

From: Celeste Landry [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, December ,
To: Jessi Romero Jessi.romero@coloradosos.gov
Cc: Mark Parsons [REDACTED] Dwight Shellman dwight.shellman@coloradosos.gov
Subject: reporting results of multi-winner contests

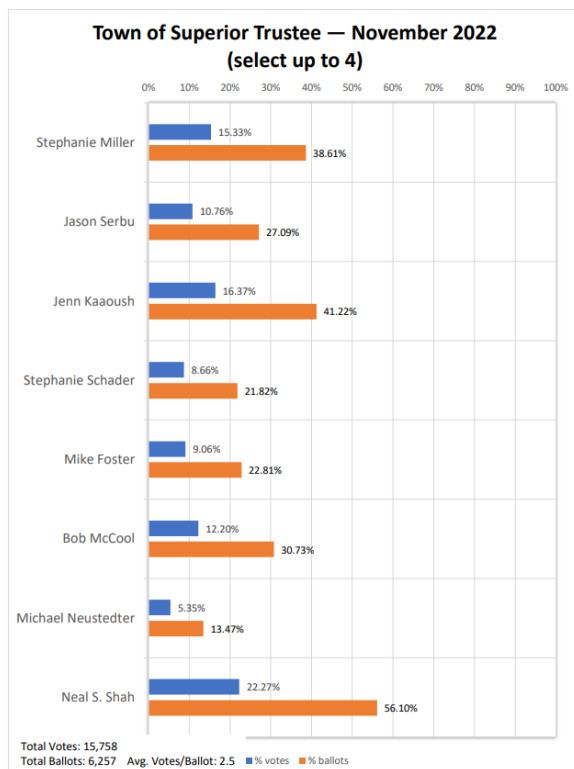
Jessi Romero
Voting Systems Manager
Colorado Department of State

Dear Mr Romero,

Dwight Shellman suggested that we contact you because we have suggestions about the graph and text displays on the SoS Election Results webpage – specifically, for the Town of Erie’s recent Home Rule Charter Commission contest, a multi-county elect-9 contest.

Since 2020, the League of Women Voters of Boulder County (LWVBC) has been educating and advocating for a better way to display election results in multi-winner contests, mostly in our own county. However, we are writing this letter as individuals to get this letter to you as soon as possible after the recent election.

LWVBC published a guest opinion on this topic in the [Boulder Beat](#) online newspaper and participated in an interview with [KGNU](#). Our main message is that reporting the votes as a percent of votes cast is not as informative as reporting the votes as a percent of BALLOTS cast. See the bar graph below for the recent elect-4 Superior Town Trustee contest. The same graph is also attached for better readability.



The highest vote-getter, Neal Shah, received support from more than half the vote-getters (3,510 out of 6,257), but you don't know this from how the results are currently reported at <https://election.boco.solutions/ElectionResults2022G>; nevertheless, majority support seems like important information to know and share.

The 2022 Erie Charter Commission contest would likewise benefit from reporting votes as a percent of BALLOTS. First, let's consider some of the similarities and differences between the two towns' contests:

	Erie Multi-county	Superior Single-county
Vote for up to	9	4
# of candidates	18	8
# of candidates / # of seats	2	2
Type of election	Special one-time	Regular municipal
Votes cast	58,821	15,758
Ballots cast	16,857	6,257
Average votes / ballot	3.5	2.5
% of possible votes cast	3.5/9 = 39%	2.5/4 = 63%

Because the average Erie voter selected fewer than half of the candidates that they could have selected, it's not surprising to find that the percent of electorate support for the Erie candidates is low. The highest vote-getter in Erie was Ashraf Shaikh with 4,768 votes. This is accurately recorded on the SoS website as 8.11% of the vote, which looks better when translated to 28% of the voters or ballots supporting Shaikh [4,768/16,857]. The percent support, especially in comparison with Superior, is discouraging, however.

Shedding light on the small number of selections per voter may lead to candidates engaging more with voters to increase the voters' "knowledge of candidates" levels and to gain more voters' support. More buzz about multi-winner elections could lead to higher voter turnout and participation which leads to the cycle of more candidates reaching out to likely voters – ideally, a snowball effect happens.

Current election results always state the number of votes in each contest. The discussion of the Erie and Superior results show the value of prominently including the number of BALLOTS cast in a contest. Knowing the number of ballots cast allows for easy visibility to two important areas:

- Percent support that each candidate truly received
- Average number of votes cast per ballot

We are curious how much work would be involved in changing the Election Night Reporting software display of multi-winner contests to

- include a second-color bar showing votes as a percent of ballots with a key explaining the two colors
- include the total number of ballots cast
- include the average number of votes per ballot

We hope and suspect that these changes are not very laborious, since we've made such changes in the Superior graph above. If the Sec of State can make the changes for the ENR software, then wouldn't any county clerks using the same software be able to piggyback on the state's changes?

Thank you for your consideration of these improvements. We would be delighted to help with the transition in any way we can. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,
Celeste Landry and Mark Parsons

P.S. Thanks to the Boulder County Elections website for its posted Statement of Votes so we could extract 7,636 Boulder-Erie voters and to Adam in the Weld County Elections office for providing the 9,221 number of Weld-Erie voters.

Attachment: full-scale Town of Superior Trustee election results bar graph