

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS IN SEVENTEEN OHIO COUNTIES CANNOT BE RIGHT

Richard Hayes Phillips, Ph.D. December 7, 2006

In the 2006 general election, according to the official website of Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, there were 4,177,498 ballots cast in the State of Ohio. Of these, only 3,831,716, or 91.72%, contained votes for Governor, and only 3,826,829, or 91.61%, contained votes for United States Senate.

These numbers create the appearance of undervote (or overvote) rates of 8.28% and 8.39%, respectively, in the two most hotly contested statewide races on the ballot.

When the unofficial election results are examined county by county, there is a strikingly abnormal distribution of undervotes and overvotes.

I have chosen the United States Senate race to examine in detail because there were only two candidates on the ballot (and one write-in candidate), which makes the mathematical analysis simpler than for the Governor's race, in which there were four candidates on the ballot (and two write-in candidates).

A similar analysis could be done, and should be done, for the Governor's race, and for all races in which the unofficial results were very close. The methodology was simple. The percentage of undervotes and overvotes for each county was derived by fifth-grade mathematics. The total number of votes counted for the candidates combined was subtracted from the number of ballots cast. The remainder is the number of uncounted ballots, or undervotes plus overvotes. This number was divided by the number of ballots cast to determine the percentage of ballots left uncounted in each county. The complete data set for all 88 counties is appended to this paper.

There are 88 counties in Ohio. Of these 88 counties, according to unofficial results posted by J. Kenneth Blackwell, 71 counties had rates of undervotes and overvotes ranging from 0.88% (in Greene County) to 6.90% (in Holmes County). In 62 of these 71 counties, the percentages were tightly clustered between 2.00% and 4.50%. The rate in these 71 counties combined was 2.99%.

In 16 of the other 17 counties, including 4 of the 10 most populous counties in the State of Ohio, the percentages of undervotes and overvotes were clearly anomalous, ranging from 11.91% (in Montgomery County) to 26.48% (in Cuyahoga County), with a combined rate of 19.46%, or six and one-half times the rate in the rest of the state.

Just four counties -- Cuyahoga, Lucas, Montgomery and Stark -- accounted for 219,332 undervotes and overvotes, or 62.55% of the statewide total of 350,669. Cuyahoga County alone accounted for 148,928 undervotes and overvotes, or 42.47% of the statewide total. It is difficult to believe that more than one in four voters in Cuyahoga County could not decide between Sherrod Brown and Mike DeWine.

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS: UNITED STATES SENATE

	Ballots Cast	Votes Counted	Undervotes/Overvotes	
16 counties	1,382,455	1,113,568	268,987	19.46%
71 counties	2,775,090	2,692,133	82,957	2.99%

In Marion County, Blackwell reported 19,853 total votes cast, and 21,128 votes counted for the United States Senate candidates -- an overcount of 1,275 votes. These are known as "phantom votes," because they are apparitions, with no explainable origin. There can never be more votes counted for an office than the number of persons voting in the election.

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS: UNDERVOTES AND OVERVOTES

County	Ballots Cast	Votes Counted	Undervotes/ Overvotes		Voting Technology
Cuyahoga	562,498	413,570	148,928	26.48%	touch screen
Morrow	15,679	12,242	3,437	21.92%	touch screen
Belmont	29,045	23,192	5,853	20.15%	touch screen
Coshocton	16,138	13,107	3,031	18.78%	touch screen
Licking	70,705	57,704	13,001	18.39%	touch screen
Jackson	12,025	9,974	2,051	17.06%	touch screen
Lucas	164,003	139,003	25,000	15.24%	touch screen
Tuscarawas	36,124	30,750	5,374	14.88%	touch screen
Stark	139,646	119,011	20,635	14.78%	touch screen
Perry	12,775	10,894	1,881	14.72%	touch screen
Carroll	12,664	10,898	1,766	13.95%	touch screen
Highland	14,351	12,358	1,993	13.89%	touch screen
Wood	50,666	44,190	6,476	12.78%	touch screen
Adams	9,592	8,378	1,214	12.66%	touch screen
Hancock	28,692	25,114	3,578	12.47%	touch screen
Montgomery	207,952	183,183	24,769	11.91%	touch screen
Marion	19,853	21,128	-1,275	-6.42%	touch screen

Note that there is no county falling between Holmes County (6.90%) and Montgomery County (11.91%). The counties listed above are clearly anomalous. The unofficial results cannot be right. And, of course, the unofficial results in Marion County are impossible.

