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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*****The PIMA COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE has received media requests for information about South Tucson election activities and has been asked to comment on a series of rumors surrounding the South Tucson election. This release is being issued in response to those requests.*****

The Pima County Recorder's Office is conducting a review of election activities in the current South Tucson city council election. The election will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2011.

Last week the Recorder's Office received a report of improper conduct in early voting activities involving voters who are elderly or disabled. The report indicated that individuals associated with one or more candidates in South Tucson were providing assistance to these voters but marking the ballots contrary to the wishes of the voter and that improper "gifts" were being provided to voters in exchange for their votes. If the claims received in the report could be established, these acts would amount to felony violations of Arizona law.

It is the policy of Pima County Recorder, F. Ann Rodriguez, to have senior staff review any report of election impropriety that is received by the office. The Recorder's Office does occasionally receive reports of voting irregularities during election cycles and these are always reviewed and evaluated. It is also policy for the Recorder's Office to refer these types of claims to the Pima County Attorney's Office for additional review if the claims involve potential criminal misconduct.

This week the Recorder's Office sent a voting assistance team to the housing locations where this conduct was reported to have occurred. Several voters were interviewed and most reported no problems with early voting or with

persons who provided or offered assistance. Most of the voters indicated that they had marked their own ballots and had returned the early vote-by-mail ballots directly to the Recorder's Office without any assistance. A few voters reported that they had received assistance, but that they had confirmed that the ballots had been marked in accordance with their directions. Several voters could not be interviewed since they were not home at the time. The assistance team left contact information for follow up with these individuals. The Recorder's Office review will not be completed until the remaining early voters at these locations are contacted. The report to the Recorder's Office was specific to two particular residence locations in South Tucson where the voting assistance team was sent.

While the investigation is ongoing, the early vote-by-mail ballots received from early voters in South Tucson have been sequestered so that any evidence of improper voting assistance can be preserved should issues be discovered during the course of the review. Should any early voter in South Tucson confirm to the Recorder's Office that their early vote-by-mail ballot was marked by someone else contrary to their express direction, that voter will be offered a chance to vote a second ballot and only the second ballot will be counted. A report of any of these confirmations will be provided to City of South Tucson officials, all candidates for office in South Tucson and the political parties in Pima County.

The Recorder's Office review will be completed on or before Election Day.

The Recorder's Office offers assistance voting teams to any voter who needs assistance in marking their ballot due to physical limitations. The Recorder's Office assistance teams consist of two employees with different political party affiliations who monitor each other's activities to ensure that the ballot is marked correctly as instructed by the voter. Both members of the assistance team must be present when the ballot is marked and the voter must be shown or read the ballot to confirm that the ballot has been marked as directed by the voter. This is the proper method of assisting voters with physical limitations.

The assistance provided to voters in South Tucson that is the subject of this review does not involve assistance provided by the Recorder's office, but by other individuals.

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Any voter in Pima County who needs assistance with marking their early ballot in any election due to physical limitations is encouraged to contact the Pima County Recorder's Office at 740-4330 to request assistance or to have a trusted family member or friend provide that assistance.

In addition to the election in South Tucson, elections are being conducted in the Towns of Marana and Sahuarita. The Town of Sahuarita election is being conducted entirely by mail. No reports of improprieties have been received for either of those jurisdictions.