Diagram for the Definition of Completed and Reconciled

County _____ Precinct _____ Date _____

Ballots Supplied		
A	Ballot Cards (Completed by County Office)	
B	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Completed by County Office) (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
C	Additional Ballot Cards	
D	Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
Total 1		

Ballots Used		
E	Ballots Scanned (Ballot Cards and Emergency Ballots) (Number displayed on the Scanner/DS200)	
F	Provisional Ballots (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots/Envelopes)	
G	Spoiled Ballots (Ballot Cards + Hand-Marked Paper Ballots)	
Total 2		

Ballots Not Used		
H	Ballot Cards	
I	Hand-Marked Paper Ballots (Emergency/Provisional + Failsafe Provisional)	
Total 3		

Voters Checked In		
J	Electronic Poll Book (EPB)	
K	Paper Poll List (Include Provisionals NOT entered in the EPB) (DO NOT Include Curbside Poll List)	
Total 4		

Line 1 Total 2 **L** + Total 3 **M** = **N** (Should equal Total 1)

Line 2 Total 4 **O** + G **P** = **Q** (Should equal Total 2)

Explain any discrepancies:

Are you returning any Emergency ballots that have not been scanned? Yes ☐ No ☐
(Do NOT include Provisional or Failsafe Provisional ballots)

Poll Clerk Signature: _____ Time: _____

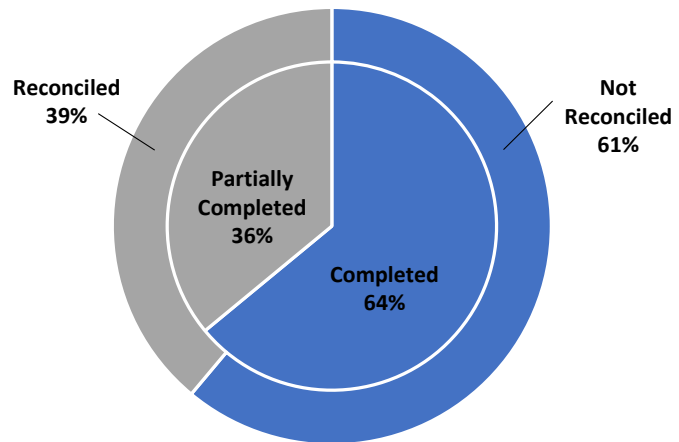
SEC FRM 1150-202208

**every vote matters.
every vote counts.**

Source: S.C. State Election Commission

For Orangeburg County, ballot reconciliation worksheets for 64% (23/36) of its polling locations were completed, while 36% (13/36) were partially completed. Additionally, 39% (14/36) of its worksheets reconciled, while 61% (22/36) were not reconciled. Figure 3 below provides a breakdown of the completion and reconciliation status of these worksheets.

Figure 3: Overall Completion and Reconciliation Status of the Worksheets



Source: Analysis of Orangeburg County's Ballot Reconciliation Worksheets, 2022 General Election

Completion of Worksheets

Of the worksheets, 36% (13/36) were partially completed because some fields were left blank, but other fields on the same worksheet contained zeros. For example, on one worksheet, row C (Additional Ballot Cards Supplied) and row D (Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Supplied) were blank while zeros were present on row F (Provisional Ballots), row I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used), and row K (Paper Poll List/Voters Checked In). If these worksheets had been filled in with the necessary zeros, then 94% (34/36) of the worksheets would have been completed. The State Election Commission's (SEC) instructions for the worksheet did not require a user to fill all fields. However, as a third-party reviewer, it was difficult to discern if an empty field was an oversight or intentional. Requiring a value for all fields on the worksheet will likely improve clarity to all users. In December 2024, a recommendation was made to the SEC to require a value, even if zero, be written in each of the worksheet's fields.

