

Subject: RE: Public Information Request (TX-SOS-21-1809) PIR 21-1230
Date: Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 4:36:58 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: GeneralCounsel
To: AO Records
CC: GeneralCounsel
Attachments: 5.5.22 Documents.zip

EXTERNAL SENDER

Good afternoon,

Consistent with our April 14 email, please see the attached documents responsive to your request for information under Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code.

The responsive documents contain email addresses of the general public. An email address of a member of the public is confidential under section 552.137 of the Texas Government Code. The attorney general authorized all governmental bodies to withhold an email address of a member of the public without first requesting an attorney general opinion in Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009). Thus, this information has been redacted.

We appreciate your patience as we continue to process your request in accordance with the terms of the PIA. We require additional time to review our records and produce additional responsive documents. We will provide you any additional responsive documents—to the extent such information is not excepted from disclosure under state or federal law—by 5:00 p.m. on May 26, 2022. *See* Tex. Gov't Code § 552.221(d).

Kind regards,

Jennifer Williams
Legal Assistant to the General Counsel
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

From: Christina Adkins
Sent: Friday, December 10, 2021 4:32 PM
To: Harris - Beth Stevens (beth.stevens@vote.hctx.net)
Subject: FW: Letter from Secretary Scott
Attachments: Texas Secretary of State Letter_Full Forensic Audit_Phase 2.pdf

Sensitivity: Personal

FYI --

From: Christina Adkins
Sent: Friday, December 10, 2021 4:32 PM
To: Collin - Bruce Sherbet (bsherbet@co.collin.tx.us) <bsherbet@co.collin.tx.us>; Dallas - Michael J. Scarpello (michael.scarpello@dallascounty.org) <michael.scarpello@dallascounty.org>; Heider I. Garcia <HIGarcia@tarrantcounty.com>; Harris - Isabel Longoria (Isabel.Longoria@vote.hctx.net) <Isabel.Longoria@vote.hctx.net>
Subject: Letter from Secretary Scott
Sensitivity: Personal

Please see the attached correspondence from Secretary Scott.

Thank you,

Christina Worrell Adkins

Legal Director – Elections Division
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
1019 Brazos Street | Rudder Building, 2nd Floor | Austin, Texas 78701
512-463-9859 (direct) | 1.800.252.VOTE (8683)
elections@sos.texas.gov | www.sos.texas.gov

For Voter Related Information, please visit:



The information contained in this email is intended to provide advice and assistance in election matters per §31.004 of the Texas Election Code. It is not intended to serve as a legal opinion for any matter. Please review the law yourself, and consult with an attorney when your legal rights are involved.

The State of Texas

Elections Division
P.O. Box 12060
Austin, Texas 78711-2060
www.sos.texas.gov
www.votetexas.gov



Phone: 512-463-5650
Fax: 512-475-2811
Dial 7-1-1 For Relay Services
(800) 252-VOTE (8683)

John B. Scott
Secretary of State

December 10, 2021

Bruce Sherbet
Collin County Elections Administrator
2010 Redbud Blvd, Suite 102
McKinney, TX 75069

Isabel Longoria
Harris County Elections Administrator
1001 Preston
Houston, TX 77002

Michael Scarpello
Dallas County Elections Administrator
1520 Round Table Drive
Dallas, TX 75247

Heider Garcia
Tarrant County Elections Administrator
100 E. Weatherford
Fort Worth, Texas 76196

Dear Bruce, Michael, Isabel and Heider:

Thank you for your service to Texas voters and for your commitment to transparency in our election process. As indicated in our office's previous communications, the Texas Secretary of State's office is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the November 2020 General Election in your respective counties. The purpose of this audit is to provide clarity and confidence for Texas voters that all applicable laws and procedures were followed during the 2020 Election, and to identify any irregularities or issues that need to be addressed going forward.

Enclosed, please find a comprehensive list of documents and records our office will be examining as part of Phase 2 of the Full Forensic Audit, as well as requests for information from your office that will be instrumental in completing the audit process. We request that your respective offices begin locating the documents listed to prepare for our Forensic Audit Division's on-site examinations, which will be coordinated at a mutually convenient time in January 2022.

In the near term, we request that you provide us the following information, in writing, to our office by **Tuesday, December 21st** in order to guide the next phase of the forensic audit process:

- **A list of Early Voting or Election Day polling locations that had a discrepancy of one percent or more between the number of voters that checked in to the number of votes cast at that location.**
- **Whether any voting sites were closed or added due to an emergency or other necessity**
- **Any known procedural or chain of custody defects**
- **Any other issues discovered that you would like to disclose now that may be relevant to our audit process**

- **A list of complaints received and resolved, with a description of any known investigative steps or known resolution.**
- **A detailed accounting of the following:**
 - **Total Early Voting Ballots by Mail Requested**
 - **Total Early Voting Ballots by Mail Sent out**
 - **Total Early Voting Ballots requested by FPCA**
 - **Breakdown of Early Voting Ballots by Mail accepted/rejected**
 - **Total number of mail ballot voters that cancelled their mail ballot without surrendering the mailed ballot and voted in person**
 - **Total number of mail ballot voters that surrendered their mail ballot and voted in person**
- **A detailed accounting of the following:**
 - **Total Number of Provisional Votes Cast**
 - **A list of Provisional Voters by reason for voting provisionally**
 - **Total Number of Provisional Votes cast for voters lacking ID**
 - **Total number of Provisional Voted Accepted/Rejected**
- **List of entities that conducted recounts or had election contests**

We thank you in advance for your responses to this initial audit survey and request that you begin preparing the enclosed list of documents and records for our agency's review.

Please feel free to reach out to our office directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



John B. Scott
Texas Secretary of State

Encl.: 2020 Forensic Election Audit – Phase 2: Comprehensive Records Examination

2020 Forensic Election Audit

Phase 2: Comprehensive Records Examination

The purpose of this document is to outline the records and procedures that the Texas Secretary of State's office is reviewing for the forensic audit of the 2020 General Election in Collin, Dallas, Tarrant, and Harris counties. The specific review process for each category will be based on the county's response to the initial survey questions provided. Once the scope is established on a county-by-county basis, we will provide detailed documentation regarding the specific review of each applicable category.

We recognize that some counties may use different terminology for certain forms and procedures. The terminology used in this document is based on commonly used terms in the Texas Election Code and based on industry standards. To the extent that counties use different terminologies to describe the election materials and procedures used in the November 2020 General Election, county election officials will have the opportunity to provide an explanation in their responses ahead of our office's on-site visits.

Election Security

The following questions pertain to each county's election security measures. Please elaborate to the fullest extent possible in your responses:

- Do you have badge-controlled access to your election office?
- Do you keep track of who enters into the office, especially sensitive areas?
- Are visitors escorted at all times?
- Do you keep track of who enters the ballot programming area? Are the number of people authorized to access the programming area limited?
- Did your county attend Texas Secretary of State webinars that discussed the [Election Security Toolkit](#)?
- Did your county create individual versions of all six documents that address the procedures in your county?
- If you did not complete all 6 documents, which of these did you complete?
 - Vendor Risk Management Policy (VRMP)
 - Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
 - Incident Response Plan (IRP)
 - Election Information Security Policy (EISP)
 - Election System Security Plan (ESSP)
 - Election Security Best Practices
- Does your county have an offsite version of the Election Security Toolkit in a printed or electronically stored format?
- Does your county have a segmented election network?
- Does your county have a next generation firewall?

- Does your county IT Department regularly patch and maintain the latest software version throughout the division?
- Does your county employ the Principle of Least Privilege?

Acceptance Testing Records if New Voting System was Used for the First Time

An examination of the following records will gauge the percentage of equipment that did not pass the acceptance testing and, therefore, was not operable during the November 2020 General Election:

- Logs for each device tested
- Logs that show if a device did not function properly or had to be returned for vendor review or service

L&A Testing Records

An examination of the following documents and records will determine if the voting system accurately recorded the test voters' choices and therefore demonstrated that the voting system accurately recorded voters' ballot choices:

- Public Notice of Logic and Accuracy (L&A) Test
- All test ballots voted in the election
- Tally Sheets
- Test Deck Records
- List of participants who voted test ballots
- Records showing test outcomes and if tests had to be repeated
- Testing media, including:
 - memory sticks
 - mobile ballot boxes (MBBs)
 - paper ballots used for L&A test voting and tabulation)
- All testing seals or other test materials

Election Preparation

An examination of the following documents and records will determine whether or not protocols to secure the voting system and ballot were followed to protect the integrity of the election:

- List of Presiding Judges and Alternate Judges by Precinct and Party
- Notification of Election Training Program
- Ballot Programming: Please indicate whether your vendor programmed your ballot or if the ballot was programmed by in-house staff.
- Electronic Poll Books (EPBs) programming: Please indicate how your EPBs were programmed and at what intervals was the Official List of Registered Voters on the EPB updated.

Early Voting In Person

An examination of the following documents will provide a summary of all processes executed to conduct in-person Early Voting:

- **Election Workers**
 - List of Early Voting Deputies, Alternate Deputies and Early Voting Clerks
 - Lists of Early Voting Workers who dropped out of the election, the date they dropped out and the names of the replacement workers
 - Please indicate the training that any emergency replacement workers received.
 - List of “no show” Early Voting workers

- **Documentation related to Ordering and Providing Notice of the Election**
 - Order of November General Election for State and County Officers (GESCO)
 - Location of the Main Early Voting Polling Place as noted on the Order of Election
 - List of Early Voting Branch Polling Places as noted on the Order of Election
 - Notice of General Election (copy of posted notice and publication)
 - Record for Posting Notice of Election if posted in this manner

- **Documentation for Ballot Corrections, if applicable**
 - Notice of Ballot Correction, if applicable
 - Notice of Ballot Destruction, if applicable
 - Record of Ballot Destruction, if applicable
 - Notice of Ballot Reprint Order, if applicable

- **Documentation for Tracking Ballots**
 - Register of Official Ballots for Early Voting at the Main Location (if ballots are pre-serialized, if not the number of ballot cards delivered)
 - Register of Official Ballots for Early Voting at a Branch Location (if ballots are pre-serialized, if not the number of ballot cards delivered)

- **Polling Place Paperwork**
 - Combination Forms for each day of Early Voting OR a report generated by the general custodian to accurately create a summary of all processes that were required to be executed as noted on paper Combination Forms
 - Daily Balancing Envelope or Report (contain copy of daily returns for Early Voting, to the extent possible)
 - Ballot Styles of voters who were given a ballot vs. how many votes of each ballot style should have been cast, based on voter registration precinct (this identifies when a voter is given the wrong ballot style)
 - Results Tapes/Suspend Reports
 - List of Declared Write-In Candidates for posting in the voting booth
 - Reasonable Impediment Declarations, if applicable
 - Statements of Residence, if applicable
 - Standard Affidavits

- Registration Omissions List
- **Other Information to be Reviewed**
 - List of Registered Voters that was used in the 2020 Presidential Election (electronic copy).
 - List of any Early Voting Site that had to be closed or changed according to county records
 - Signature Roster for Hand Delivery of a Ballot by Mail Forms (usually this process is only done only on Election Day, but the hand delivery period was extended only for the November 3, 2020 General Election)
- **Chain of Custody Paperwork**
 - Chain of Custody forms (Record of Early Voting Ballot Seals) that document the seals on the ballot boxes for each day of Early Voting
 - Chain of Custody delivery of equipment to voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who delivered equipment)
 - Chain of Custody of pickup of equipment from voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who picked up equipment)
 - Chain of Custody forms for when troubleshooters picked up completed forms from Early Voting sites for daily processing
 - List of Early Voting Daily seals for Provisional Secure Container
- **Voting System Equipment Management**
 - Trouble Logs and equipment replacement records
 - Troubleshooter visit logs
 - Equipment returned to vendor for technical support
 - Call Center Event/Complaint Logs
- **Poll Watcher Paperwork**
 - Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment

Ballot by Mail – Early Voting

An examination of these documents and records will determine whether Early Voting by Mail was conducted in accordance with state and federal law:

- Applications for Ballot by Mail (ABBM)s
- List of Annual ABBM Voters
- List of Declared Write-In Candidates
- Notices of Improper Delivery (and to whom they were sent)
- Emails from the county to voters regarding ABBM and Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) rejections
- Notices of Rejected ABBMs and reasons
- **Mail Ballot Cancellation Paperwork**
 - Request to Cancel a Ballot by Mail for Use in the Polling Place

- Request to Cancel a Ballot by Mail for Use in the Early Voting Clerk's Office
- Notice of Denial of Request to Cancel Application for a Ballot by Mail
- Notice of ABBM or FPCA Cancellation (Formerly Notice to Presiding Judge)
- **Ballot By Mail Forms**
 - A sample of the November 3, 2020 Special Ballot Envelope to demonstrate that the correct version was used
 - A sample of the November 3, 2020 Special Carrier Envelope to demonstrate that the correct version was used
 - Special Carrier Insert for an ABBM voter for November 3, 2020 Election to demonstrate that the correct version was used
- **Other Information to be Reviewed**
 - List of FPCA ballots transmitted by email to the voter
 - List of FPCAs that were physically mailed to the voter
 - List of Voters Mailed a Corrected Ballot, if applicable
 - Statistics of how many uncorrected ballots were returned and counted as well as how many corrected ballots were returned and counted, if applicable.
 - List of Voters who were required to complete and return a Statement of Residence with their Ballot by Mail
- **Special Early Voting Forms**
 - Restricted Ballot Rosters for Chapter 112, 113 and 114 Ballots
 - Poll List of Voters Voting a Limited Ballot by Personal Appearance
 - Applications for a Limited Ballot
 - Notice to Voter Registrar of Application for a Presidential Ballot
 - Applications for an Emergency Early Voting Ballot Due to Sickness or Physical Disability
 - Applications for Emergency Ballot Due to Death in the Family
 - List of persons who voted on a space flight, if any

