



South Carolina State Election Commission

Ballot Image Audit Report

June 2026



ENHANCED
VOTING

EnhancedVoting.com

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

BALLOT IMAGE AUDIT REPORT

JUNE 2026

PURPOSE

This purpose of this report is to inform the South Carolina State Election Commission of the results and findings of the 2026 June ballot image audit of the June 9, 2026, Statewide Primary Elections by Enhanced Voting. The report includes details which are intended to be used by the State Election Commission during the certification process of the 2026 June Statewide Primary Elections.

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Executive Summary and Findings

Enhanced Voting staff conducted a ballot image audit in June 2026, with data collected from each of the 46 South Carolina county election offices. The audit examined 855,487 ballot images from Election Systems and Software (ES&S) Voting System tabulators deployed during the Statewide Primaries held on June 9, 2026. The audit used the Enhanced Audit software from Enhanced Voting to examine the ballot images and scrutinize election outcomes for all 159 contests in the June 9 elections.

The 2026 Audit examined all contests on all ballots cast during the June 9th elections using ballot image data, batch-level results, and cast vote records to independently tabulate and compare results to those from the voting system. Enhanced Audit derived results from ballot images using optical character recognition over the human-readable portion of each summary ballot image or by detecting voter marks on images of hand-marked ballots.

The ballot image audit produced the following summary findings:

- The audit confirmed the election results and the associated winners in all 159 contests in the election.
- 121 contests had zero discrepancies. 158 contests had a discrepancy rate less than 0.1%, and 1 contest had a discrepancy rate of less than 0.7%. No outcomes were impacted by discrepancies.
- 31 ballots across 16 counties had at least 1 contest with a discrepancy between the original interpretation and the independent interpretation. All 31 of these ballots with discrepancies were hand-marked.
- 14 ballot images were not submitted for audit across three counties. Of these, 2 were blank summary ballot images, and 12 were a batch that was scanned separately and not included for audit. All contests on these ballots were marked as undervotes for the purposes of comparison with cast vote records (where available) or results tabulation comparison.
- 22 ballots had scanning artifacts or printing errors that prevented the auditors from drawing conclusions about the votes contained in the human-readable portion of the ballot. Of these, 21 were summary ballots, and 1 was a hand-marked ballot.
- 1 ballot was included in the image set for a separate election.

Table 1 – Audit Statistics

Statistic	Value
Total Ballots	856,005
Total Ballots Audited	855,487 ¹
Contests Audited	159
Ballot Styles Supported	5,729
Ballot Images Requiring Manual Review	3,308 (0.39% of total audited ballots)
Ballots with Discrepancies	31

Table 2 – Discrepancies, Unreadable Images, and Ballot Not Included

Ballot Type	# Ballots	# Discrepancies	# Unreadable Images	# Not Included	Accuracy
Summary Ballot	841,485	0	21	2	100%
Hand-Marked Ballots	13,988	31	1	12	99.77%

¹ This audit was conducted simultaneous to counties' canvass periods. Consequently, additional provisional ballots that were included in the certified tallies were not always present in the image sets we received. This accounts for the difference between the number of images we received and the number of ballots cast.

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1. Background and Methodology

The South Carolina State Election Commission contracted with Enhanced Voting to conduct a ballot image audit of the Statewide Primaries held on June 9, 2026. The State of South Carolina used Election Systems and Software (ES&S)'s Voting System to conduct these elections, during which voters marked ballot either by hand (producing hand-marked ballots) or via an ExpressVote Ballot Marking Device (producing summary ballots). Ballots were tabulated using DS300 Precinct scanner (for Early and Election Day voting) or the DS450, DS850, or DS950 (for hand-marked absentee by-mail and Provisional ballots).

Summary ballots represent all votes both by barcodes as well as human-readable text, which can be reviewed by voters to verify that it accurately reflects their selections prior to inserting their ballot into the scanner. Hand-marked ballots encode voter selections in ovals which are laid out on a grid of timing marks, with each oval corresponding to a possible selection in the contest.

To tabulate these ballots, ES&S scanners read the barcodes on summary ballots and identify which ovals are filled in on hand-marked ballots. For each ballot, a record of its contents is created at time of reading called a Cast Vote Record (CVR), and an image of the ballot is saved along with the CVR. Election results are created by aggregating CVR files across a jurisdiction and producing an Election Results file containing the sum of all CVRs for each selection in each contest in a jurisdiction.

