November 10, 2026

To Whom It May concern:

I was troubled by the Election Summary Report distributed by the Cherokee County Elections Office Friday, November 6. A quick glance revealed thousands of unresolved write-in votes. As a write-in candidate I had attended adjudication of unresolved write-in votes for my home county. The number to resolve had already changed from what had been included in the unofficial statement. The first troublesome realization was that adjudication was done by two Board of Elections members as representatives of their respective political parties who had no party interest in write-in votes and a third participant while a candidate with an interest had no meaningful observation of the ballots. To my knowledge the Board of Election members' oaths still require they participate in the election processing.

The next problem was that like so many other parts of elections the current system is not very conducive to accommodating write-in votes. The current system has many points of failure as any electronic system will have. I have examined the system user manual regarding write-ins and heard the instructions given to the adjudicators Friday. It sounded simple Friday that write-in votes were either a vote for a legitimate write-in candidate, the name written was not a legitimate candidate, or other for whatever reason made the vote unassignable. However, the user manual is rather convoluted. With knowledge of past errors of votes getting stuck in adjudication as well as others clicking to do something doesn't always mean the intended act is properly done. I don't presume that there was any malfeasance intended with unresolved votes but it can call into question the resolution of votes that were resolved.

Without examining the ballot images which I intend to do, I can not infer that any contest was effected by unresolved write-in votes. I do not have access to local qualified write-in candidate list or even that there were any. Having said that if there were no locally qualified write-in candidates the contests with the larger numbers of write in votes those elected can take to heart that the people they govern/serve are not happy with their service and take that into account in future actions and elections. That was the real value of write-in votes in giving a voice to dissatisfaction for those in office thoughtful enough to consider it.

Regards,
Deb Broughton Davis