

Section B

U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION



2008 Election Administration & Voting Survey

Statutory Overview

In order to better understand state laws governing federal elections, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, as part of its biennial Election Administration and Voting Survey, is collecting information on state election laws and procedures. These answers will help us to better understand the quantitative data relating to the 2008 general election that we are collecting from all U.S. states and territories.

We understand that responding to this Statutory Overview may require significant staff time on the part of your office. Please be assured that we have attempted to minimize the burden, and we appreciate your cooperation in this very important project.

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DIRECTIONS AND EXAMPLE

Please provide your state's legal citation for the responses to these questions (where applicable).

Please answer each question to the best of your ability. If terms are ambiguous or not relevant, please explain why. If a question is not applicable to your state, please explain why. If a definition or term lacks legal standing but is widely understood in practice, please explain. If election procedures vary at the local level within your state, please explain to the best of your ability.

If state laws are currently enjoined or otherwise blocked from enforcement by a state or federal court, please specify.

Please put your responses between the red, bracketed text lines. This will help us extract your answers into our central database.

Example:

A1. How does your state define the following terms related to votes and ballots? Please provide your state's legal citation defining these terms, where applicable.

- a. Over-vote

[Begin definition (a) below this line.]

Your answer goes here. You may enter the text directly, or cut and paste from another word processing program.

There is no limit to the length of your response.

[End definition (a) above this line.]

SECTION A: GENERAL

A1. How does your state define the following terms related to votes and ballots? Please provide your state's legal citation defining these terms, where applicable.

a. Over-vote

[Begin definition (a) below this line.]

Occurs when a contest is marked with a greater number of choices for different candidates or ballot questions, than the number for which the voter is lawfully entitled to vote.

[End definition (a) above this line.]

b. Under-vote

[Begin definition (b) below this line.]

Occurs when a contest is marked with a lesser number of choices of candidates or ballot questions, than the number for which the voter is lawfully entitled to vote.

[End definition (b) above this line.]

c. Blank ballot

[Begin definition (c) below this line.]

See "UNDERVOTE"

[End definition (c) above this line.]

d. Void/Spoiled ballot

[Begin definition (d) below this line.]

In an Election Day context, occurs when a ballot is voided or spoiled by the voter in order to correct a problem, (in an OpScan system, to correct an overvote, for example).

In a cast ballot context, a ballot may be voided due to the appearance on the ballot of an ambiguous or extraneous mark, or the casting of votes for multiple candidates running for the same office.

[End definition (d) above this line.]

e. Provisional/Challenged ballot

[Begin definition (e) below this line.]

Called an affidavit ballot in NY, it is cast when a voter's name does not appear in an election day poll book; when a voter has just moved into the election district (precinct) but has not previously advised the county board of that move; when a voter is required to provide ID but does not do so; in a primary election, when a voter's party enrollment does not match the enrollment noted in the poll book.

See 8-302.3(e)(ii)

[End definition (e) above this line.]

f. Absentee

[Begin definition (f) below this line.]

Opportunity for a voter to cast a ballot because they cannot be at their poll site due to their being out of their home county on election day, or is permanently ill and thus unable to appear at the poll site; is a patient or inmate at a VA facility; in jail or prison awaiting trial; or is an accompanying spouse, parent or child.

See 8-400

[End definition (f) above this line.]

g. Early voting

[Begin definition (g) below this line.]

Not permitted in NY

[End definition (g) above this line.]

h. Active Voter

[Begin definition (h) below this line.]

A registered voter who is neither inactive nor cancelled

[End definition (h) above this line.]

i. Inactive Voter

[Begin definition (i) below this line.]

A voter who has failed to respond to a confirmation notice, and has neither been restored to active status nor been cancelled

[End definition (i) above this line.]

j. Other terms (please specify) _____

[Identify each TERM and definition separately and begin below this line.]

[End TERM(s) and definition(s) above this line.]

