

**4 October 2023**

Written Reply to Parliamentary Question on Whether ELD Notified Overseas Voters in the 2023 Presidential Election That Their Votes Were Received and Accepted for Counting

**Question:**

**Ms Hazel Poa:** To ask the Prime Minister (a) whether the Elections Department (ELD) notified overseas voters in the 2023 Presidential Election that their votes were received by the Returning Officer and accepted for counting; (b) if not, why not; (c) whether those whose votes were not accepted for counting will be considered as non-voters and struck off the electoral roll; and (d) whether ELD will consider alternative methods of returning postal ballots in future, given that only 60% of ballots received in this election were accepted for counting.

**Written Reply by Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister of Education, for the Prime Minister:**

1 The Elections Department (ELD) will notify overseas postal voters via email that their return envelopes have been received by the Returning Officer. Voters may also check the status of their return envelope via ELD's Voter Services. ELD does not currently inform voters if their postal ballot papers have been accepted for counting and will study if this can be implemented in future elections.

2 An overseas voter who has successfully registered as a postal voter and has downloaded his or her postal ballot paper will not be considered as a non-voter. This remains the case even if the Returning Officer (RO) does not subsequently receive the return envelope.

3 ELD's preliminary analysis showed that the majority of postal ballot papers which reached the RO in time but could not be accepted for counting for Presidential Election 2023 was because the return envelopes had postmarks which were late (i.e. later than 31 August 2023), or had faint, illegible or missing postmarks. While ELD will review whether other improvements to the postal voting process could be made, it remained important for overseas postal voters to mail their return envelopes early, and to affix stamps if they are residing in certain regions/countries, so that that the return envelopes have the best chance of reaching Singapore by the deadline to be accepted for counting.