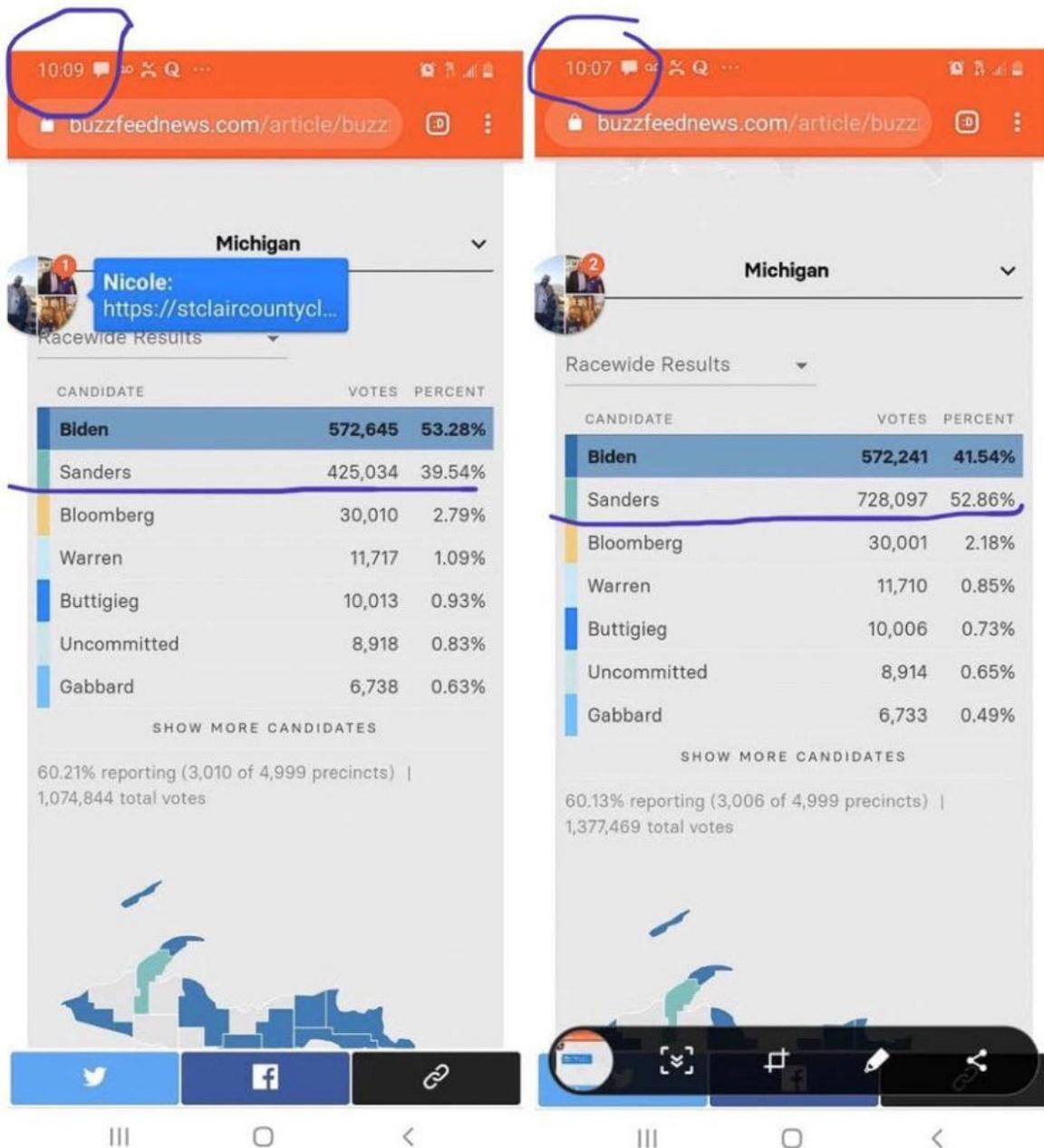# Example of election misinformation

The following image began circulating on social media sites in the days following Michigan's March 10, 2020 presidential primary. It shows more than 300,000 votes for candidate Bernie Sanders supposedly disappearing over a two-minute period and flipping the election results – a complete falsehood.

The image generated many comments such as the following:

> As with "innocent until proven guilty", the burden of proof is on the state to show our elections are free and fair beyond a reasonable doubt.
>
> This right here is what you call a VERY reasonable doubt. We need to stop accepting staged elections. Now. #RiggedPrimary

It also prompted emails to the Secretary of State including:

> *Dear Secretary of State Benson, On the night of the Democratic primary election, March 10, 2020, two screenshots were taken two minutes apart of the results that appear to have been broadcast by the St.Claire County Clerk's office…*

> *…Every vote difference came from Bernie including the 302,625 total fewer votes shown two minutes later. This pattern of re-distributing some of the taken votes suggests that the result was not random, but deliberate. The screenshots have been shared on social media. I hope that this information is seen as important to your office as the very foundation of our democracy rests on a fair and accurate representation of the will of the people, and we rely on the integrity of our elected officials to do the right thing to preserve that foundation….*

To counteract the misinformation, the department reported the misinformation to Twitter and Buzzfeed and issued a bulletin:

> *There are inaccurate, and possibly manipulated, images of Michigan election results supposedly reported by Buzzfeed circulating on social media.*

> *The state of Michigan does not report its results, official or unofficial, on Buzzfeed. Michigan's Bureau of Elections has its own results reporting site, which posts county totals as they come in. Even if not altered and the result of a data entry error, the Buzzfeed numbers that are being presented as actual election results are not consistent with what was reported to the state and should not be given any credence.*

> *The insinuation that votes have been erased in the attempt to change election results in Michigan's primary is patently false. Anyone interested can check Michigan's unofficial election results https://mielections.us/election/results/2020PPR_CENR.html and compare them to the results reported by counties https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1633_8722-103241--,00.html.*

> *In Michigan, it is not possible for 300,000 votes to "disappear." Every voter in Michigan votes a paper ballot and the number of ballots cast are balanced against totals in the pollbooks. Unofficial results are confirmed by bipartisan teams of county canvassers across the state and a bipartisan board of state canvassers.*

> *Rather than presenting the truth about how Michigan voted in the presidential primary, whomever is promoting these false images on social media is in fact contributing to an effort to undermine confidence in our elections system.*