Enhanced Voting's audit collected data on the election using these three data sources: ballot images, CVRs, and election results files. The audit included training counties on supplying data for the audit, collecting data from counties and the state for the audit, and performing automated and manual reviews of all data submitted. Enhanced Voting used its ballot image auditing tool, Enhanced Audit, to automatically process all ballot images, election results files, and cast vote records (CVRs) and compute a tally for all selections and contests in the June 9 elections that were independent from the original voting system tabulation.

Enhanced Audit uses optical character recognition (OCR) to examine only the human-readable text on South Carolina's summary ballots (comprising over 99% of ballots cast during the June 9 elections). Enhanced Audit also uses mark-sensing for hand-marked ballots, and computes tallies for all contests from these data sets. It then cross-references

its tabulation against the election results files at a batch level, as well as cross referencing individual ballot tabulation against the cast-vote record for each ballot.²

Auditors and reviewers can manually review ballots images. In cases where image processing cannot determine what votes are reflected on a ballot, or in cases where discrepancies are detected between the tabulation of an image and its CVR, the ballots are flagged for review.

Audit Timeline

County officials began to upload their election results files, ballot images, and cast vote records into Enhanced Audit shortly after polls closed on Election Day on June 9th. Uploading continued through Friday, June 12th, and Enhanced Voting conducted manual ballot reviews where needed, and investigated potential discrepancies.

All 46 county audits were completed in advance of state certification on June 12, 2026.

Definition of a Discrepancy

Enhanced Audit compares its independent interpretation of each ballot image against the image's corresponding cast vote record, as well as tallying its independent interpretations and comparing the summed independent interpretations against the reported election results. For the purposes of this report, a discrepancy is any time Enhanced Voting's interpretation of a ballot image clearly disagrees with the original ballot interpretation.

In cases where a voter's selection is not readable in Enhanced Audit due to scan quality issues, file integrity issues, or other factors not related to the performance of the election, these images will be interpreted as undervotes. In some cases, unreadable images will thus result in tallies that do not align with the original voting system tally; however, because a determination could not be made about how the ballot should have originally been tabulated, these cases are separated from obvious discrepancies.

² For more technical detail on how Enhanced Voting analyzes ballot images, see Appendix A.

2. Findings

This section contains details about findings during the audit. None of the findings presented in this report impacted any election outcomes. These are presented to illustrate the function of the ballot image audit as well as to document issues that were corrected prior to final certification.

Voter Intent and Human Error

All 31 discrepancies reported here resulted from adjudication differences, marginal marks, or human error. Of these, 26 discrepancies resulted from Enhanced Audit reading marks made by a voter that were not picked up by the original scan but represent clear expressions of voter intent.

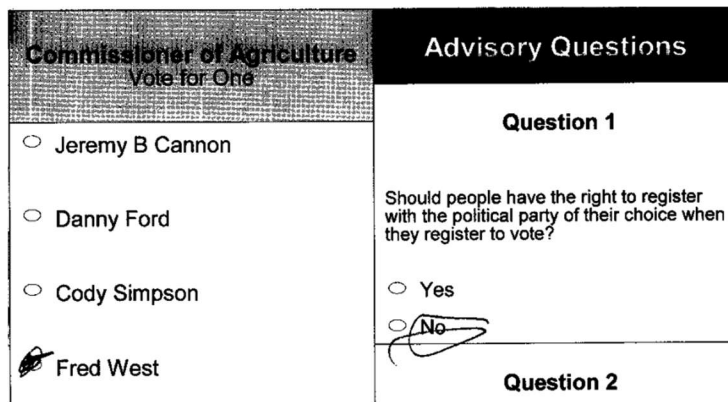


Image 1 — Clear voter intent that was not picked up by the original scan

Five discrepancies were due to adjudication decisions that were deemed by auditors to not align with South Carolina’s “Uniform Definition of What Constitutes a Vote”.

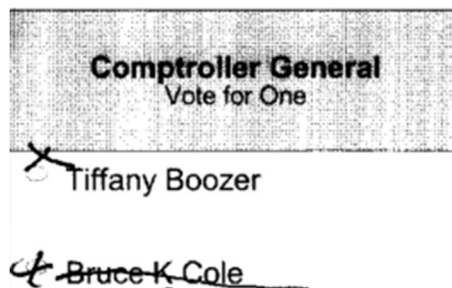


Image 2 — Ballot was incorrectly adjudicated as a vote for the crossed-out candidate

Finally, one summary ballot was scanned that clearly had the text “spoiled” written over it and was thus counted as a spoiled ballot. This ballot was removed prior to county certification and did not count.

