

56,226 Undelivered Maricopa County Ballots Whereabouts Unknown

Verity Vote

Executive Summary

Documents received from Maricopa County in response to a Public Records Request reveal that over 56,000 live, unvoted mail ballots were returned by the USPS as undeliverable. Those ballots are unaccounted for, and the County's response is that the physical ballots are "not retained." This is a clear violation of 52 USC §20701 which requires retention and preservation of federal election materials for 22 months. The original public records request was submitted to Maricopa County Recorder's Office on October 5th, 2021. In response to the PPR, the Recorder's office sent an email on November 1, 2021, indicating that they do not retain the undelivered ballot packets. The response from the MC Recorder was, "No physical packets are returned to Maricopa from the USPS since Maricopa County utilizes the 'Electronic Service Requested' endorsement..."

On November 2, 2021, Election Director Rey Valenzuela responded to questions regarding the County's handling of the undelivered ballot packets. Valenzuela confirmed that the live ballot packets are not returned to the County. A list of undeliverable items is transmitted electronically to the County for the "previous day or days" of undelivered mail. Maricopa County receives the address information from the USPS and uses that data to cancel the barcodes on the return envelopes to render the envelopes invalid. Maricopa County did not provide records of how often they processed the USPS lists, so there is no way to tell how long these envelope barcodes remained valid. Additionally, Valenzuela's response does not address the issue of the 56,226 live ballots within those envelopes that the County did not retain and for which the County has no proof of destruction.

This information was shared with the Arizona Attorney General's investigators and Senate President Karen Fann. In an interview with Clea Mitchell, Senator Fann said that she confirmed Verity Vote's report of these undelivered ballots with Maricopa County.