



Ballot design may have led to ballot confusion



By: [Kathryn Bursch](#)

Sarasota, Florida – It's been a busy week in Sarasota; yellow-tagged observers watching green-tagged re-counters. And with the outcome of the 13th Congressional race at stake, at times tempers have flared.

But all the re-counting will never answer the question of why the massive undervote. The election results show that some 18-thousand voters either skipped or failed to vote in the hot race.

The Christine Jennings' camp and some voting watchdog groups suspect some kind of machine error.

Kendall Coffey, Jennings' attorney:

"From everything I'm hearing we are still in a state of confusion and still in a state of denial, what is apparent to almost everybody, that there was machine and system malfunction on November 7th."

But a computer scientist from MIT who studies voting issues blames the undervote on ballot design. Ted Selker says the ballot's layout and colors probably confused voters.

Ted Selker, MIT:

"Oh, it's very clear the ballot is bad and we're doing experiments right now to see how bad."

And it appears Elections Supervisor Kathy Dent knew before election day that there might be trouble. Trends in early voting prompted her to issue a memo marked "critical" to precinct clerks.

The memo urges poll workers to remind people to vote in the 13th Congressional race "...because of the length of the gubernatorial race, some voters are overlooking the Buchanan/Jennings race..."

Kathryn Bursch, Tampa Bay's 10 News



Vern Buchanan and Christine Jennings