

EXHIBIT C

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Monday, December 6, 2004 · Last updated 5:46 p.m. PT

Washington orders third count in governor raceBy DAVID AMMONS
AP POLITICAL WRITER

OLYMPIA, Wash. -- Washington state on Monday ordered a third vote tally - this time an expensive and time-consuming hand count - to solve a political mystery: Who will be the state's next governor?

The state Supreme Court apparently will jump into the fray later this week, potentially expanding the number of ballots to be counted.

The first count ended with Republican Dino Rossi 261 votes ahead of Democrat Christine Gregoire out of 2.9 million ballots cast five weeks ago. An automatic machine recount certified a week ago again put Rossi ahead, this time by 42 votes.

Gregoire, 57, the state's three-term attorney general, is best known for her successful battle with the tobacco industry. Rossi, 45, is a self-made millionaire and a former state Senate budget chairman.

On Monday, Secretary of State Sam Reed ordered an unprecedented statewide hand recount, to begin on Wednesday in most counties.

The Democrats, who are paying for the hand recount, are using a state law that allows it in rare cases when races are this close. The manual recount has never before been ordered in a Washington governor's race.

The bill could exceed \$1 million, including legal fees and a ballot-handling cost of at least 25 cents per vote.

Reed's simple announcement to the 39 counties directs election departments to get started on Wednesday or Thursday. The count will take until Christmas week in some areas, especially in King County, where a third of the state's voters live and where more than 2,600 precincts must be recounted.

"Our assumption is that their job is to simply recount the ballots that were previously counted in the machine recount," Reed said in an interview. "However, in our rules we point out that the canvassing boards have the prerogative to take up and re-examine any problem ballots that have come to their attention ... and we are giving them the word that the Washington state Supreme Court will take up the Democrats' case on (Wednesday or) Thursday.

"But at this point, we are not authorizing them to go back and start all over again."

Besides demanding a new recount, Democrats are asking the high court to order election departments to reconsider several thousand previously rejected ballots and potential trouble spots. These include questioned "provisional" and absentee ballots, including hundreds where the voter's signature was missing or didn't match the one on the voter registration card.

The party also said potential problems have been identified in Skagit, Grant, Franklin, Snohomish, Kittitas, Pierce, Adams, Benton, King and Pend Oreille counties. Some counties discovered uncounted ballots and not all counties are counting ballots precisely the same, the party said.

Democrats also object to the practice in many counties of including an identified Democrat and a Republican on each three-member counting panel.

"Government mistakes have kept some ballots from being counted, several thousand is what we've heard, and when the race is too close to call, every vote counts," said Gregoire spokesman Morton Brilliant.

"It looks like we're on track to finally know who won the governor's race in the next few weeks," he said.

Added Gregoire, "I love Dino's line 'If you count and count and you count again, what do you get?' You get yourself a governor, Dino, because it's over at that point."

Rossi's actual answer to his rhetorical question is that Gregoire would have an illegitimate governorship if she wins this way.

"They will do whatever is necessary," he said in an interview.

Republicans are more upset with the Supreme Court case than with the notion of yet another vote count, said Mary Lane, a Rossi spokeswoman.

"Our problem is not a by-the-rules statewide recount," she said in an interview. "That's fine. That's the law. What we strenuously object to is this lawsuit Christine Gregoire has put forward and her attempt to change the rules midway through a recount.

"Christine Gregoire isn't interested in a fair recount. She wants this to be as inaccurate and as corruptible as possible. She didn't get the results she wanted, so now she wants to change the rules. Anyone who is concerned about the integrity of our election system should be very worried."

State GOP Chairman Chris Vance agreed: "Democrats keep trying to change the rules so they can overturn the will of Washington voters."

But state Democratic Chairman Paul Berendt said Democrats' only interest is in counting every legitimate vote.

"It may take a little while longer, but it's worth three more weeks to count all the votes and provide four years of legitimacy for the next governor," he said.

Republicans: <http://www.wsrp.org/>

Democrats: <http://www.wa-democrats.org>

Returns: <http://www.vote.wa.gov>