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STATE OF KANSAS

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ELECTIONS TASK FORCE ISSUES FINDINGS

TOPEKA (December 21, 2012) – Election night activity in Sedgwick County resulted in an investigation by a task force that reported its findings today. Secretary of State Kris Kobach sent a task force of members of his staff to Wichita so they could identify issues, assess causes and suggest possible remedies. The task force met on November 13 with the Sedgwick County Election Commissioner and with a representative of the vendor that manufactures the tabulation and reporting software.

The task force determined that there were two issues. First, results were not posted on the county's web site as early as expected or as early as had been accomplished in prior years. Second, the first set of posted results indicated that they were complete and that all precincts were included in the report. In fact, the first report included only advance vote totals and did not include a majority of the precincts.

The investigation revealed, among other things, that (1) vote totals for candidates and ballot questions were never incorrectly reported; (2) the Sedgwick County election commissioner's office has the lowest number of full time staff with the second highest number of registered voters, as compared with the other three Kansas counties with election commissioners; and (3) no laws were broken and no written policies of the secretary of state were violated.

Proposed solutions include (1) working with county commissioners and others to appropriately staff the office; (2) contracting for on-site election day support from the vendor for all regularly-scheduled elections for at least the next two calendar years; and (3) posting partial results as soon as possible after the polls close and supplementing the initial posting with cumulative reports with reasonable frequency.

"The task force did a great job in identifying problem areas and solutions," said Kobach. "We are confident that Election Commissioner Lehman will be able to implement these reforms and we look forward to successful elections in spring 2013."

The "Report on Inquiry at Sedgwick County Election Commissioner's Office for the November 6, 2012, General Election" will be posted on www.sos.ks.gov.