



Error When Loading an Election

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Affected Release(s):	ClearVote 2.5
Related Products:	ClearCast

Issue Summary

On September 23, 2026, a county in Ohio reported an issue encountered while performing Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing for the November 2026 general election. On some ClearCast precinct tabulators, after loading the election and opening the polls, county technicians encountered a “No election on drive” error after tapping “Start Voting” instead of the usual “Insert Ballot” screen.

On October 1, a second Ohio county also reported encountering this issue during L&A.

Cause

Clear Ballot traced the issue to a race condition that occurs while loading the election. In some cases, as the election is loaded onto the ClearCast tabulator, the election data is not fully written to the removable USB flash drives. The result is that the election_state.txt file that is stored on the USB flash drives contains incomplete information.

The ClearCast tabulator validates the election data at various points during the life cycle of the election. In the typical workflow, the first time that this validation occurs after loading an election is after the “Start Voting” step. That is why the error is encountered at this stage, when the validation detects the incomplete election state file. Because the data on the USB flash drive does not match the expected format of a successfully loaded election, the user interface shows this as a “No election on drive” error.

Due to the nature of race conditions, the behavior is a result of multiple factors, and the “No election on drive” error typically does not occur during the election process. The error was not observed during either internal Clear Ballot testing or VSTL certification testing of the release. Both counties that reported the issue are in the top five counties in Ohio by registered voter. It is likely that the size and complexity of their elections is a contributing factor to the behavior that was observed at these counties. Additionally, these counties recently upgraded to ClearVote 2.5, although smaller counties that have upgraded to ClearVote 2.5 have not experienced this issue. Clear Ballot does not have any reason to believe that the error will occur for the counties that remain on ClearVote 2.3.

Clear Ballot intends to submit a fix for this issue in ClearVote 2.5 under the provisions of VVSG Lifecycle Policy section 3.3.2.



Recommendation

Because this is a race condition and not a hardware or ballot programming error, the workaround is to repeat the load election procedure until it completes successfully.

In addition to “Start Voting,” the validation process also occurs when a user logs in to the ClearCast application. Therefore, an administrator can log out and log back in after loading an election to confirm that the election was loaded successfully. If the error occurs, then the administrator can clear the election and load it again.

Additional Assistance

If you have questions about this Product Advisory Notice or require additional assistance, please reach out to your Clear Ballot Professional Services Manager for assistance.