Additionally, on two of these partially completed worksheets, the clerk did not complete a mix of the following rows:

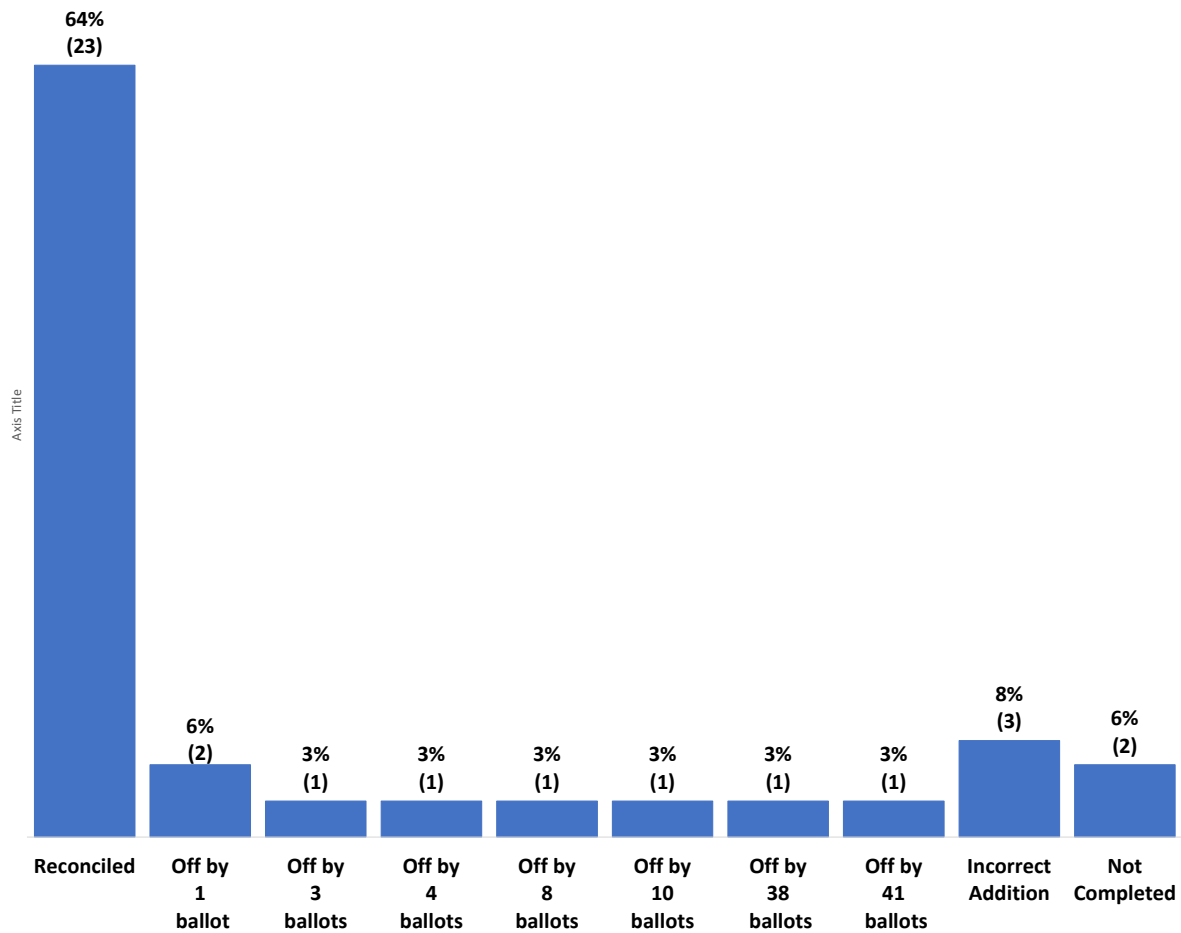
- C (Additional Ballot Cards Supplied).
- D (Additional Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Supplied).
- E (Ballots Scanned).
- F (Provisional Ballots).
- G (Spoiled Ballots).
- I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used).
- J (Electronic Pollbook/Voters Checked In).
- K (Paper Poll List/Voters Checked In).

As such, most of the required information was not accounted for. According to a county election official, the worksheets were reviewed with the clerk during its worksheet review process on election night but were not updated to reflect the results of the review process. Having the county election staff update the worksheets with the correct data during the review can improve completion.

