

For release: January 30, 2020

Contact:

Luc Hatlestad

Public Information Officer

303-734-5466

Lhatlestad@arapahoegov.com

LITTLETON, CO—On January 29, 2020, the Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder’s office discovered an error in our UOCAVA ballot delivery, specifically that—as a result of a data entry error in our office—UOCAVA voters who requested delivery of ballots by mail for the March 3 Presidential Primary were not sent those mail ballots by the 45-day deadline (January 18, 2020). This error affected approximately 985 military and overseas voters. We take full responsibility for this mistake and have already taken steps to ascertain how the problem occurred and implemented remedial measures, as outlined below.

Military and overseas voters may request to receive a ballot either via mail or email. Because of a file naming mistake by one of our staff, our print/mail vendor was given the email voter list of appx 1998 UOCAVA voters instead of the list of UOCAVA voters that requested mail ballots (985 voters). Therefore, the vendor mailed ballots to the email voters by the 45-day deadline (in addition to the email ballots that we sent to the same list of voters). However, the “mail” UOCAVA voters were not mailed any ballots or sent any emails. We discovered the error in our County on January 29 after several UOCAVA email voters contacted our staff asking why they received both a mail and email ballot.

When we discovered the mistake we immediately sent the proper file to our vendor to be produced and ready to mail ballots on January 29. Our office notified the Colorado Secretary of State’s office, and we received guidance from that office about how to proceed. Also on January 29, we spoke to relevant staff members to determine what happened and submitted a report of the incident to the Secretary of State’s office.

We will be contacting the affected voters today by phone, fax and email, and we are using expedited delivery where necessary to ensure that all affected voters will receive their ballots in time to vote in the March 3 Presidential Primary Election. Some of the ballots were sent by USPS yesterday, January 29. All remaining ballots are scheduled to be sent by expedited UPS by the end of the day today.

To ensure this does not happen again, we are adding back-up personnel as an additional check on file contents and transfers, and we’re also adjusting our internal notification and communication protocols. As a result of this incident, we will file a 45-day compliance plan and status checks ahead of the June primary election with the Secretary of State and additional UOCAVA compliance plans for the November 3 Presidential Election. We also will take any additional steps as dictated by the Secretary of State.

Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder Joan Lopez and relevant staff will hold a media availability to discuss this incident on **Friday, January 31 from 2:00-2:30 p.m. in the West Hearing Room, Arapahoe County Administration Building, 5334 S. Prince Street, Littleton**. Reporters who are unable to attend in person may call into the meeting by dialing **303-795-4758**.

###