A2. Please provide the legal citation for any **significant** changes to election laws or procedures that have been enacted or adopted since the previous Federal election. By “significant,” we do not mean routine or technical changes (such as changes to election

district boundaries or polling place changes). However, we would like to learn about any new identification requirements for voters or registrants; changes in eligibility for voting or registering; adoption of alternative voting methods; and other changes that you believe represent a significant change in the way your state runs its elections.

[Begin response to above question (A2) below this line.]

No significant changes to report

[End response to above question (A2) above this line.]

SECTION B: VOTER REGISTRATION

B1. Is your state's voter registration database system best described as a bottom-up, a top-down, or a hybrid? (Note: A bottom-up system generally uploads information retained at the local level and compiled at regular intervals to form the statewide voter registration list. A top-down system is hosted on a single, central platform/mainframe and is generally maintained by the state with information supplied by local jurisdictions. A hybrid is some combination of both systems described above.)

[Begin response to above question (B1) below this line.]

Bottom-up

[End response to above question (B1) above this line.]

If your state has a bottom-up or hybrid system, how often do local jurisdictions transmit registration information to the state list?

[Begin response to above clarification question to B1 below this line.]

Near-real time

[End response to above clarification question to B1 above this line.]

B2. Please describe the process used in your state to move voters from the active list to the inactive list, and from the inactive list to the active list. Is a different process used for UOCAVA voters?

[Begin response to above question (B2) below this line.]

Adding, changing, cancelling or removing voter registration records is conducted only by local boards of elections to voter records within their respective jurisdictions. This includes Active and Inactive status updates. Whenever a local board of elections receives a notice through the US Postal Service or through its NCOA system indicating a potential voter move to a residence address outside of such local board jurisdiction, or may have moved without leaving a forwarding address, the board of elections shall send such voter a Confirmation Notice pursuant to Sections 5-213 and 5-712 of the NYS Election Law and places the record in Inactive status. The board of elections shall restore the registration record to Active status if the voter notifies such board that he or she still resides at the address from which he or she is registered, or the board finds that such voter has validly signed a designating or nominating petition, which states that they reside at the same address, or if the voter casts a ballot in an affidavit envelope which states that they reside at such address.

The statewide voter registration list (NYSVoter) also identifies possible duplicate voter registrations upon a match of an applicant's first three letters of the first name and the first five letters of the last name, date of birth, and if available, other identification information. If such information indicates that a voter may have moved, the county board with the earlier dated registration record shall update the respective voter record status as Inactive and send a Confirmation Notice.

Upon restoring a voter's registration record to active status, the board of elections sends to voter, by first class forwardable mail, a notice advising the voter of the restoration. This process is also used for UOCAVA voters.

[End response to above question (B2) above this line.]

B3. Please describe your state's process for removing voters from the voter registration rolls (not merely moving them from active to inactive). Please include information regarding notices and confirmations. Are these procedures the same for UOCAVA voters?

[Begin response to above question (B3) below this line.]

Whenever a county board has reason to believe that a registered voter may no longer be qualified to vote, it shall, before cancelling his or her registration, notify such voter by first class forwardable mail to the address from which he or she was last registered, providing the voter with a fourteen day time period to state in writing or in person, the reasons why their registration record should not be cancelled. If after such time, the board is not satisfied that the voter is qualified to remain registered, the board shall cancel the registration.

This process is also used for UOCAVA voters.

[End response to above question (B3) above this line.]

B4. Can your state's voter registration database (or equivalent) share information electronically with your state's driver's license agency (for example, to match records or trace changes in address)? Can your voter registration database be similarly linked with databases in any other state or federal agencies? Please describe these links, including any use of database matching to verify voter registration applications.

[Begin response to above question (B4) below this line.]

The system is linked with DMV, to verify driver's license ID number and the last 4 digits of an applicant's SSA number.

[End response to above question (B4) above this line.]

B5. Please describe how your state uses National Change of Address (NCOA). What has been your state's experience with using NCOA?

[Begin response to above question (B5) below this line.]

Files are sent annually to a certified NCOA vendor, and processed records are returned to the SBOE. Records are then transmitted to county election officials who determine if NCOA info provided is sufficient to modify a voter record. Counties send out transfer and/or confirmation mailings, as appropriate.