80666651
 Horry
 JUNE PRIMARY
 6/9/2026
 JACKSON BLUFF, REP JACKSON BLUFF

GOVERNOR-----
 ATTORNEY GENERAL----- PAMELA EVETTE
 COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE----- NO SELECTION
 U.S. SENATE----- NO SELECTION
 BOARD OF EDUCATION CHAIR----- PAT HERRMANN
 QUESTION 1----- DARRELL RICKETTS
 QUESTION 2----- YES
 YES

Image 3 — Spoiled ballot that was identified during audit and removed prior to certification

Unreadable Summary Ballots

There were 21 summary ballots across 13 counties that did not have legible, human-readable selections present. All of these ballots retained their barcodes, and thus were accepted by the scanner, but it was not possible to perform OCR or human review due to the lack of text. For 20 of these ballots, contest titles were at least partially present, however no voter selections appeared. One ballot had no contests or selections listed at all.

80666647
 Aiken
 JUNE PRIMARY
 6/9/2026
 WARRENVILLE, REP WARRENVILLE

GOVERNOR-----
 ATTORNEY GENERAL-----
 COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE-----
 U.S. SENATE-----
 U.S. HOUSE OF REP DIST 2-----
 QUESTION 1-----
 QUESTION 2-----

80666649
 Richland
 JUNE PRIMARY
 6/9/2026
 LAKE CAROLINA, DEM LAKE CAROLINA

Image 4 — Ballots without human-readable voter selections

County	Unreadable Ballots
Greenville County	4
Horry County	3
Richland County	3
Berkeley County	2
Aiken County	1
Charleston County	1
Greenwood County	1
Hampton County	1
Lexington County	1
Oconee County	1
Orangeburg County	1
Sumter County	1
York County	1
Total	21

Unreadable hand-marked ballot

One hand-marked ballot had an unreadable voter selection due to an image artifact. The artifact appears to be a shadow caused by a fold in the ballot that entirely obscures the oval.

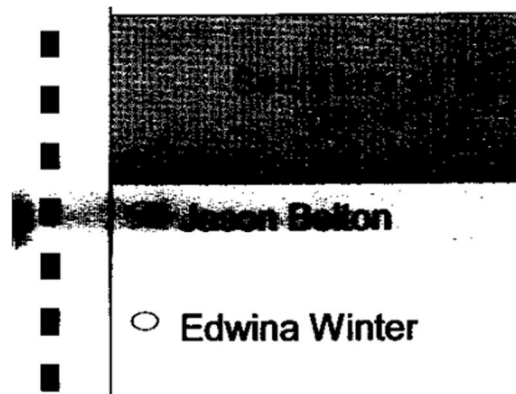


Image 5 — Hand-marked ballot with unreadable oval

Ballot from wrong election

One ballot in a county was included in the set of images we received that appears to be for a concurrent special election. This ballot was not included in the election results report or CVR files and had no impact on any outcomes.

3. Limitations

While ballot image auditing provides a powerful tool for identifying issues in the conduction of an election, it is not a substitute for other methods of data collection and examination.³

Ballot image auditing additionally assumes data provenance and good faith engagement from participating jurisdictions. We have no reason to believe any data we received was compromised or otherwise incomplete except where noted (and we have substantial evidence that the data we have is correct and complete). However, current voting system technology lacks the ability to provide data integrity guarantees, for instance cryptographic signatures. This limited the ability of auditors to validate the veracity and completeness of data received in this way.

Audit methods that explicitly reference the paper ballots (such as through statistical hand counts, like risk-limiting audits) are essential to providing critical properties like software independence.^{4,5} Nevertheless, the practical constraints around the efficiency and accuracy of hand counting mean that pairing that practice with an image audit enable a more complete audit than is otherwise possible.

³ Bernhard, M., Kandula, K., Wink, J., & Halderman, J. A. (2019, September). UnclearBallot: automated ballot image manipulation. In *International Joint Conference on Electronic Voting* (pp. 14-31). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

⁴ Bernhard, Matthew, Josh Benaloh, J. Alex Halderman, Ronald L. Rivest, Peter YA Ryan, Philip B. Stark, Vanessa Teague, Poorvi L. Vora, and Dan S. Wallach. "Public evidence from secret ballots." In *International Joint Conference on Electronic Voting*, pp. 84-109. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017.