Election Day

An examination of the following documents and records from voting sites will determine if election officials followed proper chain of custody procedures, produce documentation of the chain of custody of ballots and election materials, and determine whether all state and federal laws were followed:

Election Workers

- Final List of Election Day Polling Places
- List of Presiding Judges and Alternate Judges by Precinct and Party
- Order of Appointment of Election Judges and Alternates
- Notifications of Appointment as Election Judge
- Writs of Election for the General Election for State and County Officers

- List of emergency appointments for Election Day Workers
- Lists of Election Day Workers who dropped out of the election, the date they dropped out and the names of the replacement workers.
 - Please indicate the training that any emergency replacement workers received.
- List of “no show” workers on Election Day

Election Day Forms

- Combination Forms for election day OR a report generated by the general custodian to accurately create a summary of all processes that were required to be executed as noted on paper Combination Forms
- Ballot Styles of voters who were given a ballot vs. how many votes of each ballot style should have been cast based on voter registration precinct (this identifies when a voter is given the wrong ballot style)
- Results Tapes/Suspend Reports
- List of Declared Write-In Candidates for posting in the voting booth
- Reasonable Impediment Declarations, if needed
- Statements of Residence, if needed
- Standard Affidavits
- Registration Omissions List
- Envelope Containing Spoiled Ballots with the Register of Spoiled Ballots
- Defectively Printed Ballots
- Ballot by Mail Cancellation Requests attached to the surrendered ballots
- Register of Official Ballots for each Polling Place or the Combined Ballot and Seal Certificate and Official Ballot Register
- Ballot and Seal Certificates by Polling Location or the Combined Ballot and Seal Certificate and Official Ballot Register
- Applications to Cancel a Ballot by Mail for Use in the Polling Place

Chain of Custody Paperwork

- Chain of Custody delivery of equipment to voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who delivered equipment)
- Chain of custody of pickup of equipment from voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who picked up equipment)
- Chain of custody forms for when troubleshooters picked up completed forms from Election Day sites for processing (if performed on Election Day)
- List of seals put on equipment for Election Day, including:
 - Those put on at elections office in the morning; and
 - Those put on by Presiding Judge at the polling place in the evening when voting has concluded

Election Day Notices

- Notices of Consolidated Precincts and records of which staff member posted the notices at the various sites, if any

- Record for Posting Notice of Election if posted in this manner
- Notices of Previous Precinct and records of which staff member posted the notices at the various sites, if any
- Notices of Four Nearest Countywide Polling Places and records of which staff member posted the notices at the various sites, if any

Additional Items for Consideration

- All sign-out sheets for those picking up supplies for Election Day.
 - Please indicate who picked up supplies for Election Day.
- List of any Election Day Site that had to be closed or changed and the reason for the closure or change
- Trouble Logs and equipment replacement records
- Names of individuals who returned supplies to the Receiving Substation/Central Receiving Station
- Names of individuals who received the supplies into his or her custody when the supplies were returned by election workers

Provisional Ballots

An examination of the Provisional Forms will determine if voters' provisional ballots were accepted or rejected according to the law, as well as determine the percentage of provisional ballots accepted vs. rejected:

- Affidavits of Provisional Voter
- Early Voting List of Provisional Voters
- Election Day List of Provisional Voters
- Summary of Provisional Ballots
- List of Seals for Provisional Secure Containers for Early Voting and chain of custody forms where they were documented
- List of Seals for Provisional Secure Containers for Election Day and chain of custody forms where they were documented
- Notice of Delivery of Provisional Ballots – To Voter Registrar on Election Night
- List of Rejected Provisional Ballots and reason
- Number of Provisional Ballots cured for lack of ID
- Verification of Provisional Ballots and Seal Numbers
- Review Notices of Outcome to Provisional Voter
 - Number of provisional ballots accepted
 - Number of provisional ballots rejected
- Breakdown of percentage of Provisional Ballots counted and rejected

Signature Verification Committee

An examination of the following documents related to the Signature Verification Committee (SVC) will determine whether there was party balance on the Committee and who was responsible for the processes of accepting and rejecting signatures:

- Order Calling for Signature Verification Committee – date posted
- Notification of Appointed Members to SVC
- Notice of Appointment of SVC
- Chain of custody forms when ballots were transmitted to Central Counting Station from SVC
- Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment for SVC

Early Voting Ballot Board

An examination of the following documents related to the Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB) will determine whether there was party balance and properly review adjudications, acceptances and rejections, as well as who was responsible for those processes:

- Order for EVBB
- Notice of Convening of EVBB
- Notification of members appointed to the EVBB
- Notice of appointment of the EVBB
- Notice of delivery of balloting materials to the EVBB (Receipt of Sealed Early Voting Ballot Boxes)
- Chain of Custody forms when ballots were delivered to the EVBB
- Samples of Notice of Rejected Ballot by Mail and reasons for rejection
- Samples of Notice of Rejected FPCAs Carriers and reasons for rejection
- Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment

Central Counting Station

An examination of these documents will determine whether the Central Counting Station (CCS) Plan was followed along with all applicable laws and procedures, and whether proper Chain of Custody procedures for voted ballots were followed:

- Central Counting Station Plan
 - Please indicate whether it posted 5 days before Election Day, as required by law.
- Public Notice of Test of Automatic Tabulating Equipment
- Certification of First Test of Automated Tabulating Equipment
- Oaths for Early Voting Ballot Board and Central Counting Station Personnel
- Chain of Custody documents related to the transmittal of ballots to the CCS from Election Day polling places, Early Voting Clerk's storage, or Early Voting Ballot Board.

Partial Manual Count Records

An examination of these documents and records will determine whether the Partial Manual Count was performed according to the law, as well as who performed the count:

- All records associated with the post-election Partial Manual Count
 - Please indicate who performed the partial manual count.
- Record of the Partial Manual Count results submitted to the Texas Secretary of State's office
- Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment, if any

Post-Election and Canvass Records

An examination of these documents will determine whether certification of election results was conducted properly and whether proper documentation to support the official results was provided:

- Canvass of the General Election
- Summary of Precinct Returns
- Canvass reports by official in charge of certifying results
- Records of any recounts requested and performed after the election
- Records related to any election contests filed

Records Retention

An examination of these documents and records will determine whether Chain of Custody of records was maintained, and whether officials properly followed the 1st to 60th day rule and the 61st day to 22-month retention rule. If records must be opened, please supply a copy of the court order:

- Records of seal numbers put on and taken off records when the initial 60-day period for records retention ended
- Record of seals that were placed on the ballots and other materials on the 61st day for the remainder of the 22-month record retention period
 - Please indicate whether records were stored in a locked in a surveilled room.
- Please indicate whether county officials keep a log of anyone accessing the room where the records/ballots are stored.
- Please indicate whether any court order necessitated the unsealing of the records.
 - Provide a copy of any court order requesting opening of the records.

Central Counting Station Test Records

An examination of these records will validate the test procedures that were performed before and after counting on the automatic tabulating equipment:

- Central Counting Station (CCS) Plan
- Certification of 1st test of automated tabulating equipment
- Records from 2nd Logic and Accuracy (L&A) test before ballots are counted in the CCS
- Certification of the 3rd L&A test after ballots were counted at the Central Counting Station
- Records indicating whether there was a + or – 4 ballots tabulated that necessitated a recounting of ballots at the CCS
- Copy of final reports (unofficial results, precinct returns) signed by the presiding judge of the CCS

Training Materials

An examination of these materials will determine whether poll workers were trained according to all state and federal laws and procedures. Examining the training materials allows auditors to know if the poll workers were instructed to perform their duties accurately:

- Manuals, PowerPoint presentations, materials that were used in poll worker training and sent to the field
- An example of the forms kit that was deployed to the field, if possible
- Training attendance records, including in-person and online training

General

Any video surveillance records that were recorded from the time the election was ordered until the canvass was completed.

Additional Audit Compliance Questions

1. Are any of your election materials that are required for the audit, stored at facility not under your control?
2. How quickly could you access the materials from the storage vendor?
3. Will it take longer than one month to locate and have your records ready for examination?
4. Do you still have the same voting systems as when your county conducted the 2020 Presidential Election?
5. Of the records listed in the Audit requirements, please specify which are electronically stored and which are physical copies.
6. Are there any records that you may not be able to produce? If so, why?
7. Are there any permanent staff members who have left your office since the Presidential Election? Please give names and job duties.

From: [Keith Ingram](#)
To: briscoe@fultonstrahan.com
Cc: [Adam Bitter](#)
Bcc: [Sam Taylor](#); [Joe Esparza](#)
Subject: FW: Note from Secretary John B. Scott
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:54:00 PM
Sensitivity: Personal

Chairman Cain,

Secretary Scott wanted me to send this to you in order to extend the invitation to the members of the Elections Committee.

Let me know if you need anything.

Keith

From: Secretary <Secretary@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:41 PM
To: jim.murphy@house.texas.gov; chris.turner@house.texas.gov; carol.alvarado@senate.texas.gov; paul.bettencourt@senate.texas.gov
Cc: Joe Esparza <JEsparza@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: Note from Secretary John B. Scott
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Afternoon Caucus Chairs,

I hope you are doing well and staying healthy! I wanted to let you and all of your offices know that I am happy to speak directly to your constituents, as well as those of your members, about the full forensic audit of the 2020 General Election and election integrity as we head into the 2022 Primary season. While, as Secretary of State, I cannot participate in any type of fundraising activities for campaigns, I am happy to participate in public discussions with Texans in your district to answer their questions directly and provide educational information about safeguarding our elections in the State of Texas.

Please let me know if you would like me to join an upcoming event with your constituents, and I will do my best to make it work within our respective schedules. Please feel free to pass this along to any of your members as well.

Best wishes,

John B. Scott
Texas Secretary of State
JScott@sos.texas.gov
512-463-5770

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Attachments: John B. Scott_OpEd Submission_Houston Chronicle_11.12.21.docx
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM
To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>
Cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] >
Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is

exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **653**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in four of Texas' largest counties – Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year.

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when [a box of uncounted ballots was found in a Midland ISD bond election in 2019](#), our office moved swiftly to retrace the paths of those ballots to find out exactly how they were misplaced, determine if any illegal activity had occurred, and identify and fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Attachments: John B. Scott_OpEd Submission_Houston Chronicle_11.17.21.docx
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about ‘why these four counties?’ – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan ‘witch hunt’ against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you’d like that clarified more in the piece, we’re happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you’d like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I’m open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I’d like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven’t been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that’s not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,

Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Texas Secretary of State's office

512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM

To: Sam Taylor

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM
To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>
Cc: [REDACTED] >
Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous

representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **733**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in the **two largest counties with Democratic Commissioners Courts – Harris and Dallas – as well as the two largest counties with Republican Commissioners Courts – Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year. Commissioners Courts oversee each county's Elections Administrators, with whom our office will be working closely to obtain the materials and information we need to complete the full forensic audit.**

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when a recount in a 2019 Midland ISD bond election showed that more than 800 ballots were unaccounted for, our office worked meticulously to retrace the steps of local election officials and [discovered a box of uncounted ballots](#). We were able to determine exactly how they were misplaced and implement targeted training to fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

We will work to determine why, for example, Harris County [recorded 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election](#).

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:35 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Opinion/Commentary Submission: Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Attachments: John B. Scott_OpEd Submission_Dallas Morning News_11.16.21.docx
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Elizabeth,

I send the below and attached op-ed submission from Texas Secretary of State John Scott to the viewpoints inbox, however wanted to be sure to bring it to your personal attention as well. I hope you and your team would consider reviewing this submission from the current Secretary regarding the full forensic audit of the 2020 election.

Thanks for your consideration and feel free to give me a call if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:27 PM
To: 'viewpoints@dallasnews.com' <viewpoints@dallasnews.com>
Cc: 'editorialboard@dallasnews.com' <editorialboard@dallasnews.com>
Subject: Opinion/Commentary Submission: Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Afternoon,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed (also included below) on Texas' full forensic election audit, which is being conducted in four major Texas counties, including in your readership area of Dallas, Collin and Tarrant counties.

Please confirm receipt and let me know if you are interested in publishing the piece from Secretary Scott, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have in the meantime.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **653**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in four of Texas' largest counties – Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year.

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may

have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when [a box of uncounted ballots was found in a Midland ISD bond election in 2019](#), our office moved swiftly to retrace the paths of those ballots to find out exactly how they were misplaced, determine if any illegal activity had occurred, and identify and fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **653**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in four of Texas' largest counties – Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year.

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when [a box of uncounted ballots was found in a Midland ISD bond election in 2019](#), our office moved swiftly to retrace the paths of those ballots to find out exactly how they were misplaced, determine if any illegal activity had occurred, and identify and fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

From: [John Scott](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Texas Scorecard: New Secretary of State Updates Texans on 2020 Election Audit
Date: Friday, November 19, 2021 4:05:45 PM
Sensitivity: Personal

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 4:03:08 PM
To: John Scott <JScott@sos.texas.gov>; Joe Esparza <JEsparza@sos.texas.gov>; Adam Bitter <ABitter@sos.texas.gov>; Keith Ingram <KIngram@sos.texas.gov>; Christina Adkins <CAdkins@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: Texas Scorecard: New Secretary of State Updates Texans on 2020 Election Audit

FYI – piece from Sen. Paxton’s Town Hall is published:

New Secretary of State Updates Texans on 2020 Election Audit

Gov. Abbott approves funds for new Election Audit Division.