[End response to above question (B5) above this line.]

B6. Please describe your state's voting eligibility requirements as they relate to individuals with a felony conviction. (For example, are convicted felons allowed to vote while in prison or while on parole or probation? Are voting rights automatically restored or does the individual have to apply for a pardon, certificate of eligibility or other similar certificate? Does an individual whose voting rights have been restored have to produce documentation of his/her status when registering to vote?)

[Begin response to above question (B6) below this line.]

A voter's registration is cancelled when convicted of a felony and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. A voter may reapply for registration, as same is not automatically restored. A voter on parole may not reapply, however a voter on probation may reapply for registration.

[End response to above question (B6) above this line.]

B7. Does your state currently use the Internet in any way to facilitate voter registration? If yes, please describe how your state allows voters to use the Internet in the registration process (e.g., entire registration completed online; completed online but then must be printed, signed, and mailed by voter, etc.).

[Begin response to above question (B7) below this line.]

Registration forms may be completed online, but they must be printed out, signed, and mailed to the voter's board of elections. Electronic transmission is not permitted in NY.

[End response to above question (B7) above this line.]

SECTION C: ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

C1. Please describe how all votes cast at a place other than the voter's precinct of registration are tabulated (for example, please include descriptions of such votes as absentee ballots, mail-in ballots, votes cast at vote centers, provisional ballots, early voting locations, etc.).

a. Are the votes counted centrally or at the precincts?

[Begin response to above question (a) below this line.]

Some counties count absentee, emergency and other paper ballots at their poll sites, while others count these ballots centrally.

[End response to above question (a) above this line.]

b. If centrally tabulated, are the votes redirected to the appropriate precinct for reporting in the canvass?

[Begin response to above question (b) below this line.]

YES - they are added to that specific precinct's canvass, as part of the recanvass process, which begins 7 days after election day.

[End response to above question (b) above this line.]

c. Are the absentee, mail, etc., votes reported separately for each precinct, or are they added to the in-precinct results and reported as just a single number?

[Begin response to above question (c) below this line.]

They appear separately on the county board's original canvass sheet, but for reporting and publication by the State Board, they are aggregated

[End response to above question (c) above this line.]

d. How are UOCAVA ballots counted and reported?

[Begin response to above question (d) below this line.]

In the same manner as noted above.

[End response to above question (d) above this line.]

C2. Does your state require a reason for voting absentee, or does your state allow no-excuse absentee voting? (If a reason is required, please provide the legal citation.)

[Begin response to above question (C2) below this line.]

YES – see ABSENTEE, in Section A, above

[End response to above question (C2) above this line.]

C3. Does your state provide for in-person early voting? If so, how is early voting defined? When early voting is used, are the ballots counted at the precinct or at a central location? How are these votes reported?

[Begin response to above question (C3) below this line.]

NO – early voting is not permitted in New York

[End response to above question (C3) above this line.]

C4. Do any jurisdictions in your state use a vote-by-mail system to replace (and not merely supplement) at-the-precinct voting in any elections?

[Begin response to above question (C4) below this line.]

NO

[End response to above question (C4) above this line.]

C5. Please list each of the situations that require a provisional ballot in your state. Please provide the relevant legal citation for each situation.

[Begin response to above question (C5) below this line.]

Called an affidavit ballot in NY, it is cast when a voter's name does not appear in an election day poll book; when a voter has just moved into the election district (precinct) but has not previously advised the county board of that move; when a voter is required to provide ID but does not do so; in a primary election, when a voter's party enrollment does not match the enrollment noted in the poll book.

[End response to above question (C5) above this line.]

C6. Does your state count provisional ballots of voters who are registered in different precincts, or are those ballots automatically rejected? Please describe the process used by local election officials in determining whether to count a provisional ballot.

[Begin response to above question (C6) below this line.]

If research at the county board supports the claim the voter makes in their oath on the ballot envelope, the ballot will be counted. If research proves otherwise, the ballot is not counted. Provisional ballots cast by voters who were in the correct poll site but at the wrong voter sign-in table, will be counted, however only those contests and questions which the two different districts had in common will be counted.