⁵ Bernhard, Matthew. "Risk-limiting audits: A practical systematization of knowledge." In *Proc. 6th Int. Joint Conf. Electron. Voting*, pp. 162-177. 2021.

4. County Audit Results

Thirty-three of South Carolina’s 46 counties completed the audit with zero discrepancies for any contest.

Table 3 – County ballots cast vs discrepancies

County	Total Ballots	Missing or Unreadable Images	Discrepancies
Abbeville County	4271	0	0
Aiken County	24882	2	2
Allendale County	1066	0	0
Anderson County	34246	0	1
Bamberg County	2297	12	0
Barnwell County	3285	0	0
Beaufort County	36563	0	0
Berkeley County	34111	3	0
Calhoun County	3349	0	0
Charleston County	67200	1	1
Cherokee County	9289	0	0
Chester County	5455	0	0
Chesterfield County	4749	0	0
Clarendon County	6344	0	0
Colleton County	6425	0	0
Darlington County	10554	0	3
Dillon County	3218	0	6
Dorchester County	23686	0	1
Edgefield County	4000	0	0
Fairfield County	5645	0	0
Florence County	21201	0	1
Georgetown County	14505	0	0
Greenville County	90558	4	7
Greenwood County	10682	1	0
Hampton County	4075	1	1
Horry County	57802	3	1
Jasper County	7813	0	1
Kershaw County	12091	0	0

Lancaster County	15456	0	0
Laurens County	10794	0	1
Lee County	3242	0	0
Lexington County	49448	1	1
Marion County	5017	0	0
Marlboro County	3497	0	0
McCormick County	2729	0	0
Newberry County	6690	0	0
Oconee County	14467	1	0
Orangeburg County	15135	1	0
Pickens County	20631	0	1
Richland County	77948	3	2
Saluda County	3666	0	0
Spartanburg County	48020	0	1
Sumter County	15923	1	0
Union County	4225	0	0
Williamsburg County	6713	0	0
York County	42512	2	0
Total	855487	36	31

5. Reports by Reference

The following audit system reports are included by reference. These reports are available through the South Carolina State Election Commission.

Contest Results Comparison (PDF) – comparison of the ballot count and vote totals for all Federal and State contests

Contest Results Comparison with Jurisdiction Details (PDF) – county-level comparison of the ballot count and vote totals for all Federal and State contests

Contest Results Comparison with County Breakout (XLSX) – county-level comparison of the ballot count and vote totals for all contests

6. Appendix A

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Approach

The Enhanced Audit software is the first auditing solution to use optical character recognition (OCR) technology to process and interpret summary ballots. All in-person voting in South Carolina produces a Ballot Marking Device (BMD) summary ballot, which contains the voter's selections in human-readable text along with barcodes representing those selections. The voters are instructed to review the human-readable text before placing their ballot into the tabulator. Once the ballot has been placed in the tabulator, the tabulator reads the votes from the barcodes and includes them in the count. The audit is intended to tabulate the same ballots using the human readable text and compare those results against the tabulator's results which were computed using the barcodes.

To perform this analysis, the Enhanced Audit software uses OCR technology. First, Enhanced Audit reads the ballot style name printed on the ballot. This ballot style name is then used to look up the list of associated contests for that ballot style. If there are multiple possible ballot style matches, the system takes the one with the highest OCR confidence. If there is an error reading the image or a high level of uncertainty, the ballot is put into a separate list for manual review.

Next, the Enhanced Audit system processes ballot style information (precinct identifier), contest titles, and the voter's selections on each page of the summary ballot. The contest title is read using OCR and the system matches the text against the list of possible contests for a given ballot style. Ballots with multiple languages are supported. If the printed contest title cannot be matched to an expected contest, the ballot is put into a separate list for manual review.

Then, for each contest, the system processes the text corresponding to the voter's selection to determine the vote that appears on the ballot. The selection text typically includes the selected candidate's name but may also contain text which indicates a blank vote, write-in vote, votes for multiple options, or a yes/no vote. If the selection text cannot be interpreted by the OCR software with high enough confidence, the ballot is put into a separate list for manual review.

For the ballots in the manual review list, Enhanced Voting staff view the ballot image and determine the voter intent based on the ballot image. Auditors reviewed these changes to ensure consistency with the ballot images.