



PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD COUNCIL  
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**Fact Sheet**  
**Election Integrity in Puerto Rico's 2020 General Election**  
December 2020

**ELECTION CONTEXT**

The 2020 Statehood “YES” or “NO” plebiscite was publicly announced on May 16, 2020 upon the passage of the Puerto Rico legislature's [Act](#) to Define Puerto Rico's Ultimate Political Status ([Act No. 51-2020 \(S.B.1467\)](#)). The Act provided for public notices and advertisements leading up to the plebiscite. The plebiscite was held on the same day as the Puerto Rico general election, November 3, 2020, and was administered by the [Puerto Rico State Elections Commission \(PRSEC\)](#).

**ELECTION PROCEDURES**

**Voter Registration:** Puerto Rico residents had up to 50 days before the election to register to vote. Absentee ballots were made available to members of the Military and residents who were temporarily outside of the territory. For the first time, an early voting option was made available to voters in order to reduce potential exposure to COVID-19 on election day. Like many states across the country, the exceedingly large number of early and mail in votes caused delays in the counting process.

**Voting Times:** Polls opened at 8:00 AM and closed at 3:00 PM on election day. If a voter was in line by 3:00pm, or was serving as a poll worker, they could still cast their votes after that time. The PRSEC complied with all the voter accessibility requirements under the VRA, UOCAVA, HAVA and all other [federal voting laws](#).

**Public Holiday:** In Puerto Rico, general elections are treated as a public holiday to maximize the opportunity for all registered voters to participate.

**Voter Identification:** Puerto Rico has a strict requirement that every voter must have a state-issued voter identification card in order to cast a ballot. The voter ID cards in Puerto Rico include a photograph of the individual, and obtaining it requires an in-person voter inscription process that includes identity verification comparable to what is required for other state issued photo IDs, such as a driver's license. Any voter that lost their voter ID had the option to go to a nearby Joint Inscription Board office (commonly referred to as JIP, in Spanish) where they could get a replacement up until and including the date of the election, if needed.

**Voter Validation:**

Leading up to the general election, PRSEC purchased new electronic poll books to provide [instant voter validation on Election Day](#).

**Dry Law:** During voting hours, a dry-law is in place which prohibits serving alcohol in public establishments outside of selected tourist locations.

**Measures Against Duplicate Voting:** Voters in Puerto Rico are required to coat their finger with ink that is visible under fluorescent light to protect against the possibility of duplicate



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voting. The invisible ink cannot be washed off for at least 24 hours, creating a strong security measure.

**Voting Equipment:** PRSEC utilized voting equipment, including voting machines and tabulators, from [Dominion Voting Systems Corporation](#), one of the top three providers of electronic voting hardware and software in the U.S. As of September 2019, Dominion voting machines, like those used in Puerto Rico, were also used in 2,000 jurisdictions in 33 states.

**Transparent Participation:** All poll workers were required to register and undergo a thorough training in elections law and procedure to guarantee a safe and effective process that protected the rights of all voters and the integrity of the election. All duly registered parties were allowed to have election officials overseeing the electoral process.

#### **VALIDATION & CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

**Vote Tabulation:** Once voting ended, printouts of the tabulated results were initialed by the poll worker officials representing the registered parties participating in the election. Elections officials reconciled the machine vote count with the number of physical ballots cast as an additional verification process. The tabulated results were transmitted electronically to the PRSEC headquarters and then tallied as part of the election night canvass of the vote. All paper ballots were then packed in sealed boxes and taken via secure transportation to the PRSEC for the Post-Election Canvass of the Vote.

**Election Night Canvass of the Vote:** PRSEC issued immediate results as they came in during the day of the election. These election night results are available here: [http://elecciones2020.ceepur.org/Noche\\_del\\_Evento\\_92/index.html#en/default/PLEBISCITO\\_Resumen.xml](http://elecciones2020.ceepur.org/Noche_del_Evento_92/index.html#en/default/PLEBISCITO_Resumen.xml)

**Post-Election General Canvass of the Vote:** After the preliminary election night results were tabulated, the PRSEC began the general canvass, which includes a comprehensive audit of the election results and processes. The process entails full transparency, with each duly registered party having representation, and ensuring the full privacy of voters. At the end of the general canvass the PRSEC must publish a certified statement of the results of the election. The general canvass results are available here: [http://elecciones2020.ceepur.org/Escrutinio\\_General\\_93/index.html#en/default/PLEBISCITO\\_Resumen.xml](http://elecciones2020.ceepur.org/Escrutinio_General_93/index.html#en/default/PLEBISCITO_Resumen.xml)

**Official Communication to Congress and the President:** Once the PRSEC certifies the results, the Governor of Puerto Rico must officially communicate the certified results of the plebiscite to the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States.