

By Juan Moreno Haines

The men on San Quentin's Death Row overwhelmingly favor Hillary Clinton for President over Donald Trump. In a mock election, the former Secretary of State won 64 percent of the vote, compared to Trump's 15 percent, and the remainder divided among Libertarian and Green candidates.

San Quentin has 747 men on Death Row. Nevertheless, the survey of more than 100 condemned men is believed to be the most comprehensive of its kind ever done.

In other results, 57 percent of condemned men voted to end capital punishment. What's remarkable is that the condemned population is substantially less enthusiastic about ending capital punishment than the mainline inmate population. In the mock vote 88 percent of mainline inmate population favored ending capital punishment.

UC Berkley student Adrianna Dinolfo, fellow undergrad Libby Rainey and Journalism Berkeley Professor William J. Drummond helped supervise the ballot stations for the mainline inmates on the prison's Lower Yard on August 13 and 22.

"The men have important things to say," Dinolfo said. "Even though it doesn't officially count, I think that these men should be able to express their opinion on the issues, just as much as someone who can vote." Drummond added that participation in civic affairs is a big step toward accepting the responsibility of citizenship. "The prisoners have to start some place, and voting is an excellent place to begin, even if the results don't count."

Arnulfo T. Garcia, executive editor of *San Quentin News*, added, "When the idea first came up about creating a mock election for the men at San Quentin, it struck me how I never myself had the opportunity to vote; that is until I was on the run in Mexico, when I went to the polls and voted for the president of Mexico (Vicente Fox). That gave me a sense of freedom and power that I know the men felt, walking up to the booth to cast their ballots."

The ballot selections for president included Hillary Clinton, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, and Donald Trump. Bernie Sanders received the most write-in votes of any candidate with nine votes.

On Death Row and the mainline, Kamala Harris held a big lead over fellow Democrat Loretta Sanchez for the US Senate seat for California.

Four propositions were on the ballot. Proposition 57 Gov. Jerry Brown's prison reform measure, Proposition 62 to end the death penalty, Proposition 64 to legalize marijuana, and Proposition 66 to speed up the execution process.

Sixty-seven percent of condemned inmates voted "no" on Proposition 66, not wanting to speed up the execution process, while 83 percent general population inmates opposed speedier executions.

"I was surprised by the turnout," said *San Quentin News* staffer, Rahsaan Thomas. "A lot of people were engaged. Some people said this was the first time they voted in their lives. It was more than a mock election to them." Thomas added, "One guy told others that this was a chance to be a part of the solution and he brought people to vote by shaming them."

On the election days, *San Quentin News* staffer Emile DeWeaver walked around the Lower Yard, showing inmates where to vote.

DeWeaver acknowledged that many of the people who came to the ballot station were uninformed and voted the way their friends did; nonetheless, he said, many were curious and used the opportunity to be heard.

Dinolfo added, "I think it was both very enlightening and sad because we talked to some people who never voted before. Then, there were the people who were excited about it and wanted to know more about the ballot initiatives. Several of them wanted to talk to us about everything on the ballot and wanted to know our opinion about them."

Dinolfo along with inmates Phil Phillips, and Davonte Pariani were the official ballot counters.

"Some people marked the wrong place, so those ballots were not counted," Pariani said. "The vote was counted only if the "yes" or "no" box was marked, or it clearly indicated which candidate the inmate wanted. There were a couple of ballots completely blank."

Pariani said there were several write-in votes for single candidates.

Michelle Obama had two write-in votes.