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Did polling irregularities occur?

By Pippa Fisher

Vice Mayor Cam Burks is concerned that multiple voters in Lafayette were victims of voter suppression during the June 5 election and is calling for the county registrar to formally investigate.

Several Lafayette precincts ran out of paper ballots before the polls close. Burks says that while some voters who arrived before 8 p.m. chose to wait in long lines to vote on the only available machine; others who had pressing schedules could not wait and were unable to cast votes. "I understand that approximately at least 20 voters left one of the affected precincts without voting. Regardless of how this happened, the result is that voter suppression likely occurred and that is not acceptable."

Burks stressed that he makes these comments not in any way related to Measure L and the outcome of that particular decision. "I make them in the context of representing and supporting the people of Lafayette to be able to exercise their clear right to freely vote.

"Even one resident - let alone multiple residents - not having the ability to cast a vote because of a breakdown in the county registrar's potential mismanagement of this election, is totally unacceptable to me," said Burks. "I want answers and I want those responsible to be held accountable."

When contacted about irregularities, Lafayette City Clerk Joanne Robbins confirmed that the city had learned with regret that some polling places ran out of ballots prior to closing. Assistant Registrar of Voters for Contra Costa County Scott Konopasek did not return Lamorinda Weekly's calls about the matter. Burks would like to see the issue placed on the council agenda for future discussion.

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

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