See Election Law, Sections 5-403, 9-209

[End response to above question (C6) above this line.]

C7. Please describe your state's laws regarding post-election audits, if any.

[Begin response to above question (C7) below this line.]

New York requires a complete recanvass of machine and paper ballots cast at each election – one of the few states to do so. In addition to this complete recanvass process, New York has provided for a post-election audit which requires that 3% of the voter-verifiable audit records of voting machines or systems within the jurisdiction of the board, be manually counted.

See Election Law 9-211

[End response to above question (C7) above this line.]

C8. Please describe any state requirements for poll worker training.

[Begin response to above question (C8) below this line.]

The State provides to county boards and poll workers, a statewide curriculum, and web-based training programs. Poll workers serve one-year terms, must be trained annually, and must pass an exam prior to their certification as a poll worker.

See Election Law 3-412

[End response to above question (C8) above this line.]

SECTION D: ELECTION DAY ACTIVITIES

D1. Please describe your state's process for capturing "over-vote" and "under-vote" counts.

[Begin response to above question (D1) below this line.]

County boards of elections canvass and report votes to the State Board. At present, they are aggregated when reported to the State, however as we migrate to new voting systems, we are changing the reporting format such that blanks, voids, and other votes can be reported separately.

[End response to above question (D1) above this line.]

D2. What identification does your state require from voters in the following situations:

a. registering to vote;

[Begin response to above question (a) below this line.]

Driver's license or non-driver ID number, or last 4 of SSN, however if an applicant has neither, several forms of ID can be provided/presented: valid photo ID, current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document that shows the name and address of the voter.

[End response to above question (a) above this line.]

b. casting an in-person ballot;

[Begin response to above question (b) below this line.]

Signature comparison in poll book, however if such record is flagged as "ID REQUIRED" the above list applies

[End response to above question (b) above this line.]

c. casting a mail-in or absentee vote;

[Begin response to above question (c) below this line.]

NONE

[End response to above question (c) above this line.]

d. casting a ballot under UOCAVA;

[Begin response to above question (d) below this line.]

NONE

[End response to above question (d) above this line.]

e. any other stage in registration or voting process in which identification is required (please specify).

[Begin response to above question (e) below this line.]

NO

[End response to above question (e) above this line.]

D3. Please describe your state's laws regarding access to the polling place for election observers. Election observers are people allowed inside the polling place who are not poll workers, election officials or voters. If decisions on access to observers are left to local jurisdictions, please explain.

[Begin response to above question (D3) below this line.]

Poll watchers are permitted in a poll site, provided they are qualified voters in the county in which they are serving and have a signed certificate from a party official or candidate who appears on the ballot.

ELECTION LAW 8-500

[End response to above question (D3) above this line.]

SECTION E: OTHER

E1. Under HAVA, Section 402, states are required to have in place administrative complaint procedures to remedy grievances. Has your state revised its administrative complaint procedures since they were first implemented? If so, how?

[Begin response to above question (E1) below this line.]

Specific processes are currently being developed for the conduct of hearings and determinations.

[End response to above question (E1) above this line.]

E2. Please add any additional comments or information about your state's election administration processes that would help to inform the EAC's interpretation of your data.

[Begin response to above question (E2) below this line.]

[End response to above question (E2) above this line.]

* The information collection associated with the Election Administration and Voting Survey is required for the EAC to meet its statutory requirements under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15301), the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-1 et seq.), and the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voters Act (UOCAVA) (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1). Respondent's obligation to reply to this information collection is mandatory as required under NVRA (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-1 et seq.) and UOCAVA (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1). This part of the information collection is being requested to help the EAC to better understand state laws governing federal elections. Respondents include the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories. This information will be made publicly available on the EAC website (www.eac.gov). According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is OMB Control No. 3265-0006 (expires 3/31/09). The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 59 hours per state response. This estimate includes the time for reviewing the instructions, gathering information, and completing the form. Comments regarding this burden estimate should be sent the U.S. Election Assistance Commission – 2008 Election Administration and Voting Survey, 1225 New York Avenue, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005.