Reconciliation of Line 1

For Line 1, 64% (23/36) of the worksheets were reconciled. For the 13 worksheets that were not reconciled, 6 were off by 10 or fewer ballots, 1 was off by 38 ballots, and 1 was off by 41 ballots. For the remaining five worksheets, three contained incorrect addition, and two were not completed. Figure 4 below provides a breakdown of the reconciliation status of Line 1.

Figure 4: Reconciliation Status of Line 1



Note: Off by 2% due to rounding.

Source: Analysis of Orangeburg County's Ballot Reconciliation Worksheets, 2022 General Election

For six worksheets off by ten or fewer ballots and one worksheet with incorrect addition, the issue was likely due to the ballot packaging process. It is important to note, the ballot card packaging process weighs rather than counts ballot cards and could, therefore, cause packages to be off by $\pm 2\%$; a package of 250 could be over or under by as many as 5 ballot cards. If county staff and poll clerks count the ballot packages and not the individual ballot cards, the values in row A (Ballot Cards Supplied) and row C (Additional Ballot Cards Supplied) could be incorrect and, therefore, cause Total 1 (Total Ballots Supplied) to be incorrect. According to a county election official, ballot cards are not individually counted in the office before an election, but poll clerks are trained to count individual ballot cards to verify the accuracy of rows A (Ballot Cards Supplied) and B (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Supplied). Counting individual ballot cards in the office and again at the polling location by a clerk will likely reduce miscounts in the number of ballots supplied.

For the worksheets off by 38 ballots, 41 ballots, and the 2 remaining worksheets with incorrect addition, this was due to a mix of data entry errors. Specifically, these errors related to:

- Accounting for ballots scanned in row E (Ballots Scanned).
- Accounting for ballots scanned and provisional ballots used in row E and row F (Provisional Ballots Used), respectively.
- Accounting for unused ballot cards in row H (Ballot Cards Not Used).
- Accounting for unused hand-marked paper ballots in row I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used).

This was evident after comparing the worksheets against the Scanner/DS200 data and the provisional ballots report. Had the correct data been written on the worksheets and the unused ballots been accounted for, Line 1 on these worksheets would have reconciled. According to a county election official, the county provides training, which includes reviewing the worksheet, providing hands-on practice, and allowing time to address questions. Including a hands-on activity on where to find the totals from the voting equipment, how to account for the number of used and unused ballots, and how to add this data together will likely resolve these issues.

For the remaining two worksheets that were not reconciled on Line 1, this was due to them being not completed. Specifically:

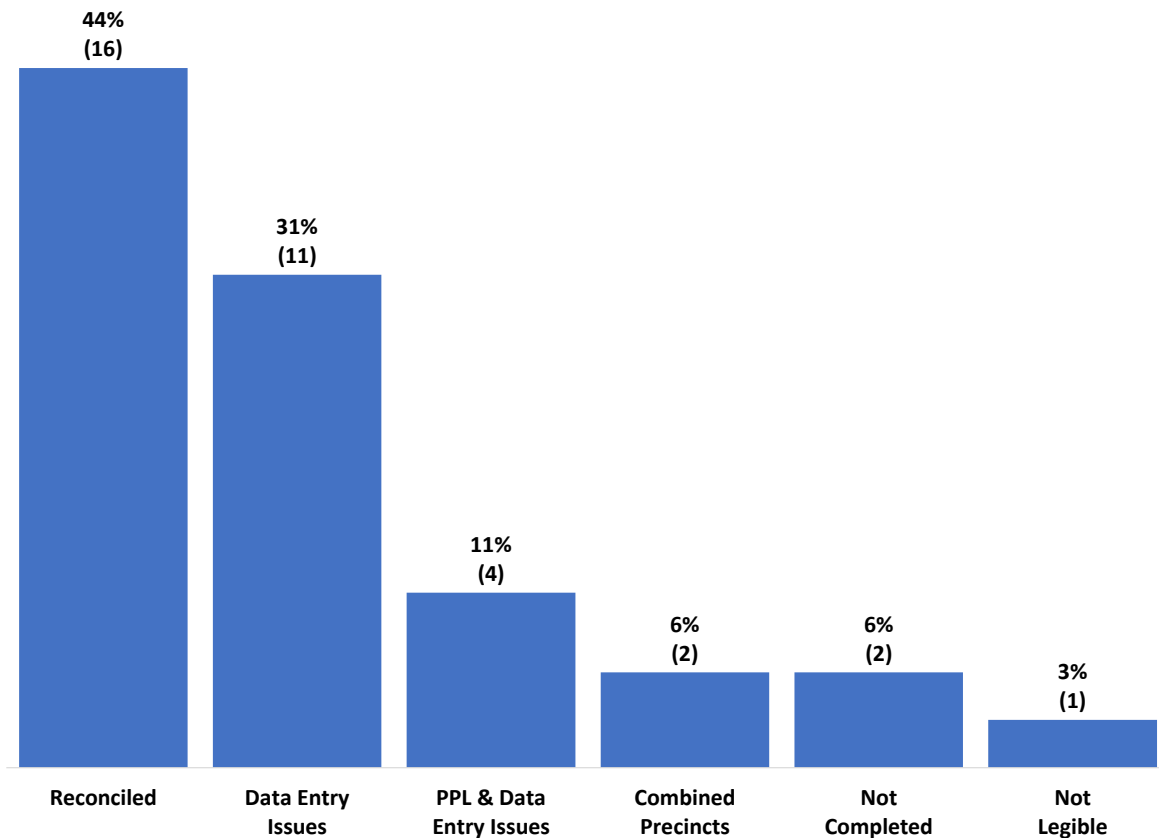
- One was missing values in rows E (Ballots Scanned), F (Provisional Ballots), G (Spoiled Ballots), I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used), and J (Electronic Pollbook/Voters Checked In).
- On the other, the line was not completed. Had the line been completed with the data on the worksheet, it would still be off by one ballot, which was due to not accounting for all unused ballots.

As previously mentioned, the county has a worksheet review process in place, but worksheets are not always updated with corrected data. Having county election staff update the worksheet with the correct data during the review may improve reconciliation.

Reconciliation of Line 2

For Line 2, 44% (16/36) of the worksheets were reconciled. For the 20 worksheets that were not reconciled on the line, 11 had data entry errors, 4 had paper poll list and data entry issues, 2 had combined precincts, 2 were not completed, and 1 was not legible. Figure 5 below provides a breakdown of the reconciliation status of Line 2.

Figure 5: Reconciliation Status of Line 2



PPL= Paper Poll List

Note: Off by 1% due to rounding.

Source: Analysis of Orangeburg County's Ballot Reconciliation Worksheets,
2022 General Election

For the 20 worksheets that did not reconcile, we checked the worksheets against Scanner/DS200 data, provisional ballot report, and turnout report data—data logged by the electronic pollbook host server that shows the count of voters who were issued voting credit—to determine the source of the issues.

Below is a description of the issues that caused these worksheets not to reconcile.

# OF WORKSHEETS	MAIN ISSUE	ISSUE DESCRIPTION
11	Data Entry Issues	These worksheets had data entry issues that, if addressed, Line 2 would have reconciled. As mentioned above, a worksheet review process is already used. Ensuring this process checks returned election materials and turnout report data in addition to working with the poll clerks may resolve the data entry imbalances.
4	Paper Poll List & Data Entry Issues	These worksheets had paper poll list and data entry issues. Using corrected data, we found that the issue was likely due to a lack of acquiring all paper poll list signatures. Additionally, on two of these worksheets, the number of provisional ballots recorded did not match the provisional ballots report. As mentioned above, a worksheet review process is already used. Ensuring this process updates worksheets using returned election materials, such as paper poll lists and provisional ballot envelopes, and turnout report data, in addition to reviewing the worksheet with poll clerks may resolve the data entry imbalances.
2	Combined Precincts	<p>These worksheets were not reconciled due to multiple precincts being combined into a single polling location. This caused the number of checked-in voters to be higher than the number of ballots voted on the worksheets. Since the checked in totals reflected two combined precincts but the ballots voted reflected only one precinct, the line did not reconcile.</p> <p>On one of these worksheets, a used provisional ballot was not recorded. If it had been, the worksheets for the combined precincts would have reconciled when added together. For the other worksheet, the turnout and Scanner/DS200 data were not consistent with what was present on the worksheet. As mentioned above, including a specific hands-on training for poll clerks on how to enter data onto the worksheet from the assigned precinct when multiple precincts are combined into a single polling location may improve reconciliation.</p>
2	Not Completed	<p>These worksheets did not reconcile due to not being completed. For one of the worksheets, the incomplete rows were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E (Ballots Scanned). • F (Provisional Ballots). • G (Spoiled Ballots). • I (Hand-Marked Paper Ballots Not Used). • J (Electronic Pollbook/Voters Checked In).

