

## Weber County conducting 'pilot', elects for one polling location

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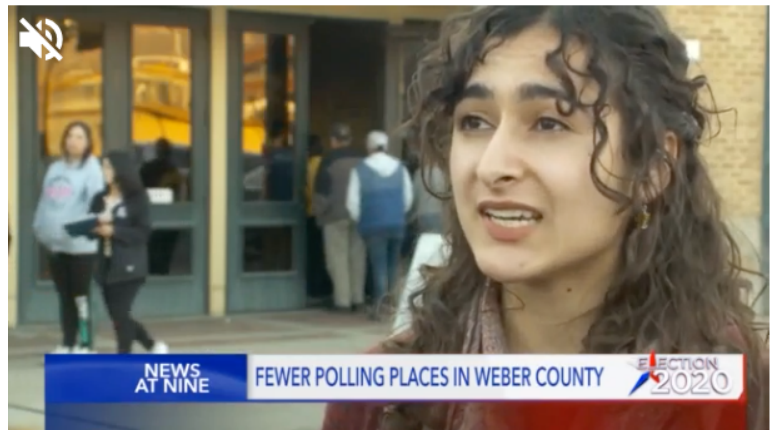
FOX13

By Brian Schnee

<https://www.fox13now.com/news/local-news/weber-county-conducting-pilot-elects-for-one-polling-location>

WEBER COUNTY, Utah — After a 2.5 percent in-person voter turnout last November, the Weber County Elections Office opted to try something new for Super Tuesday.

"Our elections team got together, they're very innovative, we thought about what are some ideas or the drawbacks, potential risks, what are the benefits, and we thought, this is worth giving it a try," said Weber County Clerk/Auditor Ricky Hatch. "Election officials, we're the referees — we don't want to influence anything one way or another, we just to make it convenient to vote."



In 2012 there were over 60 polling locations in the county. Last November, the five Weber County Libraries and Weber County Fairgrounds were all used as polling stations. Union Station in downtown Ogden was used as the only polling location for Tuesday's presidential primary.

"It gives us the ability to pump those resources in it to make it efficient and easy," said Weber County Elections Director Ryan Cowley. "It'll have a big impact if this is successful and it works out well. It will definitely change how we do things going forward."

American Civil Liberties Union volunteers were out tracking the amount of people who showed up to any of the local libraries anticipating a polling location.

"We had tallied at least 200 people who have showed up at libraries looking to vote in person," said Nikila Venugopal, ACLU Utah Voting Rights Coordinator. "I can say personally that I've chatted with folks in Huntsville, from Eden, folks who showed up at their local library in Ogden Valley and thought that they were going to be able to vote and then were told they had to drive down to Union Station and told me they weren't going to be able to vote."

Venugopal told Fox13 that the ACLU plans to present its data to the Weber County Elections Office to try and work together to give Weber County residents more options with polling locations.

As of Tuesday night at 9 p.m., unofficially 3,174 in-person votes were cast at Union Station. County Elections Officials believe less than ten percent of votes come from in-person polling locations thus giving the single polling place a try.

"It's a pilot, we're going to see how it works out," said Ricky Hatch. "We'll reevaluate it, we'll look at the numbers."

Hatch plans to wait for the two week 'canvass' to finish and then immediately look at the success of the single-poll location pilot. He plans to speak with volunteers, hear from residents and his staff to decide how polling stations within Weber County will work in future elections.