Note also that all 17 counties listed above utilized touch screen voting machines, known in the trade as Direct Recording Electronic (DRE). 31 of 88 Ohio counties utilized optical scanners, and none of them had this problem.

Data on voting technology utilized in 2006 by each Ohio county is displayed on a map provided by www.yourvotecountsohio.org. A word of caution is in order. In the 2005 general election in Ohio, several counties reported incorrect figures for total ballots cast. The false numbers

were derived by counting absentee ballots twice, as the Diebold tabulators were programmed to do. However, there is no evidence that this is the cause of the abnormally high numbers of undervotes and overvotes reported in 16 counties in the 2006 general election. The combined totals of absentee and provisional ballots are reported by Blackwell for each county, and in no case are these numbers anywhere near what would be required to account for the discrepancies.

To the contrary, unofficial voter turnout in these 17 counties was 54.35%, compared to 52.21% in the other 71 counties of Ohio. That is not much of a difference. There were 1,402,408 ballots cast in these 17 counties. If the rate of undervotes and overvotes had been about 3%, as was the case elsewhere in the state, there would have been about 42,000.

Instead there were 267,712 (or 268,987 if one takes into account the 1,275 phantom votes in Marion County). This raises the disturbing possibility that some 227,000 votes were lost by touch screen voting machines in Ohio. Surely this merits a full-scale investigation. Whether or not this "affected the outcome," a phrase generally intended to mean who won and who lost the election, is beside the point. If 227,000 votes were not counted, the outcome was affected.

2. VOTER TURNOUT, UNITED STATES SENATE UNOFFICIAL RESULTS: NOVEMBER 7, 2006

County	Registered Voters	Ballots Cast	Percent Turnout	Votes Counted	Undervotes/Overvotes	
Adams	16,966	9,592	56.54%	8,378	1,214	12.66%
Allen	68,892	35,138	51.00%	33,758	1,380	3.93%
Ashland	35,499	19,458	54.81%	18,636	822	4.22%
Ashtabula	62,265	34,415	55.27%	33,614	801	2.33%
Athens	42,573	17,525	41.16%	17,078	447	2.55%
Auglaize	32,759	16,877	51.52%	16,427	450	2.67%
Belmont	43,396	29,045	66.93%	23,192	5,853	20.15%
Brown	27,436	14,290	52.08%	13,831	459	3.21%
Butler	236,998	114,908	48.48%	110,908	4,000	3.48%
Carroll	20,169	12,664	62.79%	10,898	1,766	13.95%
Champaign	25,162	14,553	57.84%	14,168	385	2.65%
Clark	90,057	49,972	55.49%	48,934	1,038	2.08%
Clermont	127,759	65,531	51.29%	63,308	2,223	3.39%
Clinton	25,826	12,749	49.37%	12,394	355	2.78%
Columbiana	79,855	37,143	46.51%	36,104	1,039	2.80%
Coshocton	20,768	16,138	77.71%	13,107	3,031	18.78%
Crawford	28,923	17,072	59.03%	16,430	642	3.76%
Cuyahoga	1,054,670	562,498	53.33%	413,570	148,928	26.48%
Darke	34,357	20,435	59.48%	19,726	709	3.47%
Defiance	25,769	13,168	51.10%	12,981	187	1.42%
Delaware	108,733	64,927	59.71%	63,248	1,679	2.59%
Erie	51,017	30,645	60.07%	29,795	850	2.77%

