

Voter Registration Fraud

According to press reports, the following types of allegations of voter registration fraud are most common:

- Registering in the name of dead people;
- Fake names and other information on voter registration forms;
- Illegitimate addresses used on voter registration forms;
- Voters being tricked into registering for a particular party under false pretenses; and
- Destruction of voter registration forms depending on the party the voter registered with.

There was only one self evident instance of a noncitizen registering to vote. Many of the instances reported included official investigations and charges filed, but few actual convictions, at least from the news reporting. There have been multiple reports of registration fraud in California, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Voter Intimidation and Suppression

This is the area which had the most articles, in part because there were so many allegations of intimidation and suppression during the 2004 election. Most of these remained allegations and no criminal investigation or prosecution ensued. Some of the cases did end up in civil litigation.

This is not to say that these alleged activities were confined to 2004 – there were several allegations made during every year studied. Most notable were the high number of allegations of voter intimidation and harassment reported during the 2003 Philadelphia mayoral race.

A very high number of the articles were about the issue of challenges to voters' registration status and challengers at the polling places. There were many allegations that planned challenge activities were targeted at minority communities. Some of the challenges were concentrated in immigrant communities.

However, the tactics alleged varied greatly. The types of activities discussed also include the following:

- Photographing or videotaping voters coming out of polling places;
- Improper demands for identification;

- Poll watchers harassing voters;
- Poll workers being hostile to or aggressively challenging voters;
- Disproportionate police presence;
- Poll watchers wearing clothes with messages that seemed intended to intimidate; and
- Insufficient voting machines and unmanageably long lines.

Although the incidents reported on occurred everywhere, not surprisingly, many came from “battleground” states. There were several such reports out of Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

“Dead Voters and Multiple Voting”

There were a high number of articles about people voting in the names of the dead and voting more than once. Many of these articles were marked by allegations of big numbers of people committing these frauds, and relatively few of these allegations turning out to be accurate according to investigations by the newspapers themselves, elections officials, and criminal investigators. Often the problem turned out to be a result of administrative error, poll workers mis-marking voter lists, a flawed registration list and/or errors made in the attempt to match names of voters on the list with the names of the people who voted. In a good number of cases, there were allegations that charges of double voting by political leaders were an effort to scare people away from the voting process.

Nonetheless there were a few cases of people actually being charged and/or convicted for these kinds of activities. Most of the cases involved a person voting both by absentee ballot and in person. A few instances involved people voting both during early voting and on Election Day, which calls into question the proper marking and maintenance of the voting lists. In many instances, the person charged claimed not to have voted twice on purpose. A very small handful of cases involved a voter voting in more than one county and there was one substantiated case involving a person voting in more than one state. Other instances in which such efforts were alleged were disproved by officials.

In the case of voting in the name of a dead person, the problem lay in the voter registration list not being properly maintained, i.e. the person was still on the registration list as eligible to vote, and a person took criminal advantage of that. In total, the San Francisco Chronicle found five such cases in March 2004; the AP cited a newspaper analysis of five such persons in an Indiana primary in May 2004; and a senate committee found two people to have voted in the names of the dead in 2005.

As usual, there were a disproportionate number of such articles coming out of Florida. Notably, there were three articles out of Oregon, which has one hundred percent vote-by-mail.

Vote Buying

There were a surprising number of articles about vote buying cases. A few of these instances involved long-time investigations concentrated in three states (Illinois, Kentucky, and West Virginia). There were more official investigations, indictments and convictions/pleas in this area.

Deceptive Practices

In 2004 there were numerous reports of intentional disinformation about voting eligibility and the voting process meant to confuse voters about their rights and when and where to vote. Misinformation came in the form of flyers, phone calls, letters, and even people going door to door. Many of the efforts were reportedly targeted at minority communities. A disproportionate number of them came from key battleground states, particularly Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. From the news reports found, only one of these instances was officially investigated, the case in Oregon involving the destruction of completed voter registration applications. There were no reports of prosecutions or any other legal proceeding.

Non-citizen Voting

There were surprisingly few articles regarding noncitizen registration and voting – just seven all together, in seven different states across the country. They were also evenly split between allegations of noncitizens registering and noncitizens voting. In one case, charges were filed against ten individuals. In another case, a judge in a civil suit found there was illegal noncitizen voting. Three instances prompted official investigations. Two cases, from this Nexis search, remained just allegations of noncitizen voting.