Erin Anderson

Texas Scorecard

November 19, 2021

<https://texasscorecard.com/state/new-secretary-of-state-updates-texans-on-2020-election-audit/>

Texas’ newly appointed chief election official provided voters in Collin County with a progress report this week on the state’s ongoing partial audit of the November 2020 election—efforts bolstered by \$4 million in funding announced today for a new Election Audit Division within the Texas secretary of state’s office.

In a virtual town hall meeting Wednesday hosted by State Sen. Angela Paxton (R–McKinney), Texas Secretary of State John Scott described the steps involved in the audit, what progress has been made, and why it’s important.

“It’s a huge undertaking, but one that’s necessary to restore confidence in our elections,” Scott told Paxton’s constituents in the meeting focused on election integrity.

Scott was appointed secretary of state in October, following a five-month vacancy in the position. At the time, he said his top priority was completing the internal audits.

Paxton’s Senate District 8 lies mostly within Collin County, one of the four counties included in the ongoing audit. She said election integrity was the most frequent topic of communications her office received this legislative session.

In September, prior to Scott’s appointment, the secretary of state’s office announced it had launched a “full and comprehensive forensic audit” of the 2020 general election in four Texas

counties: Collin, Dallas, Harris, and Tarrant.

A week later, the office provided more details of exactly what the audit would entail and said it was being conducted in two phases.

Scott said Wednesday the first phase is “well underway.”

Phase 1 includes voter list maintenance, a routine process required by state and federal law of regularly removing ineligible people from voter rolls, including deceased voters, people who have moved away or are registered in multiple places, and non-U.S. citizens.

The process is enhanced this year with data from the Electronic Registration Information Center, a nationwide voter roll crosscheck program Texas joined in March 2020 that helps identify people who are improperly registered in the state or voted here illegally.

The first audit phase also included testing voting machine accuracy with partial manual recounts of paper ballots (also done routinely under current law) and a cybersecurity assessment of all counties’ election systems.

Scott said he expects a report on Phase 1 by the end of the year, adding his office would be “fully transparent with the public” about the audit process and findings.

Phase 2 is “much more detailed” and includes “a 13-page list of items to be examined” for each of the four counties, Scott said, such as mail ballots, in-person ballots, voting machines, and more.

He said auditors would be looking at “a multitude of issues” beyond the risk-limiting audits already done, documenting information for almost 4 million votes—a third of all Texas votes cast in the 2020 presidential election.

The “forensic” aspect of the audit will reveal any issues that rise to the level of criminal activity, so they can be turned over to the attorney general’s office to investigate and potentially prosecute.

The audit will also allow problems within the election process to be identified so specific recommendations for fixes can be made to the Legislature, and will offer a comparison of how effectively different county election offices operate.

“What we learn from these four counties can be extrapolated,” Scott said.

“The purpose of the audit is to bring election integrity and restore confidence among voters that our elections are secure, only eligible voters are voting, and counts are not altered,” he added.

“The public must have confidence in outcome of elections,” Paxton said. “To do that, they must have confidence in the procedures and accuracy of the process.”

But some election integrity advocates say the ongoing audit isn’t enough.

Last month, the Collin County Republican Party adopted a resolution calling for a full forensic audit of the 2020 election in Texas.

Unlike the audit Scott's office is now overseeing, grassroots activists want an independent third-party review of the 13 largest counties in the state.

Collin Republicans' resolution said the state's current efforts are "not adequate to create confidence and answer all questions related to election integrity and the possibility of election fraud from the 2020 elections."

In a move that bolsters Scott's work, Abbott announced Friday an "emergency" budget transfer of \$4 million to establish a new Election Audit Division within the secretary of state's office:

"The people of Texas must have trust and confidence in the election process, as well as the outcomes of our elections, which is why the state of Texas will transfer funding needed so that the Texas Secretary of State can create a division dedicated entirely to this important issue."

From: Christina Adkins
Sent: Friday, December 10, 2021 4:32 PM
To: Collin - Bruce Sherbet (bsherbet@co.collin.tx.us); Dallas - Michael J. Scarpello (michael.scarpello@dallascounty.org); Heider I. Garcia; Harris - Isabel Longoria (Isabel.Longoria@vote.hctx.net)
Subject: Letter from Secretary Scott
Attachments: Texas Secretary of State Letter_Full Forensic Audit_Phase 2.pdf
Sensitivity: Personal

Please see the attached correspondence from Secretary Scott.

Thank you,

Christina Worrell Adkins

Legal Director – Elections Division
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
1019 Brazos Street | Rudder Building, 2nd Floor | Austin, Texas 78701
512-463-9859 (direct) | 1.800.252.VOTE (8683)
elections@sos.texas.gov | www.sos.texas.gov
For Voter Related Information, please visit:



The information contained in this email is intended to provide advice and assistance in election matters per §31.004 of the Texas Election Code. It is not intended to serve as a legal opinion for any matter. Please review the law yourself, and consult with an attorney when your legal rights are involved.

The State of Texas

Elections Division
P.O. Box 12060
Austin, Texas 78711-2060
www.sos.texas.gov
www.votetexas.gov



Phone: 512-463-5650
Fax: 512-475-2811
Dial 7-1-1 For Relay Services
(800) 252-VOTE (8683)

John B. Scott
Secretary of State

December 10, 2021

Bruce Sherbet
Collin County Elections Administrator
2010 Redbud Blvd, Suite 102
McKinney, TX 75069

Isabel Longoria
Harris County Elections Administrator
1001 Preston
Houston, TX 77002

Michael Scarpello
Dallas County Elections Administrator
1520 Round Table Drive
Dallas, TX 75247

Heider Garcia
Tarrant County Elections Administrator
100 E. Weatherford
Fort Worth, Texas 76196

Dear Bruce, Michael, Isabel and Heider:

Thank you for your service to Texas voters and for your commitment to transparency in our election process. As indicated in our office's previous communications, the Texas Secretary of State's office is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the November 2020 General Election in your respective counties. The purpose of this audit is to provide clarity and confidence for Texas voters that all applicable laws and procedures were followed during the 2020 Election, and to identify any irregularities or issues that need to be addressed going forward.

Enclosed, please find a comprehensive list of documents and records our office will be examining as part of Phase 2 of the Full Forensic Audit, as well as requests for information from your office that will be instrumental in completing the audit process. We request that your respective offices begin locating the documents listed to prepare for our Forensic Audit Division's on-site examinations, which will be coordinated at a mutually convenient time in January 2022.

In the near term, we request that you provide us the following information, in writing, to our office by **Tuesday, December 21st** in order to guide the next phase of the forensic audit process:

- **A list of Early Voting or Election Day polling locations that had a discrepancy of one percent or more between the number of voters that checked in to the number of votes cast at that location.**
- **Whether any voting sites were closed or added due to an emergency or other necessity**
- **Any known procedural or chain of custody defects**
- **Any other issues discovered that you would like to disclose now that may be relevant to our audit process**

- **A list of complaints received and resolved, with a description of any known investigative steps or known resolution.**
- **A detailed accounting of the following:**
 - **Total Early Voting Ballots by Mail Requested**
 - **Total Early Voting Ballots by Mail Sent out**
 - **Total Early Voting Ballots requested by FPCA**
 - **Breakdown of Early Voting Ballots by Mail accepted/rejected**
 - **Total number of mail ballot voters that cancelled their mail ballot without surrendering the mailed ballot and voted in person**
 - **Total number of mail ballot voters that surrendered their mail ballot and voted in person**
- **A detailed accounting of the following:**
 - **Total Number of Provisional Votes Cast**
 - **A list of Provisional Voters by reason for voting provisionally**
 - **Total Number of Provisional Votes cast for voters lacking ID**
 - **Total number of Provisional Voted Accepted/Rejected**
- **List of entities that conducted recounts or had election contests**

We thank you in advance for your responses to this initial audit survey and request that you begin preparing the enclosed list of documents and records for our agency's review.

Please feel free to reach out to our office directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



John B. Scott
Texas Secretary of State

Encl.: 2020 Forensic Election Audit – Phase 2: Comprehensive Records Examination

2020 Forensic Election Audit

Phase 2: Comprehensive Records Examination

The purpose of this document is to outline the records and procedures that the Texas Secretary of State's office is reviewing for the forensic audit of the 2020 General Election in Collin, Dallas, Tarrant, and Harris counties. The specific review process for each category will be based on the county's response to the initial survey questions provided. Once the scope is established on a county-by-county basis, we will provide detailed documentation regarding the specific review of each applicable category.

We recognize that some counties may use different terminology for certain forms and procedures. The terminology used in this document is based on commonly used terms in the Texas Election Code and based on industry standards. To the extent that counties use different terminologies to describe the election materials and procedures used in the November 2020 General Election, county election officials will have the opportunity to provide an explanation in their responses ahead of our office's on-site visits.

Election Security

The following questions pertain to each county's election security measures. Please elaborate to the fullest extent possible in your responses:

- Do you have badge-controlled access to your election office?
- Do you keep track of who enters into the office, especially sensitive areas?
- Are visitors escorted at all times?
- Do you keep track of who enters the ballot programming area? Are the number of people authorized to access the programming area limited?
- Did your county attend Texas Secretary of State webinars that discussed the [Election Security Toolkit](#)?
- Did your county create individual versions of all six documents that address the procedures in your county?
- If you did not complete all 6 documents, which of these did you complete?
 - Vendor Risk Management Policy (VRMP)
 - Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
 - Incident Response Plan (IRP)
 - Election Information Security Policy (EISP)
 - Election System Security Plan (ESSP)
 - Election Security Best Practices
- Does your county have an offsite version of the Election Security Toolkit in a printed or electronically stored format?
- Does your county have a segmented election network?
- Does your county have a next generation firewall?

- Does your county IT Department regularly patch and maintain the latest software version throughout the division?
- Does your county employ the Principle of Least Privilege?

Acceptance Testing Records if New Voting System was Used for the First Time

An examination of the following records will gauge the percentage of equipment that did not pass the acceptance testing and, therefore, was not operable during the November 2020 General Election:

- Logs for each device tested
- Logs that show if a device did not function properly or had to be returned for vendor review or service

L&A Testing Records

An examination of the following documents and records will determine if the voting system accurately recorded the test voters' choices and therefore demonstrated that the voting system accurately recorded voters' ballot choices:

- Public Notice of Logic and Accuracy (L&A) Test
- All test ballots voted in the election
- Tally Sheets
- Test Deck Records
- List of participants who voted test ballots
- Records showing test outcomes and if tests had to be repeated
- Testing media, including:
 - memory sticks
 - mobile ballot boxes (MBBs)
 - paper ballots used for L&A test voting and tabulation)
- All testing seals or other test materials

Election Preparation

An examination of the following documents and records will determine whether or not protocols to secure the voting system and ballot were followed to protect the integrity of the election:

- List of Presiding Judges and Alternate Judges by Precinct and Party
- Notification of Election Training Program
- Ballot Programming: Please indicate whether your vendor programmed your ballot or if the ballot was programmed by in-house staff.
- Electronic Poll Books (EPBs) programming: Please indicate how your EPBs were programmed and at what intervals was the Official List of Registered Voters on the EPB updated.

Early Voting In Person

An examination of the following documents will provide a summary of all processes executed to conduct in-person Early Voting:

- **Election Workers**
 - List of Early Voting Deputies, Alternate Deputies and Early Voting Clerks
 - Lists of Early Voting Workers who dropped out of the election, the date they dropped out and the names of the replacement workers
 - Please indicate the training that any emergency replacement workers received.
 - List of “no show” Early Voting workers

- **Documentation related to Ordering and Providing Notice of the Election**
 - Order of November General Election for State and County Officers (GESCO)
 - Location of the Main Early Voting Polling Place as noted on the Order of Election
 - List of Early Voting Branch Polling Places as noted on the Order of Election
 - Notice of General Election (copy of posted notice and publication)
 - Record for Posting Notice of Election if posted in this manner

- **Documentation for Ballot Corrections, if applicable**
 - Notice of Ballot Correction, if applicable
 - Notice of Ballot Destruction, if applicable
 - Record of Ballot Destruction, if applicable
 - Notice of Ballot Reprint Order, if applicable

- **Documentation for Tracking Ballots**
 - Register of Official Ballots for Early Voting at the Main Location (if ballots are pre-serialized, if not the number of ballot cards delivered)
 - Register of Official Ballots for Early Voting at a Branch Location (if ballots are pre-serialized, if not the number of ballot cards delivered)

- **Polling Place Paperwork**
 - Combination Forms for each day of Early Voting OR a report generated by the general custodian to accurately create a summary of all processes that were required to be executed as noted on paper Combination Forms
 - Daily Balancing Envelope or Report (contain copy of daily returns for Early Voting, to the extent possible)
 - Ballot Styles of voters who were given a ballot vs. how many votes of each ballot style should have been cast, based on voter registration precinct (this identifies when a voter is given the wrong ballot style)
 - Results Tapes/Suspend Reports
 - List of Declared Write-In Candidates for posting in the voting booth
 - Reasonable Impediment Declarations, if applicable
 - Statements of Residence, if applicable
 - Standard Affidavits

- Registration Omissions List
- **Other Information to be Reviewed**
 - List of Registered Voters that was used in the 2020 Presidential Election (electronic copy).
 - List of any Early Voting Site that had to be closed or changed according to county records
 - Signature Roster for Hand Delivery of a Ballot by Mail Forms (usually this process is only done only on Election Day, but the hand delivery period was extended only for the November 3, 2020 General Election)
- **Chain of Custody Paperwork**
 - Chain of Custody forms (Record of Early Voting Ballot Seals) that document the seals on the ballot boxes for each day of Early Voting
 - Chain of Custody delivery of equipment to voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who delivered equipment)
 - Chain of Custody of pickup of equipment from voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who picked up equipment)
 - Chain of Custody forms for when troubleshooters picked up completed forms from Early Voting sites for daily processing
 - List of Early Voting Daily seals for Provisional Secure Container
- **Voting System Equipment Management**
 - Trouble Logs and equipment replacement records
 - Troubleshooter visit logs
 - Equipment returned to vendor for technical support
 - Call Center Event/Complaint Logs
- **Poll Watcher Paperwork**
 - Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment

Ballot by Mail – Early Voting

An examination of these documents and records will determine whether Early Voting by Mail was conducted in accordance with state and federal law:

- Applications for Ballot by Mail (ABBM)s
- List of Annual ABBM Voters
- List of Declared Write-In Candidates
- Notices of Improper Delivery (and to whom they were sent)
- Emails from the county to voters regarding ABBM and Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) rejections
- Notices of Rejected ABBMs and reasons
- **Mail Ballot Cancellation Paperwork**
 - Request to Cancel a Ballot by Mail for Use in the Polling Place

- Request to Cancel a Ballot by Mail for Use in the Early Voting Clerk's Office
 - Notice of Denial of Request to Cancel Application for a Ballot by Mail
 - Notice of ABBM or FPCA Cancellation (Formerly Notice to Presiding Judge)
- **Ballot By Mail Forms**
 - A sample of the November 3, 2020 Special Ballot Envelope to demonstrate that the correct version was used
 - A sample of the November 3, 2020 Special Carrier Envelope to demonstrate that the correct version was used
 - Special Carrier Insert for an ABBM voter for November 3, 2020 Election to demonstrate that the correct version was used
- **Other Information to be Reviewed**
 - List of FPCA ballots transmitted by email to the voter
 - List of FPCAs that were physically mailed to the voter
 - List of Voters Mailed a Corrected Ballot, if applicable
 - Statistics of how many uncorrected ballots were returned and counted as well as how many corrected ballots were returned and counted, if applicable.
 - List of Voters who were required to complete and return a Statement of Residence with their Ballot by Mail
- **Special Early Voting Forms**
 - Restricted Ballot Rosters for Chapter 112, 113 and 114 Ballots
 - Poll List of Voters Voting a Limited Ballot by Personal Appearance
 - Applications for a Limited Ballot
 - Notice to Voter Registrar of Application for a Presidential Ballot
 - Applications for an Emergency Early Voting Ballot Due to Sickness or Physical Disability
 - Applications for Emergency Ballot Due to Death in the Family
 - List of persons who voted on a space flight, if any

Election Day

An examination of the following documents and records from voting sites will determine if election officials followed proper chain of custody procedures, produce documentation of the chain of custody of ballots and election materials, and determine whether all state and federal laws were followed:

Election Workers

- Final List of Election Day Polling Places
- List of Presiding Judges and Alternate Judges by Precinct and Party
- Order of Appointment of Election Judges and Alternates
- Notifications of Appointment as Election Judge
- Writs of Election for the General Election for State and County Officers

- List of emergency appointments for Election Day Workers
- Lists of Election Day Workers who dropped out of the election, the date they dropped out and the names of the replacement workers.
 - Please indicate the training that any emergency replacement workers received.
- List of “no show” workers on Election Day

Election Day Forms

- Combination Forms for election day OR a report generated by the general custodian to accurately create a summary of all processes that were required to be executed as noted on paper Combination Forms
- Ballot Styles of voters who were given a ballot vs. how many votes of each ballot style should have been cast based on voter registration precinct (this identifies when a voter is given the wrong ballot style)
- Results Tapes/Suspend Reports
- List of Declared Write-In Candidates for posting in the voting booth
- Reasonable Impediment Declarations, if needed
- Statements of Residence, if needed
- Standard Affidavits
- Registration Omissions List
- Envelope Containing Spoiled Ballots with the Register of Spoiled Ballots
- Defectively Printed Ballots
- Ballot by Mail Cancellation Requests attached to the surrendered ballots
- Register of Official Ballots for each Polling Place or the Combined Ballot and Seal Certificate and Official Ballot Register
- Ballot and Seal Certificates by Polling Location or the Combined Ballot and Seal Certificate and Official Ballot Register
- Applications to Cancel a Ballot by Mail for Use in the Polling Place

Chain of Custody Paperwork

- Chain of Custody delivery of equipment to voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who delivered equipment)
- Chain of custody of pickup of equipment from voting sites (with seal numbers and equipment serial numbers noted) (signatures of persons who picked up equipment)
- Chain of custody forms for when troubleshooters picked up completed forms from Election Day sites for processing (if performed on Election Day)
- List of seals put on equipment for Election Day, including:
 - Those put on at elections office in the morning; and
 - Those put on by Presiding Judge at the polling place in the evening when voting has concluded

Election Day Notices

- Notices of Consolidated Precincts and records of which staff member posted the notices at the various sites, if any

- Record for Posting Notice of Election if posted in this manner
- Notices of Previous Precinct and records of which staff member posted the notices at the various sites, if any
- Notices of Four Nearest Countywide Polling Places and records of which staff member posted the notices at the various sites, if any

Additional Items for Consideration

- All sign-out sheets for those picking up supplies for Election Day.
 - Please indicate who picked up supplies for Election Day.
- List of any Election Day Site that had to be closed or changed and the reason for the closure or change
- Trouble Logs and equipment replacement records
- Names of individuals who returned supplies to the Receiving Substation/Central Receiving Station
- Names of individuals who received the supplies into his or her custody when the supplies were returned by election workers

Provisional Ballots

An examination of the Provisional Forms will determine if voters' provisional ballots were accepted or rejected according to the law, as well as determine the percentage of provisional ballots accepted vs. rejected:

- Affidavits of Provisional Voter
- Early Voting List of Provisional Voters
- Election Day List of Provisional Voters
- Summary of Provisional Ballots
- List of Seals for Provisional Secure Containers for Early Voting and chain of custody forms where they were documented
- List of Seals for Provisional Secure Containers for Election Day and chain of custody forms where they were documented
- Notice of Delivery of Provisional Ballots – To Voter Registrar on Election Night
- List of Rejected Provisional Ballots and reason
- Number of Provisional Ballots cured for lack of ID
- Verification of Provisional Ballots and Seal Numbers
- Review Notices of Outcome to Provisional Voter
 - Number of provisional ballots accepted
 - Number of provisional ballots rejected
- Breakdown of percentage of Provisional Ballots counted and rejected

Signature Verification Committee

An examination of the following documents related to the Signature Verification Committee (SVC) will determine whether there was party balance on the Committee and who was responsible for the processes of accepting and rejecting signatures:

- Order Calling for Signature Verification Committee – date posted
- Notification of Appointed Members to SVC
- Notice of Appointment of SVC
- Chain of custody forms when ballots were transmitted to Central Counting Station from SVC
- Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment for SVC

Early Voting Ballot Board

An examination of the following documents related to the Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB) will determine whether there was party balance and properly review adjudications, acceptances and rejections, as well as who was responsible for those processes:

- Order for EVBB
- Notice of Convening of EVBB
- Notification of members appointed to the EVBB
- Notice of appointment of the EVBB
- Notice of delivery of balloting materials to the EVBB (Receipt of Sealed Early Voting Ballot Boxes)
- Chain of Custody forms when ballots were delivered to the EVBB
- Samples of Notice of Rejected Ballot by Mail and reasons for rejection
- Samples of Notice of Rejected FPCAs Carriers and reasons for rejection
- Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment

Central Counting Station

An examination of these documents will determine whether the Central Counting Station (CCS) Plan was followed along with all applicable laws and procedures, and whether proper Chain of Custody procedures for voted ballots were followed:

- Central Counting Station Plan
 - Please indicate whether it posted 5 days before Election Day, as required by law.
- Public Notice of Test of Automatic Tabulating Equipment
- Certification of First Test of Automated Tabulating Equipment
- Oaths for Early Voting Ballot Board and Central Counting Station Personnel
- Chain of Custody documents related to the transmittal of ballots to the CCS from Election Day polling places, Early Voting Clerk's storage, or Early Voting Ballot Board.

Partial Manual Count Records

An examination of these documents and records will determine whether the Partial Manual Count was performed according to the law, as well as who performed the count:

- All records associated with the post-election Partial Manual Count
 - Please indicate who performed the partial manual count.
- Record of the Partial Manual Count results submitted to the Texas Secretary of State's office
- Poll Watcher Certificates of Appointment, if any

Post-Election and Canvass Records

An examination of these documents will determine whether certification of election results was conducted properly and whether proper documentation to support the official results was provided:

- Canvass of the General Election
- Summary of Precinct Returns
- Canvass reports by official in charge of certifying results
- Records of any recounts requested and performed after the election
- Records related to any election contests filed

Records Retention

An examination of these documents and records will determine whether Chain of Custody of records was maintained, and whether officials properly followed the 1st to 60th day rule and the 61st day to 22-month retention rule. If records must be opened, please supply a copy of the court order:

- Records of seal numbers put on and taken off records when the initial 60-day period for records retention ended
- Record of seals that were placed on the ballots and other materials on the 61st day for the remainder of the 22-month record retention period
 - Please indicate whether records were stored in a locked in a surveilled room.
- Please indicate whether county officials keep a log of anyone accessing the room where the records/ballots are stored.
- Please indicate whether any court order necessitated the unsealing of the records.
 - Provide a copy of any court order requesting opening of the records.

Central Counting Station Test Records

An examination of these records will validate the test procedures that were performed before and after counting on the automatic tabulating equipment:

- Central Counting Station (CCS) Plan
- Certification of 1st test of automated tabulating equipment
- Records from 2nd Logic and Accuracy (L&A) test before ballots are counted in the CCS
- Certification of the 3rd L&A test after ballots were counted at the Central Counting Station
- Records indicating whether there was a + or – 4 ballots tabulated that necessitated a recounting of ballots at the CCS
- Copy of final reports (unofficial results, precinct returns) signed by the presiding judge of the CCS

Training Materials

An examination of these materials will determine whether poll workers were trained according to all state and federal laws and procedures. Examining the training materials allows auditors to know if the poll workers were instructed to perform their duties accurately:

- Manuals, PowerPoint presentations, materials that were used in poll worker training and sent to the field
- An example of the forms kit that was deployed to the field, if possible
- Training attendance records, including in-person and online training

General

Any video surveillance records that were recorded from the time the election was ordered until the canvass was completed.

Additional Audit Compliance Questions

1. Are any of your election materials that are required for the audit, stored at facility not under your control?
2. How quickly could you access the materials from the storage vendor?
3. Will it take longer than one month to locate and have your records ready for examination?
4. Do you still have the same voting systems as when your county conducted the 2020 Presidential Election?
5. Of the records listed in the Audit requirements, please specify which are electronically stored and which are physical copies.
6. Are there any records that you may not be able to produce? If so, why?
7. Are there any permanent staff members who have left your office since the Presidential Election? Please give names and job duties.

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM
To: 'viewpoints@chron.com'; 'outlook@chron.com'
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Attachments: John B. Scott_OpEd Submission_Houston Chronicle_11.12.21.docx
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **653**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in four of Texas' largest counties – Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year.

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when [a box of uncounted ballots was found in a Midland ISD bond election in 2019](#), our office moved swiftly to retrace the paths of those ballots to find out exactly how they were misplaced, determine if any illegal activity had occurred, and identify and fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:27 PM
To: 'viewpoints@dallasnews.com'
Cc: 'editorialboard@dallasnews.com'
Subject: Opinion/Commentary Submission: Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Attachments: John B. Scott_OpEd Submission_Dallas Morning News_11.16.21.docx
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Afternoon,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed (also included below) on Texas' full forensic election audit, which is being conducted in four major Texas counties, including in your readership area of Dallas, Collin and Tarrant counties.

Please confirm receipt and let me know if you are interested in publishing the piece from Secretary Scott, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have in the meantime.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **653**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in four of Texas' largest counties – Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year.

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when [a box of uncounted ballots was found in a Midland ISD bond election in 2019](#), our office moved swiftly to retrace the paths of those ballots to find out exactly how they were misplaced, determine if any illegal activity had occurred, and identify and fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **653**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in four of Texas' largest counties – Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year.

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when [a box of uncounted ballots was found in a Midland ISD bond election in 2019](#), our office moved swiftly to retrace the paths of those ballots to find out exactly how they were misplaced, determine if any illegal activity had occurred, and identify and fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:21 PM
To: 'Garrett, Robert T.'
Subject: RE: could I see your statement?

Hi Bob,

The total \$4M figure is for hiring new staff, including their travel budgets for on-site visits to the four counties during the audit process, so it's not possible to parse out exactly how much will be used on the 2020 General Election Audit vs the additional four-county audits required under Rep. Slaton's amendment to SB 1 (the one requiring us to randomly choose two counties over 300,000 and two counties under 300,000 for audits going forward). In short, this overall figure is for costs to conduct both current and ongoing election audits required under law passed by the lege.

Here's our full statement:

"We thank Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Phelan, Senator Nelson and Representative Bonnen for approving critical funds to support the Texas Secretary of State's Forensic Audit Division. In order to complete our ongoing full forensic audit of the 2020 General Election and conduct subsequent audits as required by SB 1, our agency will be using these funds to dedicate additional staff to oversee audit activities, including: verifying counties' removal of ineligible voters from the rolls, meticulously reviewing each county's election materials for our comprehensive document examination, and ensuring compliance with state and federal election laws. These resources are essential for maintaining the integrity of Texas elections and identifying issues that must be fixed in order to restore voters' confidence in our state's election systems."

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Garrett, Robert T. [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:08 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: could I see your statement?