Fairfield	96,566	54,246	56.18%	52,441	1,805	3.33%
Fayette	15,476	8,510	54.99%	8,340	170	2.00%
Franklin	766,490	342,958	44.74%	333,466	9,492	2.77%
Fulton	28,633	16,269	56.82%	15,728	541	3.33%
Gallia	23,320	9,976	42.78%	9,862	114	1.14%
Geauga	63,299	40,006	63.20%	38,765	1,241	3.10%
Greene	104,200	57,168	54.86%	56,663	505	0.88%
Guernsey	25,429	12,936	50.87%	12,365	571	4.42%
Hamilton	566,661	282,190	49.80%	273,129	9,061	3.21%
Hancock	49,855	28,692	57.55%	25,114	3,578	12.47%
Hardin	17,604	9,805	55.70%	9,388	417	4.25%
Harrison	10,936	6,234	57.00%	5,967	267	4.28%
Henry	19,618	11,697	59.62%	11,201	496	4.24%
Highland	25,679	14,351	55.89%	12,358	1,993	3.89%
Hocking	18,035	9,800	54.34%	9,465	335	3.42%
Holmes	18,204	8,564	47.04%	7,973	591	6.90%
Huron	35,645	18,635	52.28%	18,020	615	3.30%
Jackson	21,748	12,025	55.29%	9,974	2,051	17.06%
Jefferson	48,693	26,344	54.10%	25,364	980	3.72%
Knox	36,348	20,784	57.18%	20,180	604	2.91%
Lake	154,048	86,684	56.27%	84,134	2,550	2.94%
Lawrence	41,470	19,209	46.32%	18,731	478	2.49%
Licking	102,300	70,705	69.12%	57,704	13,001	18.39%
Logan	29,730	16,488	55.46%	15,955	533	3.23%
Lorain	190,767	98,664	51.72%	96,324	2,340	2.37%
Lucas	296,541	164,003	55.31%	139,003	25,000	15.24%
Madison	23,597	13,583	57.56%	13,106	477	3.51%
Mahoning	175,923	96,027	54.58%	92,497	3,530	3.68%
Marion	43,814	19,853	45.31%	21,128	-1,275	-6.42%
Medina	121,000	65,600	54.21%	64,384	1,216	1.85%
Meigs	15,690	7,912	50.43%	7,661	251	3.17%
Mercer	30,985	15,510	50.06%	14,966	544	3.51%
Miami	68,309	36,686	53.71%	36,089	597	1.63%
Monroe	10,054	6,266	62.32%	5,925	341	5.44%
Montgomery	375,459	207,952	55.39%	183,183	24,769	11.91%
Morgan	9,605	5,480	57.05%	5,370	110	2.01%
Morrow	23,962	15,679	65.43%	12,242	3,437	21.92%
Muskingum	51,907	29,004	55.88%	27,739	1,265	4.36%
Noble	8,650	5,453	63.04%	5,124	329	6.03%
Ottawa	28,773	17,734	61.63%	17,238	496	2.80%
Paulding	13,619	7,749	56.90%	7,409	340	4.39%
Perry	20,888	12,775	61.16%	10,894	1,881	14.72%
Pickaway	30,917	17,383	56.22%	16,860	523	3.01%

Pike	18,320	9,632	52.58%	9,508	124	1.29%
Portage	103,718	55,283	53.30%	53,557	1,726	3.12%
Preble	27,699	16,007	57.79%	15,552	455	2.84%
Putnam	24,259	14,545	59.96%	14,031	514	3.53%
Richland	90,641	46,124	50.89%	44,900	1,224	2.65%
Ross	42,351	23,008	54.33%	22,262	746	3.24%
Sandusky	40,477	23,129	57.14%	22,265	864	3.74%
Scioto	47,285	26,072	55.14%	25,466	606	2.32%
Seneca	34,982	20,399	58.31%	19,818	581	2.85%
Shelby	29,476	17,523	59.45%	16,926	597	3.46%
Stark	270,515	139,646	51.62%	119,011	20,635	14.78%
Summit	373,289	199,256	53.38%	193,188	6,068	3.05%
Trumbull	141,393	81,011	57.29%	8,552	2,459	3.04%
Tuscarawas	56,295	36,124	64.17%	30,750	5,374	14.88%
Union	30,004	17,076	56.91%	16,554	522	3.06%
Van Wert	20,347	10,642	52.30%	10,299	343	3.22%
Vinton	8,666	4,598	53.06%	4,412	186	4.05%
Warren	127,843	66,684	52.16%	64,859	1,825	2.74%
Washington	39,547	23,134	58.50%	22,369	765	3.31%
Wayne	70,067	39,130	55.85%	37,753	1,377	3.52%
Williams	25,329	13,174	52.01%	12,687	487	3.70%
Wood	93,272	50,666	54.32%	44,190	6,476	12.78%
Wyandot	15,428	8,303	53.82%	8,006	297	3.58%
TOTAL	7,851,499	4,177,498	53.21%	3,826,829	350,669	8.39%