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Your Vote Matters

For anyone who thinks their vote doesn't matter, consider the recent election in Transylvania County. After election day, results for Brevard City Council and Rosman Board of Aldermen showed a tie in Rosman and one vote separating second and third place in Brevard. After 30 provisional votes were considered, only 13 were actually counted-- and those 13 votes broke the tie and widened the one-vote gap to cement a win. The provisional ballots that were dismissed were determined to be from voters who lived outside of city limits, so they were not eligible to vote in this election.

Of course it is always best to check voter registration status before going to the polls and presenting required photo ID. But when there is uncertainty about a voter's eligibility or qualifications to vote, a provisional ballot is provided at the polling place. This gives a voter the opportunity to vote, and then, depending on the eligibility question, allows the voter to bring in required documentation and/or have their eligibility cleared by election officials. Through research, county board of elections members make a final determination about eligibility, as they did in this case. When all eligible provisional ballots are counted, the election results are finalized at the official "county canvass," ten days after Election Day. Canvass, like every Board of Election meeting, is open to the public and conducted with complete transparency.

In our current political climate, voters pay a great deal of attention to national and statewide elections. But results like Transylvania's should remind all voters that every vote really does matter, especially those cast in municipal elections. The League of Women voters urges every eligible voter to register, become educated about candidates and issues at every level of government, and then be sure to vote.

Liz Hill

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