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Sam,

Did you say how much of the \$4M would be used for the 2020, four-county audit?

I see reference in Trib story (below).

Thanks,

Bob

--

Robert T. Garrett
[Austin Bureau Chief](#)
The Dallas Morning News
M: (512) 413-7793
O: (512) 370-3815

Know now.

The Dallas Morning News

In a statement later Friday, the secretary of state's office referenced both its 2020 audit and future audits required under the new state law, saying that the latest funds would be used for "additional staff to oversee audit activities," such as "verifying counties' removal of ineligible voters from the rolls ... and ensuring compliance with state and federal election laws."

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:33 PM
To: 'Windy Johnson'
Subject: RE: Election Audit Funds

Hi Windy,

Please see our statement from this afternoon after the funding was announced:
<https://twitter.com/TXsecofstate/status/1461815486551887872/photo/1>

Happy to chat at a later time if you'd like to know additional details. Thanks, have a great weekend!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Windy Johnson [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 4:09 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: Election Audit Funds

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good afternoon Sam,

Hope you are doing well. Can you please share how the additional funds will be used for election audits? I know my counties have a particular interest in how it will affect us. Thank you!

Windy Johnson
Program Manager
Texas Conference of Urban Counties
500 W 13th St. | Austin TX 78701
P: 512.476.6174 Cell: 512.731.3246
E: [REDACTED] | W: www.cuc.org



January 12-14, 2022
Texas A&M Hotel & Conference Center
Early Registration - \$400
General Registration - \$425
Late Registration - \$475
cuc.org/cstat2022

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 5:47 PM
To: 'Riccardi, Nicholas'
Subject: RE: Interview request

Hi Nick,

We're still evaluating that and looking through those specific records to determine how many had voting history in recent elections. That number will be included in our forthcoming phase 1 progress report of the [full forensic audit of the 2020 General Election](#).

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Riccardi, Nicholas [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 10:58 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Interview request

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Another question – do you know if any of the 278 confirmed noncitizens voted in any recent elections/

Thanks.

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 4:54 PM
To: Riccardi, Nicholas [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Interview request

[EXTERNAL]

Correct - that's statewide.

From: Riccardi, Nicholas <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 5:45 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Interview request

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Just to clarify, the 11,737 records are the number of voters that have to date been flagged?

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 4:27 PM
To: Riccardi, Nicholas <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Interview request

[EXTERNAL]

Hi Nicholas,

This process was initiated on September 9, 2021 in accordance with the parties' [settlement agreement in LULAC v Whitley from 2019](#). Sounds like you've already seen this advisory, but just passing along a link to it here: <https://www.sos.texas.gov/elections/laws/advisory2021-11.shtml>

Per the settlement agreement, county voter registrars are authorized to send a notice of examination to any registered voter who registered to vote before the date on which the voter indicated he or she was a non-U.S. citizen to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

To date, our office has provided **11,737** records to all 254 counties statewide.

Voters who do not provide proof of citizenship to their county voter registrar within 30 days of receiving the notice of examination will have their registration cancelled, with the opportunity to be reinstated if the voter later provides proof of citizenship, including at the polling place.

A voter can prove U.S. citizenship in several ways, including by presenting a copy of:

- U.S. birth certificate;
- Consular Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States issued by the United States Department of State;
- U.S. passport;
- Certificate of naturalization of the voter;
- Certificate of naturalization of the voter's parent (along with the voter's foreign birth certificate) that allowed the voter to become a U.S. citizen while he or she was a minor; or
- Any other form prescribed by the Secretary of State.

To date, **2,327** voter registration records have been cancelled through this process, **278** of which are cases in which voter registrars were able to verify that the registered voters were not U.S. citizens. The rest were cancelled because they did not respond to the notice of examination within the 30-day window.

Here's a statement attributable to me/the Texas Secretary of State's office, if needed:

"In accordance with the terms of the 2019 settlement agreement, the Texas Secretary of State's office is undertaking its constitutional duty to maintain an accurate list of qualified registered voters in the State of Texas. This process, agreed upon by all parties and stakeholders, will ensure that only qualified U.S. citizens remain on the voter rolls in Texas' 254 counties."

Let me know if you have any additional questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Riccardi, Nicholas <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 3:36 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: Interview request

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

I'm trying to get more information about list maintenance involving potential non-citizens. I saw the directive your office sent in September on this issue and wanted to know how many potential non-citizens have been identified, how many removed from the rolls and how many turned out to be citizens.

Happy to talk or correspond by email. I'm at 720 470-4319.

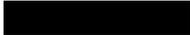
Thanks,



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nicholas Riccardi
Western Political Writer

1120 Lincoln Street
Suite 901
Denver, Co 80203


www.ap.org

Office: 303-825-0123
Cell: 720-470-4319

The information contained in this communication is intended for the use of the designated recipients named above. If the reader of this communication is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error, and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify The Associated Press immediately by telephone at +1-212-621-1500 and delete this email. Thank you.

The information contained in this communication is intended for the use of the designated recipients named above. If the reader of this communication is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error, and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify The Associated Press immediately by telephone at +1-212-621-1500 and delete this email. Thank you.

The information contained in this communication is intended for the use of the designated recipients named above. If the reader of this communication is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error, and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify The Associated Press immediately by telephone at +1-212-621-1500 and delete this email. Thank you.

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:56 PM
To: 'Goudeau, Ashley'
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

That'll work! He is available tomorrow morning (anytime from 9am – noon), as well as between 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. Which window(s) work best for him to come by? Let me know and I'll get it on his calendar and we'll be there. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:18 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hi Sam!

I am definitely still interested! Can we plan for Tuesday at KVUE (3201 Steck Avenue)?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content
☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 2, 2021 12:40 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

Just wanted to follow up – would you still be interested in doing a sit-down interview with the Secretary next week? Plenty to discuss, including the election audit, and new election laws going into effect today.

Let me know and we'll get something on the books Monday or Tuesday, whichever works. And let us know if you'd like to come here to the SOS office in the capitol or if you'd like him to come in-studio. Either works for us.

Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 7:06 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

Yes! The Secretary is available to do an interview early next week — preferably Monday or Tuesday if either of those work?

Let me know, as well as what topics you're hoping to cover and we'll get it on the books. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:37 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thank you so much for sending this over Sam.

Also, any update on my interview request with the SOS?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

📞 O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:04 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password. Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

That's correct – there has been an election contest filed against certification of Proposition 2 (attached here). Prop 2 was approved by a majority of voters in the November 2021 statewide Constitutional Amendment Election.

However, the Texas Election Code lays out a specific process under Sec. 233.014 that must occur when a proposed constitutional amendment is contested:

Sec. 233.014. SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONTEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION. (a) This section applies only to a contest of an election on a proposed constitutional amendment.

(b) The contestant's petition must be filed and service of citation on the secretary of state must be obtained before the final official canvass is completed.

(c) The declaration of the official result of a contested election may not be made until the contest is finally determined. The secretary of state shall tabulate the county returns and the governor shall announce the final vote count, as ascertained from the returns, in a written

document. The document announcing the final vote count must state that a contest of the election has been filed and that the declaration of the official result will not be made until the contest is finally determined.

(d) The trial date may not be earlier than the 45th day after the date of the contested election unless the contestant requests an earlier date.

(e) If an amended petition alleging additional grounds of contest is filed, the contest may not be called for trial earlier than the 20th day after the date the amended petition is filed unless the secretary of state agrees to calling the contest for trial at an earlier date.

(f) The court shall include in its judgment in a contest an order directing the governor to declare the official result of the election or to declare the election void, as appropriate, not later than the 10th day after the date the judgment becomes final.

(g) Any question relating to the validity or outcome of a constitutional amendment election may be raised in an election contest. A contest is the exclusive method for adjudicating such questions.

Essentially, what happens now is that the fate of Prop 2 is in the courts.

The plaintiffs announced this lawsuit on November 4th – two days after the election – and our office was served on November 8th. The plaintiffs' press statement can be found here: <https://truetexasproject.com/true-tx-project-sues-abbotts-sos/>

Hope this helps, let me know if you have any other questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:13 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good Afternoon Sam,

Nan Tolson with Governor Greg Abbott's office instructed me to reach out to you about the certification process for Prop 2.

As I am sure you are aware, the Governor certified the other 7 amendments that voters approved yesterday. Nan tells me Prop 2 was not certified because of the lawsuit filed against it, adding the prop and that it has to go through a different process, but she was unable to tell me what that process is. So can you please explain. Also, is this something that has happened in recent history?

Thank You,

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

📞 O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 2:07 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley
Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

9:30 would work best — what's the address of the studio and are there any protocols/mask requirements, etc. we should be aware of?

Thanks!

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 1:48 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Great.

The morning window in the 9:00 hour works best for us. Should we do right at 9 or maybe 9:30?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

📞 O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:56 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegn.com.

That'll work! He is available tomorrow morning (anytime from 9am – noon), as well as between 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. Which window(s) work best for him to come by? Let me know and I'll get it on his calendar and we'll be there. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:18 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hi Sam!

I am definitely still interested! Can we plan for Tuesday at KVUE (3201 Steck Avenue)?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 2, 2021 12:40 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password. Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

Just wanted to follow up – would you still be interested in doing a sit-down interview with the Secretary next week? Plenty to discuss, including the election audit, and new election laws going into effect today.

Let me know and we'll get something on the books Monday or Tuesday, whichever works. And let us know if you'd like to come here to the SOS office in the capitol or if you'd like him to come in-studio. Either works for us.

Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 7:06 PM

To: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

Yes! The Secretary is available to do an interview early next week — preferably Monday or Tuesday if either of those work?

Let me know, as well as what topics you're hoping to cover and we'll get it on the books. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:37 PM

To: Sam Taylor

Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thank you so much for sending this over Sam.

Also, any update on my interview request with the SOS?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:04 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

That's correct – there has been an election contest filed against certification of Proposition 2 (attached here). Prop 2 was approved by a majority of voters in the November 2021 statewide Constitutional Amendment Election.

However, the Texas Election Code lays out a specific process under Sec. 233.014 that must occur when a proposed constitutional amendment is contested:

Sec. 233.014. SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONTEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION. (a) This section applies only to a contest of an election on a proposed constitutional amendment.

(b) The contestant's petition must be filed and service of citation on the secretary of state must be obtained before the final official canvass is completed.

(c) The declaration of the official result of a contested election may not be made until the contest is finally determined. The secretary of state shall tabulate the county returns and the governor shall announce the final vote count, as ascertained from the returns, in a written document. The document announcing the final vote count must state that a contest of the election has been filed and that the declaration of the official result will not be made until the contest is finally determined.

(d) The trial date may not be earlier than the 45th day after the date of the contested election unless the contestant requests an earlier date.

(e) If an amended petition alleging additional grounds of contest is filed, the contest may not be called for trial earlier than the 20th day after the date the amended petition is filed unless the secretary of state agrees to calling the contest for trial at an earlier date.

(f) The court shall include in its judgment in a contest an order directing the governor to declare the official result of the election or

to declare the election void, as appropriate, not later than the 10th day after the date the judgment becomes final.

(g) Any question relating to the validity or outcome of a constitutional amendment election may be raised in an election contest. A contest is the exclusive method for adjudicating such questions.

Essentially, what happens now is that the fate of Prop 2 is in the courts.

The plaintiffs announced this lawsuit on November 4th – two days after the election – and our office was served on November 8th. The plaintiffs' press statement can be found here: <https://truetexasproject.com/true-tx-project-sues-abbotts-sos/>

Hope this helps, let me know if you have any other questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:13 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good Afternoon Sam,

Nan Tolson with Governor Greg Abbott's office instructed me to reach out to you about the certification process for Prop 2.

As I am sure you are aware, the Governor certified the other 7 amendments that voters approved yesterday. Nan tells me Prop 2 was not certified because of the lawsuit filed against it, adding the prop and that it has to go through a different process, but she was unable to tell me what that process is. So can you please explain. Also, is this something that has happened in recent history?

Thank You,

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

📞 O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 3:44 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

Hi Ashley,

Many apologies, we just had a few new meeting come up and won't be able to fit the secretary in tomorrow morning for the interview. Unfortunately, he'll be traveling the rest of the week starting Wednesday.

Can we shoot for early next week sometime? That way, we can have the Secretary discuss the end of the candidate filing period (closes on Monday), new election procedures in effect under SB 1, the 2020 election audit, and whichever other topics you'd like to cover.

Sorry about the last-minute change, appreciate your patience and understanding. Let me know if next Monday or Tuesday works. Thanks so much!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 2:07 PM

To: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

9:30 would work best — what's the address of the studio and are there any protocols/mask requirements, etc. we should be aware of?

Thanks!

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 1:48 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Great.

The morning window in the 9:00 hour works best for us. Should we do right at 9 or maybe 9:30?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

📞 O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:56 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegn.com.

That'll work! He is available tomorrow morning (anytime from 9am – noon), as well as between 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. Which window(s) work best for him to come by? Let me know and I'll get it on his calendar and we'll be there. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:18 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hi Sam!

I am definitely still interested! Can we plan for Tuesday at KVUE (3201 Steck Avenue)?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 2, 2021 12:40 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

Just wanted to follow up – would you still be interested in doing a sit-down interview with the Secretary next week? Plenty to discuss, including the election audit, and new election laws going into effect today.

Let me know and we'll get something on the books Monday or Tuesday, whichever works. And let us know if you'd like to come here to the SOS office in the capitol or if you'd like him to come in-studio. Either works for us.

Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 7:06 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

Yes! The Secretary is available to do an interview early next week — preferably Monday or Tuesday if either of those work?

Let me know, as well as what topics you're hoping to cover and we'll get it on the books. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:37 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thank you so much for sending this over Sam.

