

## **CRITIQUE: PARTISAN HAND-TO-EYE AUDIT CONDUCTED JULY 28, 2022:**

I am mindful that I took an oath to all the citizens of Chatham, not just Republicans, but Democrats and other citizens. In this discussion, I will state the facts and let the citizens make their own conclusions.(1) In 2002, the Help America Vote Act introduced electronic voting. Under North Carolina Statutes, a paper record or paper ballot must be generated as a backup for each electronic vote. The audit is a quality control mechanism using a hand count of paper ballots as a double-check for accuracy in the electronic voting machines.(2) Unfortunately, on July 28, 2022, a partisan audit occurred at the Chatham Board of Elections. At that audit, counters/talliers/observers were selected to numerically advantage two Democrats and two Unaffiliated participants, while disadvantaging only one Republican. At this critical time, a major midterm election is approaching and voting integrity is under intense public scrutiny. Any irregular conduct by voting administrators (like a partisan audit) may undermine public confidence.

Paradoxically, the Director of Communications for the State Board of Elections, Pat Gannon, was published by WRAL on July 31, 2022. The reporter quoted Mr. Gannon, “The current environment, including increased demands and hostility toward these public servants, has led elections workers to leave their positions.” Chatham’s Director was quoted in the same article: “In this Political Climate, my staff is facing more scrutiny.”(3) I agree with Mr. Gannon and Chatham Director’s comments that the current environment is charged regarding voting integrity with a domino effect directed toward voting administrators. I stress that the current environment should require that Chatham Board of Elections take increased devotion to avoid any appearance of partisanship. Appearance of audit partisanship may translate into toxic optics that can undermine this Board’s reputation and further Balkanize the public discourse. Finally, if the audit organizer had exerted effort toward equal Republican participation, this critical letter was totally avoidable.

Frank Dunphy, (Member, Chatham Board of Elections), August 4, 2022

*I request this critique be included in the final approved Board meeting minutes that are posted on the Chatham website.*

(1) Paraphrase from, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New York State Annual Report, fireside chat radio broadcast, 1929.

(2) Election and Related Laws and Rules of NC, 2019 Edition, Chapter 163, (pages 171-2, 203-5).

(3) “Threats, intimidation and legal action. Skeptics strain NC election workers.” By Paul Specht, WRAL state government reporter. Posted July 31, 2022.