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Certification of the Special Election for US Senate

The SBE has received a large volume of calls regarding the timing of certifying the results of the Special Election for the remainder of the term for the US Senate position previously held by President Obama.

The special election to fill the remainder of that US Senate term was conducted pursuant to a federal court order. That order included an expedited certification date of November 24, 2010 (so as to be sooner than the normal time of 31 days after Election Day provided by the Illinois Election Code, which would have been December 3, 2010).

In setting that certification date, the court carefully weighed the various issues and determined to set the certification in such a way as to allow all of the military absentee ballots properly arriving during the two weeks after Election Day to be processed and counted in accordance with established Illinois election Law. The court's deadline was the earliest date that the court estimated that complete results that did not disenfranchise the military voters could be reliably expected to be ready for certification.

In a separate federal court matter, another order was entered extending the time for receiving and processing military absentee ballots in several counties, with November 19, 2010 being the latest of those extensions ordered by that court.

The SBE is scheduled to meet and certify the results on the morning of November 23, 2010, a day ahead of the first court's deadline.

As to why a couple of other states having special elections for US Senate seats were able to generate certified results sooner than Illinois, the difference lies in the fact that those states do not have the two week absentee processing provisions in their election laws.