Also, any update on my interview request with the SOS?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:04 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

That's correct – there has been an election contest filed against certification of Proposition 2 (attached here). Prop 2 was approved by a majority of voters in the November 2021 statewide Constitutional Amendment Election.

However, the Texas Election Code lays out a specific process under Sec. 233.014 that must occur when a proposed constitutional amendment is contested:

Sec. 233.014. SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONTEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION. (a) This section applies only to a contest of an election on a proposed constitutional amendment.

(b) The contestant's petition must be filed and service of citation on the secretary of state must be obtained before the final official canvass is completed.

(c) The declaration of the official result of a contested election may not be made until the contest is finally determined. The secretary of state shall tabulate the county returns and the governor shall announce the final vote count, as ascertained from the returns, in a written document. The document announcing the final vote count must state that a contest of the election has been filed and that the declaration of the official result will not be made until the contest is finally determined.

(d) The trial date may not be earlier than the 45th day after the date of the contested election unless the contestant requests an earlier date.

(e) If an amended petition alleging additional grounds of contest is filed, the contest may not be called for trial earlier than the 20th day after the date the amended petition is filed unless the secretary of state agrees to calling the contest for trial at an earlier date.

(f) The court shall include in its judgment in a contest an order directing the governor to declare the official result of the election or to declare the election void, as appropriate, not later than the 10th day after the date the judgment becomes final.

(g) Any question relating to the validity or outcome of a constitutional amendment election may be raised in an election contest. A contest is the exclusive method for adjudicating such questions.

Essentially, what happens now is that the fate of Prop 2 is in the courts.

The plaintiffs announced this lawsuit on November 4th – two days after the election – and our office was served on November 8th. The plaintiffs' press statement can be found here: <https://truetexasproject.com/true-tx-project-sues-abbotts-sos/>

Hope this helps, let me know if you have any other questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:13 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good Afternoon Sam,

Nan Tolson with Governor Greg Abbott's office instructed me to reach out to you about the certification process for Prop 2.

As I am sure you are aware, the Governor certified the other 7 amendments that voters approved yesterday. Nan tells me Prop 2 was not certified because of the lawsuit filed against it, adding the prop and that it has to go through a different process, but she was unable to tell me what that process is. So can you please explain. Also, is this something that has happened in recent history?

Thank You,

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 4:14 PM
To: 'Goudeau, Ashley'
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

Tuesday or Wednesday morning would be best! Around the same time, if that works, but really any time before noon either day would be fine.

Thanks so much!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 4:09 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hi Sam,

I understand. What days next week is he available?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 3:44 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

Many apologies, we just had a few new meeting come up and won't be able to fit the secretary in tomorrow morning for the interview. Unfortunately, he'll be traveling the rest of the week starting Wednesday.

Can we shoot for early next week sometime? That way, we can have the Secretary discuss the end of the candidate filing period (closes on Monday), new election procedures in effect under SB 1, the 2020 election audit, and whichever other topics you'd like to cover.

Sorry about the last-minute change, appreciate your patience and understanding. Let me know if next Monday or Tuesday works. Thanks so much!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 2:07 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

9:30 would work best — what's the address of the studio and are there any protocols/mask requirements, etc. we should be aware of?

Thanks!

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 1:48 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

The morning window in the 9:00 hour works best for us. Should we do right at 9 or maybe 9:30?

Ashley Goudeau
Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content
O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:56 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegn.com.

That'll work! He is available tomorrow morning (anytime from 9am – noon), as well as between 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. Which window(s) work best for him to come by? Let me know and I'll get it on his calendar and we'll be there. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 12:18 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

I am definitely still interested! Can we plan for Tuesday at KVUE (3201 Steck Avenue)?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

📞 O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 2, 2021 12:40 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegn.com.

Hi Ashley,

Just wanted to follow up – would you still be interested in doing a sit-down interview with the Secretary next week? Plenty to discuss, including the election audit, and new election laws going into effect today.

Let me know and we'll get something on the books Monday or Tuesday, whichever works. And let us know if you'd like to come here to the SOS office in the capitol or if you'd like him to come in-studio. Either works for us.

Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 7:06 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

Yes! The Secretary is available to do an interview early next week — preferably Monday or Tuesday if either of those work?

Let me know, as well as what topics you're hoping to cover and we'll get it on the books. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:37 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Also, any update on my interview request with the SOS?

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:04 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegna.com.

Hi Ashley,

That's correct – there has been an election contest filed against certification of Proposition 2 (attached here). Prop 2 was approved by a majority of voters in the November 2021 statewide Constitutional Amendment Election.

However, the Texas Election Code lays out a specific process under Sec. 233.014 that must occur when a proposed constitutional amendment is contested:

Sec. 233.014. SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONTEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION. (a) This section applies only to a contest of an election on a proposed constitutional amendment.

(b) The contestant's petition must be filed and service of citation on the secretary of state must be obtained before the final official canvass is completed.

(c) The declaration of the official result of a contested election may not be made until the contest is finally determined. The secretary of state shall tabulate the county returns and the governor shall announce the final vote count, as ascertained from the returns, in a written document. The document announcing the final vote count must state that a contest of the election has been filed and that the declaration of the official result will not be made until the contest is finally determined.

(d) The trial date may not be earlier than the 45th day after the date of the contested election unless the contestant requests an earlier date.

(e) If an amended petition alleging additional grounds of contest is filed, the contest may not be called for trial earlier than the 20th day after the date the amended petition is filed unless the secretary of state agrees to calling the contest for trial at an earlier date.

(f) The court shall include in its judgment in a contest an order directing the governor to declare the official result of the election or to declare the election void, as appropriate, not later than the 10th day after the date the judgment becomes final.

(g) Any question relating to the validity or outcome of a constitutional amendment election may be raised in an election contest. A contest is the exclusive method for adjudicating such questions.

Essentially, what happens now is that the fate of Prop 2 is in the courts.

The plaintiffs announced this lawsuit on November 4th – two days after the election – and our office was served on November 8th. The plaintiffs' press statement can be found here: <https://truetexasproject.com/true-tx-project-sues-abbotts-sos/>

Hope this helps, let me know if you have any other questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:13 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Nan Tolson with Governor Greg Abbott's office instructed me to reach out to you about the certification process for Prop 2.

As I am sure you are aware, the Governor certified the other 7 amendments that voters approved yesterday. Nan tells me Prop 2 was not certified because of the lawsuit filed against it, adding the prop and that it has to go through a different process, but she was unable to tell me what that process is. So can you please explain. Also, is this something that has happened in recent history?

Thank You,

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

☎ O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Thursday, December 2, 2021 12:40 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

Hi Ashley,

Just wanted to follow up – would you still be interested in doing a sit-down interview with the Secretary next week? Plenty to discuss, including the election audit, and new election laws going into effect today.

Let me know and we'll get something on the books Monday or Tuesday, whichever works. And let us know if you'd like to come here to the SOS office in the capitol or if you'd like him to come in-studio. Either works for us.

Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 7:06 PM

To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: Media Inquiry

Yes! The Secretary is available to do an interview early next week — preferably Monday or Tuesday if either of those work?

Let me know, as well as what topics you're hoping to cover and we'll get it on the books. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:37 PM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thank you so much for sending this over Sam.

Also, any update on my interview request with the SOS?

Ashley Goudeau
Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content
O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 5:04 PM
To: Goudeau, Ashley <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry

CAUTION - EXTERNAL EMAIL - Please use caution opening attachments and never share your password.
Send suspicious email to infosec@tegn.com.

Hi Ashley,

That's correct – there has been an election contest filed against certification of Proposition 2 (attached here). Prop 2 was approved by a majority of voters in the November 2021 statewide Constitutional Amendment Election.

However, the Texas Election Code lays out a specific process under Sec. 233.014 that must occur when a proposed constitutional amendment is contested:

Sec. 233.014. SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONTEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION. (a) This section applies only to a contest of an election on a proposed constitutional amendment.

(b) The contestant's petition must be filed and service of citation on the secretary of state must be obtained before the final official canvass is completed.

(c) The declaration of the official result of a contested election may not be made until the contest is finally determined. The secretary of state shall tabulate the county returns and the governor shall announce the final vote count, as ascertained from the returns, in a written

document. The document announcing the final vote count must state that a contest of the election has been filed and that the declaration of the official result will not be made until the contest is finally determined.

(d) The trial date may not be earlier than the 45th day after the date of the contested election unless the contestant requests an earlier date.

(e) If an amended petition alleging additional grounds of contest is filed, the contest may not be called for trial earlier than the 20th day after the date the amended petition is filed unless the secretary of state agrees to calling the contest for trial at an earlier date.

(f) The court shall include in its judgment in a contest an order directing the governor to declare the official result of the election or to declare the election void, as appropriate, not later than the 10th day after the date the judgment becomes final.

(g) Any question relating to the validity or outcome of a constitutional amendment election may be raised in an election contest. A contest is the exclusive method for adjudicating such questions.

Essentially, what happens now is that the fate of Prop 2 is in the courts.

The plaintiffs announced this lawsuit on November 4th – two days after the election – and our office was served on November 8th. The plaintiffs' press statement can be found here: <https://truetexasproject.com/true-tx-project-sues-abbotts-sos/>

Hope this helps, let me know if you have any other questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Goudeau, Ashley [REDACTED] >

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:13 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: Media Inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good Afternoon Sam,

Nan Tolson with Governor Greg Abbott's office instructed me to reach out to you about the certification process for Prop 2.

As I am sure you are aware, the Governor certified the other 7 amendments that voters approved yesterday. Nan tells me Prop 2 was not certified because of the lawsuit filed against it, adding the prop and that it has to go through a different process, but she was unable to tell me what that process is. So can you please explain. Also, is this something that has happened in recent history?

Thank You,

Ashley Goudeau

Anchor / Managing Editor of Political Content

📞 O. 512.459.2082 • C. 512.433.0758 • kvue.com



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:16 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you, have a great weekend!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:11 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thanks. We're good to go.

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:09 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

No problem! See below in bold for references requested. Let me know if this works, and feel free to give me a call if needed and I'll be here to chat through any additional changes needed!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 4:29 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Sam,

Sorry to send these edits so late before the weekend. The yellow underlining represents cuts or notes. The blue represents added language. When do you think you can get back to me?

Raj

Full forensic audit will restore faith in Texas elections

By John B. Scott

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to **doubt not trust** the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew **Research Center** poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with **79 percent indicating candidates engage in illegal activity at least sometimes during swings elections.** **[NOTE: "36% of Americans say candidates often do illegal things...43% say this happens sometimes"]**

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in the two largest counties with Democratic Commissioners Courts — Harris and Dallas — as well as the two largest counties with Republican Commissioners Courts — Tarrant and Collin — accounting for [NOTE: Please share math on 35 percent?][The overall turnout statewide in 2020 was 11,315,056. The vote totals for the four counties being audited were as follows: Harris – 1,640,818, Dallas – 919,504, Tarrant – 834,697, Collin – 490,856. Those four counties combined had 3,885,875 votes cast, which is 34.3% of the 11.3 million statewide turnout figure. These are all available on our election results portal here: <https://results.texas-election.com/county>] 35 percent of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year. Commissioners Courts oversee each county's elections administrators, with whom our office will be working closely to obtain the materials and information we need to complete the full forensic audit.

While counties [NOTE: Just to clarify, who has already conducted these three things?] [the county election officials conduct partial manual counts of all races in at least 1% of election precincts within 72 hours after the polls close in order to ensure the accuracy of the tabulation of electronic voting machines, per [Sec. 127.201 of the Texas Election Code](#). Have added a word to distinguish between these partial manual counts and the full manual recounts referenced below] partial manual recounts, election security assessments and verification of voters' voter eligibility verification have already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly [NOTE: Pennsylvania says it is conducting a forensic audit. How is that not a true one?][[Pennsylvania's forensic audit only involves a subpoena of voter registration records as well as e-mails between county election officials and the PA Secretary of State between November 2020 and May 2021](#) – it does not examine actual election records, voting machines, logic and accuracy tests of those machines, etc. and therefore does not go as far in detecting potential illegal activity as [Texas' forensic audit](#)] “forensic” audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct additional a full manual recounts of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities [NOTE: The previous paragraph states that manual recounts have already been done.]. [As noted above, the manual recounts conducted automatically after each election only represent 1% of all precincts, whereas our office's authority to conduct a full manual recount of any number of votes in any

number of precincts allows us to cover 100% of all ballots cast in those affected precincts. [Texas Election Code Sec. 127.202](#)]

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's Office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind — they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore voters' faith in elections among voters.

For example, after when a recount in a 2019 Midland ISD bond election flipped the results, showed that more than 800 ballots were unaccounted for, our office worked meticulously to retrace the steps of local election officials and a box of 836 uncounted ballots was discovered that ended up flipping the election again. Our office worked meticulously to retrace the steps of local election officials. We were able to determine exactly how they were misplaced and implement targeted training to fix any deficiencies that led to the election-changing irregularity.

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's Office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed and not repeated in future elections.

We will work to investigate claims of irregularities in Harris County, such as the allegation that the county initially reported 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter — regardless of political affiliation — knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas secretary of state.

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:27 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Of course! Just wanted to make sure we were still set for publication this weekend and resolve any additional edits needed to the piece. Appreciate it!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:25 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thanks for that update. Can you give me about 30 more minutes?

Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:06 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just wanted to flag that the [legislature has approved \\$4M in additional funds for our agency to conduct the election audit](#), both for the 2020 General Election and for election audits as required under SB 1. This makes the piece all the more timely for Sunday's opinion section. Let me know if any additional changes are needed or if there's additional feedback from your editorial team.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:34 AM

To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

That's exactly the type of claim that our audit will investigate and, if not true, debunk and, if true, provide a full detailed report of what happened. We haven't been given access to the documents yet. And, as HC has reported, the [Harris County Commissioners court has openly opposed complying with the audit or our request for documents](#), so we're weighing our options on how to obtain these documents in order to verify/debunk this claim in our audit findings.

To be fair, can we characterize it as a claim? Such as:

"We will work to investigate claims of irregularities in Harris County, such as [the allegation that the county initially reported 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election.](#)"

Let me know if that works better. Don't want to get ahead of our audit findings and provide a possible explanation or theory of how that number came to be, because we haven't been provided the documents yet, which include the sign-in sheets for those drive-thru voting locations in Harris County.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:22 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm still expecting one more editor to read the piece.

I do have one concern with the added claim on Harris County: "We will work to determine why, for example, Harris County recorded 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election."

The only source for that 1,884 number is Bettencourt. The Chronicle article that notes that claim from Bettencourt doesn't provide any detail. I would either like to cut that sentence or for the secretary of state's office to provide some explanation of how that number came to be. Are there official tallies that you can point me to that show that discrepancy?

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:07 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Morning Raj,

Just wanted to check back in to see if there were any additional edits on the Secretary's op-ed that we need to review. As long as they are not too substantive, we can probably sign off very quickly. Let me know and I'll make sure to give them a look today. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:13 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Sure, no problem! Let me know when you have additional changes to review and we'll be happy to sign off when ready. Thank you for your time!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I think it's a stronger piece with the changes. I'm planning on publishing it Sunday. I will likely have some additional edits for you to review, hopefully before the end of the day.

Thanks for your patience and persistence as well. We're pulled in a lot of directions and I wish I could get back to everyone more efficiently.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically

involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about 'why these four counties?' – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan 'witch hunt' against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you'd like that clarified more in the piece, we're happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you'd like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I'd like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven't been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that's not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of

Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:09 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

No problem! See below in bold for references requested. Let me know if this works, and feel free to give me a call if needed and I'll be here to chat through any additional changes needed!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 4:29 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Sam,

Sorry to send these edits so late before the weekend. The yellow underlining represents cuts or notes. The blue represents added language. When do you think you can get back to me?

Raj

Full forensic audit will restore faith in Texas elections

By John B. Scott

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to **doubt not trust** the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew **Research Center** poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with **79 percent indicating candidates engage in illegal activity at least sometimes during swings elections.** **[NOTE: "36% of Americans say candidates often do illegal things...43% say this happens sometimes"]**

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in the two largest counties with Democratic Commissioners Courts — Harris **v** and Dallas **v** — as well as the two largest counties with Republican Commissioners Courts — Tarrant **v** and Collin **v** — accounting for **[NOTE: Please share math on 35 percent?]** **[The overall turnout statewide in 2020 was 11,315,056. The vote totals for the four counties being audited were as follows: Harris – 1,640,818, Dallas – 919,504, Tarrant – 834,697, Collin – 490,856. Those four counties combined had 3,885,875 votes cast, which is 34.3% of the 11.3 million statewide turnout figure. These are all available on our election results portal here: <https://results.texas-election.com/county>]** 35 percent of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year. Commissioners Courts oversee each county's elections administrators, with whom our office will be working closely to obtain the materials and information we need to complete the full forensic audit.

While **counties** **[NOTE: Just to clarify, who has already conducted these three things?]** **[the county election officials conduct partial manual counts of all races in at least 1% of election precincts within 72 hours after the polls close in order to ensure the accuracy of the tabulation of electronic voting machines, per [Sec. 127.201 of the Texas Election Code](#). Have added a word to distinguish between these partial manual counts and the full manual recounts referenced below] **partial** manual recounts, election security assessments and **verification of voters' voter** eligibility **verification** **have** **has already been conducted**, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to**

ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly **[NOTE: Pennsylvania says it is conducting a forensic audit. How is that not a true one?]** **[Pennsylvania’s forensic audit only involves a subpoena of voter registration records as well as e-mails between county election officials and the PA Secretary of State between November 2020 and May 2021 – it does not examine actual election records, voting machines, logic and accuracy tests of those machines, etc. and therefore does not go as far in detecting potential illegal activity as Texas’ forensic audit]** “forensic” audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct **additional a full** manual recounts of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities **[NOTE: The previous paragraph states that manual recounts have already been done.]** **[As noted above, the manual recounts conducted automatically after each election only represent 1% of all precincts, whereas our office’s authority to conduct a full manual recount of any number of votes in any number of precincts allows us to cover 100% of all ballots cast in those affected precincts. Texas Election Code Sec. 127.202]**

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General’s Office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind — they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore voters’ faith in elections among voters.

For example, after when a recount in a 2019 Midland ISD bond election flipped the results, showed that more than 800 ballots were unaccounted for, our office worked meticulously to retrace the steps of local election officials and a box of 836 uncounted ballots was discovered that ended up flipping the election again. Our office worked meticulously to retrace the steps of local election officials. We were able to determine exactly how they were misplaced and implement targeted training to fix any deficiencies that led to the election-changing irregularity.

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State’s Office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed and not repeated in future elections.

We will work to investigate claims of irregularities in Harris County, such as the [allegation](#) that the county initially reported 1,884  more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election.

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors , and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter — regardless of political affiliation — knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas secretary of state.

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:27 PM

To: Mankad, Raj 

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Of course! Just wanted to make sure we were still set for publication this weekend and resolve any additional edits needed to the piece. Appreciate it!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj 

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:25 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thanks for that update. Can you give me about 30 more minutes?

Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:06 PM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just wanted to flag that the [legislature has approved \\$4M in additional funds for our agency to conduct the election audit](#), both for the 2020 General Election and for election audits as required under SB 1. This makes the piece all the more timely for Sunday's opinion section. Let me know if any additional changes are needed or if there's additional feedback from your editorial team.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:34 AM

To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

That's exactly the type of claim that our audit will investigate and, if not true, debunk and, if true, provide a full detailed report of what happened. We haven't been given access to the documents yet. And, as HC has reported, the [Harris County Commissioners court has openly opposed complying with the audit or our request for documents](#), so we're weighing our options on how to obtain these documents in order to verify/debunk this claim in our audit findings.

To be fair, can we characterize it as a claim? Such as:

"We will work to investigate claims of irregularities in Harris County, such as [the allegation that the county initially reported 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election.](#)"

Let me know if that works better. Don't want to get ahead of our audit findings and provide a possible explanation or theory of how that number came to be, because we haven't been provided the documents yet, which include the sign-in sheets for those drive-thru voting locations in Harris County.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:22 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm still expecting one more editor to read the piece.

I do have one concern with the added claim on Harris County: "We will work to determine why, for example, Harris County recorded 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election."

The only source for that 1,884 number is Bettencourt. The Chronicle article that notes that claim from Bettencourt doesn't provide any detail. I would either like to cut that sentence or for the secretary of state's office to provide some explanation of how that number came to be. Are there official tallies that you can point me to that show that discrepancy?

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:07 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Morning Raj,

Just wanted to check back in to see if there were any additional edits on the Secretary's op-ed that we need to review. As long as they are not too substantive, we can probably sign off very quickly. Let me know and I'll make sure to give them a look today. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:13 AM

To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Sure, no problem! Let me know when you have additional changes to review and we'll be happy to sign off when ready. Thank you for your time!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I think it's a stronger piece with the changes. I'm planning on publishing it Sunday. I will likely have some additional edits for you to review, hopefully before the end of the day.

Thanks for your patience and persistence as well. We're pulled in a lot of directions and I wish I could get back to everyone more efficiently.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM

To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about 'why these four counties?' – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan 'witch hunt' against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you'd like that clarified more in the piece, we're happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you'd like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I'd like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven't been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that's not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:27 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Of course! Just wanted to make sure we were still set for publication this weekend and resolve any additional edits needed to the piece. Appreciate it!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:25 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Thanks for that update. Can you give me about 30 more minutes?

Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:06 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just wanted to flag that the [legislature has approved \\$4M in additional funds for our agency to conduct the election audit](#), both for the 2020 General Election and for election audits as required under SB 1. This makes the piece all the more timely for Sunday's opinion section. Let me know if any additional changes are needed or if there's additional feedback from your editorial team.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:34 AM

To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

That's exactly the type of claim that our audit will investigate and, if not true, debunk and, if true, provide a full detailed report of what happened. We haven't been given access to the documents yet. And, as HC has reported, the [Harris County Commissioners court has openly opposed complying with the audit or our request for documents](#), so we're weighing our options on how to obtain these documents in order to verify/debunk this claim in our audit findings.

To be fair, can we characterize it as a claim? Such as:

"We will work to investigate claims of irregularities in Harris County, such as [the allegation that the county initially reported 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election.](#)"

Let me know if that works better. Don't want to get ahead of our audit findings and provide a possible explanation or theory of how that number came to be, because we haven't been provided the documents yet, which include the sign-in sheets for those drive-thru voting locations in Harris County.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:22 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm still expecting one more editor to read the piece.

I do have one concern with the added claim on Harris County: "We will work to determine why, for example, Harris County recorded 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election."

The only source for that 1,884 number is Bettencourt. The Chronicle article that notes that claim from Bettencourt doesn't provide any detail. I would either like to cut that sentence or for the secretary of state's office to provide some explanation of how that number came to be. Are there official tallies that you can point me to that show that discrepancy?

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:07 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Morning Raj,

Just wanted to check back in to see if there were any additional edits on the Secretary's op-ed that we need to review. As long as they are not too substantive, we can probably sign off very quickly. Let me know and I'll make sure to give them a look today. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:13 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Sure, no problem! Let me know when you have additional changes to review and we'll be happy to sign off when ready. Thank you for your time!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I think it's a stronger piece with the changes. I'm planning on publishing it Sunday. I will likely have some additional edits for you to review, hopefully before the end of the day.

Thanks for your patience and persistence as well. We're pulled in a lot of directions and I wish I could get back to everyone more efficiently.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically

involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about 'why these four counties?' – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan 'witch hunt' against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you'd like that clarified more in the piece, we're happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you'd like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I'd like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven't been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that's not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of

Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:06 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just wanted to flag that the [legislature has approved \\$4M in additional funds for our agency to conduct the election audit](#), both for the 2020 General Election and for election audits as required under SB 1. This makes the piece all the more timely for Sunday's opinion section. Let me know if any additional changes are needed or if there's additional feedback from your editorial team.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:34 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

That's exactly the type of claim that our audit will investigate and, if not true, debunk and, if true, provide a full detailed report of what happened. We haven't been given access to the documents yet. And, as HC has reported, the [Harris County Commissioners court has openly opposed complying with the audit or our request for documents](#), so we're weighing our options on how to obtain these documents in order to verify/debunk this claim in our audit findings.

To be fair, can we characterize it as a claim? Such as:

[“We will work to investigate claims of irregularities in Harris County, such as the allegation that the county initially reported 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election.”](#)

Let me know if that works better. Don't want to get ahead of our audit findings and provide a possible explanation or theory of how that number came to be, because we haven't been provided the documents yet, which include the sign-in sheets for those drive-thru voting locations in Harris County.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:22 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm still expecting one more editor to read the piece.

I do have one concern with the added claim on Harris County: "We will work to determine why, for example, Harris County recorded 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election."

The only source for that 1,884 number is Bettencourt. The Chronicle article that notes that claim from Bettencourt doesn't provide any detail. I would either like to cut that sentence or for the secretary of state's office to provide some explanation of how that number came to be. Are there official tallies that you can point me to that show that discrepancy?

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:07 AM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Morning Raj,

Just wanted to check back in to see if there were any additional edits on the Secretary's op-ed that we need to review. As long as they are not too substantive, we can probably sign off very quickly. Let me know and I'll make sure to give them a look today. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:13 AM

To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED] >

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Sure, no problem! Let me know when you have additional changes to review and we'll be happy to sign off when ready. Thank you for your time!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I think it's a stronger piece with the changes. I'm planning on publishing it Sunday. I will likely have some additional edits for you to review, hopefully before the end of the day.

Thanks for your patience and persistence as well. We're pulled in a lot of directions and I wish I could get back to everyone more efficiently.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about 'why these four counties?' – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan 'witch hunt' against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you'd like that clarified more in the piece, we're happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you'd like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I'd like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven't been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that's not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:34 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

That's exactly the type of claim that our audit will investigate and, if not true, debunk and, if true, provide a full detailed report of what happened. We haven't been given access to the documents yet. And, as HC has reported, the [Harris County Commissioners court has openly opposed complying with the audit or our request for documents](#), so we're weighing our options on how to obtain these documents in order to verify/debunk this claim in our audit findings.

To be fair, can we characterize it as a claim? Such as:

"We will work to investigate claims of irregularities in Harris County, such as [the allegation that the county initially reported 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election.](#)"

Let me know if that works better. Don't want to get ahead of our audit findings and provide a possible explanation or theory of how that number came to be, because we haven't been provided the documents yet, which include the sign-in sheets for those drive-thru voting locations in Harris County.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:22 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm still expecting one more editor to read the piece.

I do have one concern with the added claim on Harris County: "We will work to determine why, for example, Harris County recorded 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election."

The only source for that 1,884 number is Bettencourt. The Chronicle article that notes that claim from Bettencourt doesn't provide any detail. I would either like to cut that sentence or for the secretary of state's office to provide some explanation of how that number came to be. Are there official tallies that you can point me to that show that discrepancy?