		For the other worksheet, Line 2 was not completed. Due to incompleteness, neither worksheet contained sufficient information to determine reconciliation. Having county election staff update the incomplete rows with the returned election materials and turnout data during review may improve reconciliation.
1	Not Legible	This worksheet did not reconcile due to legibility issues. Specifically, the line was not legible as values were written over others, and entries were crossed out. As already stated, having county election staff update the worksheets after the review process may improve reconciliation.

Recommendations

1. The Orangeburg County Voter Registration and Elections Office should update its ballot reconciliation worksheets with corrected data from returned election materials—totals from the voting equipment, provisional ballot envelopes, spoiled ballots, unused hand-marked paper ballots, and paper poll lists—and host server turnout data during its worksheet review process.
2. The Orangeburg County Voter Registration and Elections Office should count individual ballots cards before supplying them to the polling locations.
3. The Orangeburg County Voter Registration and Elections Office should include hands-on training specific to:
 - Inputting data onto the worksheet when precincts are combined.
 - Accounting for used and unused ballots cards and unused hand-marked paper ballots.

Appendix A: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

This report provides the results of our compliance audit of the Orangeburg County Voter Registration and Elections Office and its use of the ballot reconciliation worksheet. We conducted this audit under the provision of S.C. Code §7-3-20(D)(3). The review period for the audit was for the November 2022 General Election, and the objective was to determine whether precinct ballot reconciliation worksheets from this election were adequately completed and reconciled. To conduct this audit, we used a variety of sources of evidence, including:

- Federal and state laws.
- S.C. State Election Commission (SEC) policies and procedures.
- SEC training materials.
- Interviews with and surveys of county election officials.
- Information from South Carolina and other state agencies as well as the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.
- Contracts and information from Election Systems & Software and its vendor, Printelect.
- Ballot reconciliation worksheets.

Criteria used to evaluate compliance was based on federal and state laws and agency policies, procedures, and training material. We reviewed internal controls in several areas, including SEC policies and procedures; county policies, procedures, and practices; and agency training. Our findings are detailed in this report.

Appendix B: Orangeburg County Comments



COUNTY OF ORANGEBURG

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OCTOBER 20, 2025

RESPONSE: 2022 BALLOT RECONCILIATION WORKSHEET AUDIT ORANGEBURG COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS OFFICE FINDINGS

ATTN: HUGO ALBERGARIA

THE AUDIT FINDINGS STEMS FROM ISSUES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION AND USE OF THE BALLOT RECONCILIATION WORKSHEET DURING THE 2022 ELECTION. THESE INCLUDE:

- THE **BALLOT RECONCILIATION WORKSHEET** WAS INTRODUCED WITH VERY LITTLE ADVANCE NOTICE, SHORTLY BEFORE THE ELECTION.
- THERE WERE **NO CLEAR EXPECTATIONS OR GUIDANCE** FROM THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION (SEC) REGARDING PROPER COMPLETION, INCLUDING:
 - WHETHER BLANK FIELDS WERE ACCEPTABLE OR SHOULD BE MARKED WITH ZEROS.
 - **WHETHER OR HOW CORRECTIONS COULD BE MADE AFTER INITIAL SUBMISSION.**
- THE COUNTY OFFICE HAD AN **EXISTING INTERNAL AUDIT AND RECONCILIATION PROCESS** IN PLACE TO TRACK BALLOTS ISSUED AND RETURNED, WHICH CONTINUED IN PARALLEL DUE TO THE LATE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW WORKSHEET.
- CLERKS AND POLL MANAGERS RECEIVED **VERY LITTLE TRAINING** ON THE NEW WORKSHEET AND **DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS IMPORTANCE OR REQUIREMENTS.**

CONCLUSIONS

THE DISCREPANCIES AND ISSUES NOTED IN THE AUDIT WERE NOT DUE TO NEGLIGENCE OR LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY, BUT RATHER:

- **A LACK OF TIMELY AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION AND GUIDANCE** FROM THE SEC.
- THE COUNTY OFFICE'S CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO ALTERING THE WORKSHEET POST-SUBMISSION, DUE TO **UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE PERMISSIBILITY OF MAKING CORRECTIONS.**

DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES, THE COUNTY OFFICE:

- **VERIFIED ALL BALLOTS WERE ACCOUNTED FOR** THROUGH A MANUAL COUNT.
- **REVIEWED EACH WORKSHEET WITH THE CLERKS**, IDENTIFIED DISCREPANCIES, AND CLARIFIED THE NEEDED CORRECTIONS — EVEN IF THOSE CORRECTIONS WERE NOT DIRECTLY WRITTEN ON THE WORKSHEETS AT THE TIME.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

TO IMPROVE FUTURE PERFORMANCE AND COMPLIANCE, ORANGEBURG COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS OFFICE RECOMMENDS AND IS IMPLEMENTING THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

1. IMPROVED TRAINING

- ALL CLERKS AND POLL MANAGERS ARE RECEIVING **COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING** ON HOW TO PROPERLY COMPLETE THE BALLOT RECONCILIATION WORKSHEET.
- CURRENT TRAINING IS EMPHASIZING THE **IMPORTANCE OF ACCURACY**, INCLUDING HOW TO HANDLE BLANK FIELDS AND WHEN/HOW TO MAKE CORRECTIONS.

2. ELECTION NIGHT CORRECTIONS

- CLERKS ARE REQUIRED TO REVIEW AND **MAKE ALL NECESSARY CORRECTIONS TO WORKSHEETS ON ELECTION NIGHT**, WITH OVERSIGHT FROM THE COUNTY OFFICE.

————— *EVERY VOTE MATTERS. EVERY VOTE COUNTS* —————



DIRECTOR
AURORA K. SMALLS

COUNTY OF ORANGEBURG
VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
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BOARD & COMMISSIONERS
KATHERINE G. JOHN, CHAIRMAN
BROADUS JAMERSON III, VICE CHAIRMAN
SUMMER SNIPES, SECRETARY
GAYLE M. BROWN
CORNELIUS SUMPTER
DORIS DANTZLER
CARMELLA MACK

3. ENHANCED GUIDANCE FROM SEC

- **DETAILED WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS** FOR COMPLETING THE WORKSHEET.
- **CLEAR PROTOCOLS** FOR CORRECTING ERRORS.
- **CLARIFICATION ON EXPECTATIONS**, SUCH AS WHETHER ALL FIELDS MUST BE COMPLETED (INCLUDING USE OF ZEROS FOR UNUSED SECTIONS).

4. INTERNAL REVIEW & QUALITY ASSURANCE

- THE COUNTY WILL CONTINUE ITS OWN RECONCILIATION PROCESS ALONGSIDE THE STATE WORKSHEET, ENSURING **REDUNDANCY AND ACCURACY**.
- A **POST-ELECTION REVIEW** WILL BE CONDUCTED TO IDENTIFY ANY GAPS AND ENSURE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

If you have any question or concerns, please call at (803)533-6213 or email me at asmalls@orangeburgcounty.org

Thanks

Aurora Smalls