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:07 AM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Morning Raj,

Just wanted to check back in to see if there were any additional edits on the Secretary's op-ed that we need to review. As long as they are not too substantive, we can probably sign off very quickly. Let me know and I'll make sure to give them a look today. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:13 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <Raj.Mankad@chron.com>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Sure, no problem! Let me know when you have additional changes to review and we'll be happy to sign off when ready. Thank you for your time!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I think it's a stronger piece with the changes. I'm planning on publishing it Sunday. I will likely have some additional edits for you to review, hopefully before the end of the day.

Thanks for your patience and persistence as well. We're pulled in a lot of directions and I wish I could get back to everyone more efficiently.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about 'why these four counties?' – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four

largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan 'witch hunt' against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you'd like that clarified more in the piece, we're happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you'd like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I'd like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven't been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that's not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity

of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM
To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>
Cc: [REDACTED] >
Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and

conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 11:07 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Morning Raj,

Just wanted to check back in to see if there were any additional edits on the Secretary's op-ed that we need to review. As long as they are not too substantive, we can probably sign off very quickly. Let me know and I'll make sure to give them a look today. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:13 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Sure, no problem! Let me know when you have additional changes to review and we'll be happy to sign off when ready. Thank you for your time!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I think it's a stronger piece with the changes. I'm planning on publishing it Sunday. I will likely have some additional edits for you to review, hopefully before the end of the day.

Thanks for your patience and persistence as well. We're pulled in a lot of directions and I wish I could get back to everyone more efficiently.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about 'why these four counties?' – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan 'witch hunt' against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you'd like that clarified more in the piece, we're happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you'd like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I'd like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven't been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that's not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM

To: Sam Taylor

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,

Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:13 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Sure, no problem! Let me know when you have additional changes to review and we'll be happy to sign off when ready. Thank you for your time!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I think it's a stronger piece with the changes. I'm planning on publishing it Sunday. I will likely have some additional edits for you to review, hopefully before the end of the day.

Thanks for your patience and persistence as well. We're pulled in a lot of directions and I wish I could get back to everyone more efficiently.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Afternoon Raj,

Let me know if y'all are interested in publishing the updated version of the piece (attached here). This is still being offered as an exclusive to the Chronicle if you choose to publish it. Thanks again for your time, feedback, and consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about ‘why these four counties?’ – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan ‘witch hunt’ against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you’d like that clarified more in the piece, we’re happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you’d like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I’m open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I’d like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven’t been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that’s not being audited.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM

To: Sam Taylor

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous

representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:22 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Attachments: John B. Scott_OpEd Submission_Houston Chronicle_11.17.21.docx
Sensitivity: Personal

Thank you for the feedback, Raj. Attached, please find an updated version of the piece addressing your comments.

To answer your first question, the theme of the piece is restoring confidence among a voting public that has voiced diminished faith in our election systems. Nevertheless, we added a notable example in Harris county that specifically involves a discrepancy in the number of votes cast vs. the number of voters who checked in at drive-thru locations in Harris County in 2020. This is an example of the type of irregularity that, while maybe not nefarious in nature, does diminish voters' confidence in the integrity of elections if it is not resolved and explained by an objective third party – which is the role our agency is taking on through this election audit.

To your second question about 'why these four counties?' – as noted in the updated piece, these are the two largest counties with Democratic and Republican Commissioners Courts, who oversee the elections offices in each county. It is only fair that we examine the two largest Democratic and two largest Republican counties, rather than choosing the four largest counties by population, which would undoubtedly be panned as a partisan 'witch hunt' against Democratic-leaning counties only. If you'd like that clarified more in the piece, we're happy to make adjustments as needed.

Thanks again for your time to carefully review and consider the piece, and please let me know ASAP if you'd like to publish the attached version.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity

of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I'm open to publishing this piece but there are a couple of counter arguments that I'd like the op-ed to anticipate.

One is that there haven't been specific allegations of irregularities in Texas. The Texas AG devoted considerable resources to look for fraud and found almost nothing, and nothing that would impact the integrity of the elections. Why should there be an audit here? The previous secretary of state said that the election in Texas was secure.

And why just those four counties? I think our readers will be quick to point out that the one example of an election-changing irregularity cited in the piece took place in a county that's not being audited.

Best wishes,

Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State

Word Count: **733**

For the past several election cycles, voters have faced a crisis of confidence in the very system that underpins our representative form of government. Whether it was the specter of foreign interference in our elections or allegations of widespread mail ballot fraud during the pandemic, voters have been hit with a barrage of reasons to not trust the system.

And, unsurprisingly, it's starting to take its toll on their faith in the integrity of our elections.

According to a Pew poll released earlier this year, large shares of Americans of both parties believe there is cheating in elections, with [79% indicating illegal activity swings elections](#).

This is why, in order to restore voters' confidence in the strength and resilience of our election systems, Texas is conducting the largest and most comprehensive forensic audit of the 2020 General Election.

Over the next several months, the Texas Secretary of State's office will complete a top-to-bottom examination of election records in the **two largest counties with Democratic Commissioners Courts – Harris and Dallas – as well as the two largest counties with Republican Commissioners Courts – Tarrant and Collin – accounting for 35% of all votes cast in the historically high-turnout election in Texas last year. Commissioners Courts oversee each county's Elections Administrators, with whom our office will be working closely to obtain the materials and information we need to complete the full forensic audit.**

While manual recounts, election security assessments, and verification of voters' eligibility has already been conducted, the Texas Forensic Audit goes well beyond any other legislative election audit proposals or models in other states. Our audit examines, among other items: chain of custody records of voted ballots and voting equipment, audit logs from electronic voting systems, and materials from Early Voting Ballot Boards and Signature Verification Committees to ensure that mail ballots were not subjected to tampering and match the list of voters who requested them.

Importantly, this will be the only truly 'forensic' audit of the 2020 election, using analytical tools to examine the literal nuts and bolts of election administration to determine if any illegal activity may have occurred. Using the authority given to our agency by the Texas Legislature, we will conduct a manual recount of any and all precincts affected by election irregularities.

We will follow the facts, follow the evidence, and ensure any cases of illegal voting or election crimes are investigated by the proper law enforcement authorities, including the Texas Attorney General's office.

Texans should be encouraged by the dedicated county election officials who work cycle after cycle to conduct elections with the integrity and professionalism that voters deserve.

But voters also need peace of mind – they need assurances that Texas election law and federal laws protecting the rights of legal, eligible voters are being followed at every step in the process. When irregularities occur, no matter how inconsequential they may seem, it takes a concerted effort to restore faith in elections among voters.

For example, when a recount in a 2019 Midland ISD bond election showed that more than 800 ballots were unaccounted for, our office worked meticulously to retrace the steps of local election officials and [discovered a box of uncounted ballots](#). We were able to determine exactly how they were misplaced and implement targeted training to fix any deficiencies that led to the [election-changing irregularity](#).

Using those same methods and techniques, the Texas Secretary of State's office will endeavor to deliver the same peace of mind to Texas voters and ensure that any irregularities that compromise the integrity of our elections are uncovered, fixed, and not repeated in future elections.

We will work to determine why, for example, Harris County [recorded 1,884 more votes than voters who checked in across several drive-thru locations during the 2020 General Election](#).

Most importantly, we are conducting this forensic election audit without any preconceived notions about what we are going to find. We will separate evidence from hearsay, facts from rumors, and empirical data from unverifiable theories.

Ultimately, we want to make sure every single eligible Texas voter – regardless of political affiliation – knows that voting in our state is fair and secure, and that only legal votes are cast and counted in Texas elections.

Any crack in the confidence of our elections is a crack in the foundation of our democracy. We must restore confidence in the integrity of our elections before the entire structure crumbles under the weight of mistrust.

John B. Scott is the 114th Texas Secretary of State.

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 1:28 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Wanted to circle back on this to see if you could provide me a general timeline for when you and your team expect to complete your review of the submission. If you don't expect to finish the review before mid-day tomorrow, I may have to take the Secretary's op-ed submission to another publication, although we would *strongly* prefer to seek publication in the Chronicle. Please let me know so that I can plan accordingly. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED] >
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor

Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM

To: 'Mankad, Raj' [REDACTED] >

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM

To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,

Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM

To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith

in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM

To: Sam Taylor

Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM

To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:05 AM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Just checking back in on this submission. Feel free to give me a call on my direct line if any questions – 512-463-6116.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity

of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,
Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM
To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>
Cc: [REDACTED] >
Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and

conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:12 PM
To: 'Mankad, Raj'
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Got it – let me know if any questions in the meantime. Thanks!

Best,

-Sam

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hello Sam,

I need a little more time to finish reviewing it.

Best wishes,

Raj

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj [REDACTED] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Mankad, Raj
Subject: Re: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Raj,

Circling back on the Secretary's op-ed submission. Have you/your team had an opportunity to review it yet? Let me know, thank you!

Best,

Sam Taylor
Texas Secretary of State's office
512-463-6116

From: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Sam Taylor
Subject: RE: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Good morning,

I've received the op-ed and will be back in touch early next week.

Best wishes,
Raj

Raj Mankad
Op-Ed Editor
Houston Chronicle

From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Mankad, Raj <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections
Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning Raj,

Passing this along to you because I received an out-of-office reply from Lisa.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 8:42 AM

To: 'viewpoints@chron.com' <viewpoints@chron.com>; 'outlook@chron.com' <outlook@chron.com>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Subject: Op-Ed Submission: John B. Scott, Texas Secretary of State: Full Forensic Audit Will Restore Faith in Integrity of Texas Elections

Sensitivity: Personal

Good Morning,

On behalf of Texas Secretary of State John B. Scott, I am submitting the attached op-ed on our agency's full forensic audit of the 2020 Election. In the op-ed, Secretary Scott makes clear that the purpose of the audit is to restore voters' confidence in the integrity of our election system – which has been brought into question by critics on both sides of the political aisle since 2016. Contrary to narratives [published in the Chronicle](#) and elsewhere that Secretary Scott's previous representation of former President Trump disqualifies him to run an independent and objective audit, the piece makes clear that our agency approaches this election audit with no preconceived notions regarding what the results and conclusions will be. Secretary Scott's legal career has been defined by following the evidence and the facts, which is exactly what the Texas Secretary of State's office is doing in undertaking the full forensic election audit in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties.

We'd like to submit this piece **exclusively** to the Houston Chronicle for publication. Please let me know if you are interested in publishing this piece early next week, as I understand we may have missed the deadline for a Sunday opinion publication.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 5:35 PM
To: 'Clayton Neville'
Subject: RE: QUESTION-WBAP/KLIF

Hi Clayton,

Sorry I missed you earlier – have been on the road with the Secretary today and left you a message from my personal cell, but happy to call in and record anytime if you're still looking for sound for a package. Let me know and I'll be happy to hop on!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State
smtaylor@sos.texas.gov
Office: 512-463-6116
Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Clayton Neville <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 9:17 AM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: QUESTION-WBAP/KLIF

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

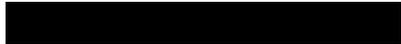
Sam,

Are you or someone with the Sec of State Office available for a quick pre-recorded phone call regarding the latest on the election audit that was sent out Friday? We'd like to include in our newscasts.

Clayton Neville
Reporter/Anchor WBAP/KLIF
Westwood One News Correspondent
Cumulus Radio Station Group | Dallas / Fort Worth
O: 214.765.5296

M: 469.487.6772

3090 Olive Street, Suite 400, Dallas, TX 75219



cumulusmedia.com

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:20 PM
To: 'Cassandra Pollock'
Subject: RE: Texas Tribune inquiry

Hi Cassi,

Yes – you can attribute the following statement to me/the Texas Secretary of State’s office:

“We thank Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Phelan, Senator Nelson and Representative Bonnen for approving critical funds to support the Texas Secretary of State’s Forensic Audit Division. In order to complete our ongoing full forensic audit of the 2020 General Election and conduct subsequent audits as required by SB 1, our agency will be using these funds to dedicate additional staff to oversee audit activities, including: verifying counties’ removal of ineligible voters from the rolls, meticulously reviewing each county’s election materials for our comprehensive document examination, and ensuring compliance with state and federal election laws. These resources are essential for maintaining the integrity of Texas elections and identifying issues that must be fixed in order to restore voters’ confidence in our state’s election systems.”

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications

Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293



From: Cassandra Pollock [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2021 3:18 PM
To: Sam Taylor <SMTaylor@sos.texas.gov>
Subject: Texas Tribune inquiry

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the SOS organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the email and know that the content is safe. If you believe this to be a malicious or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to Informationsecurity@sos.texas.gov.

Hi Sam, it's Cassi with the Texas Tribune. Hope you're doing great.

Wanted to see if there was a statement from the SOS we could include about the emergency transfer of funds to the agency, announced this afternoon by Gov. Greg Abbott and other GOP leaders.

Please call anytime with questions: 972-358-8659.

Thanks,
Cassi

--
--



Cassi Pollock
Reporter

919 Congress Avenue
Sixth Floor
Austin, TX 78701
www.texastribune.org

M (972) 358-8659
@cassi_pollock

From: Sam Taylor
Sent: Thursday, December 2, 2021 10:46 AM
To: 'Fine, Julie (NBCUniversal)'
Subject: Topics for Tomorrow?

Sensitivity: Personal

Hi Julie!

Looking forward to bringing the Secretary to the studio tomorrow afternoon – do y'all know what topics you'd like to cover? He's up for anything and is happy to discuss the election audit, his time working on the Pennsylvania election lawsuit, SB 1 going into effect, upcoming primary elections, etc. Just let me know and I'll make sure he's prepped accordingly. Thanks!

Best,

Sam Taylor

Assistant Secretary of State for Communications
Office of the Texas Secretary of State

smtaylor@sos.texas.gov

Office: 512-463-6116

Cell: 512-538-5293