Felon Voting

Although there were only thirteen cases of felon voting, some of them involved large numbers of voters. Most notably, of course, are the cases that came to light in the Washington gubernatorial election contest (see Washington summary) and in Wisconsin (see Wisconsin summary). In several states, the main problem was the large number of ineligible felons that remained on the voting list.

Election Official Fraud

In most of the cases in which fraud by elections officials is suspected or alleged, it is difficult to determine whether it is incompetence or a crime. There are several cases of ballots gone missing, ballots unaccounted for and ballots ending up in a worker's possession. In two cases workers were said to have changed peoples' votes. The one

instance in which widespread ballot box stuffing by elections workers was alleged was in Washington State. The judge in the civil trial of that election contest did not find that elections workers had committed fraud. Four of the cases are from Texas.

Recommendation

The consultants recommend that subsequent EAC research should include a Nexis search that specifically attempts to follow up on the cases for which no resolution is evident from this particular initial search.

CASE LAW RESEARCH

After reviewing over 40,000 cases from 2000 to the present, the majority of which came from appeals courts, the consultants found comparatively few applicable to this study. Of those that were applicable, the consultants found that no apparent thematic pattern emerges. However, it appears to them that the greatest areas of fraud and intimidation have shifted from past patterns of stealing votes to present problems with voter registration, voter identification, the proper delivery and counting of absentee and overseas ballots, provisional voting, vote buying, and challenges to felon eligibility.

Recommendation

Because so few cases provided a picture of these current problems, consultants suggest that subsequent EAC research include a review of state trial-level decisions.

PROJECT WORKING GROUP

Consultants and EAC worked together to select members for the Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Working Group that included election officials and representatives of advocacy groups and the legal community who have an interest and expertise in the subject matter. (See Attachment A for a list of members.) The working group is scheduled to convene at EAC offices on May 18, 2006 to consider the results of the preliminary research and to offer ideas for future EAC activities concerning this subject.

FINAL REPORT

After convening the project working group, the consultants will draft a final report summarizing the results of their research and the working group deliberations. This report will include recommendations for future EAC research related to this subject matter. The draft report will be reviewed by EAC and, after obtaining any clarifications or corrections deemed necessary, will be made available to the EAC Standards Board and EAC Board of Advisors for review and comment. Following this, a final report will be prepared.

Attachment A

Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Project Working Group

The Honorable Todd Rokita

Indiana Secretary of State

Member, EAC Standards Board and the Executive Board of the Standards Board

Kathy Rogers

Georgia Director of Elections, Office of the Secretary of State

Member, EAC Standards Board

J.R. Perez

Guadalupe County Elections Administrator, TX

Barbara Arnwine

Executive Director, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Leader of Election Protection Coalition

(To be represented at May 18, 2006 meeting by Jon M. Greenbaum, Director of the Voting Rights Project for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law)

Robert Bauer

Chair of the Political Law Practice at the law firm of Perkins Coie, DC

National Counsel for Voter Protection, Democratic National Committee

Benjamin L. Ginsberg

Partner, Patton Boggs LLP

Counsel to national Republican campaign committees and Republican candidates

Mark (Thor) Hearne II

Partner-Member, Lathrop & Gage, St Louis, MO

National Counsel to the American Center for Voting Rights

Barry Weinberg

Former Deputy Chief and Acting Chief, Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S.

Department of Justice

EAC Invited Technical Advisor:

Craig Donsanto

Director, Election Crimes Branch, U.S. Department of Justice

Jeannie Layson /EAC/GOV

10/18/2006 11:46 AM

To pdegregorio@eac.gov

cc asherrill@eac.gov, bwhitener@eac.gov

bcc

Subject Interview request

Mr. Chairman,

Chuck McCutchen of Newhouse News Service wants to interview you tomorrow at 11:30 regarding absentee voting, and your thoughts about whether this presents more opportunities for fraud. He asked for and I sent him the status report on fraud, but he's focused on the absentee voting angle. He knows you were a former elections official and have first hand experience with this issue. The interview would last about 15 min. Newhouse owns about 25 newspapers scattered throughout the nation. Please let me know if you can accomodate him. If so, we are to call him at [REDACTED]

Jeannie Layson
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York Ave., NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-566-3100
www.eac.gov

026417

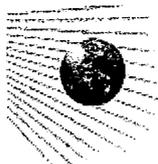


Amie J. Sherrill/EAC/GOV
10/20/2006 04:34 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
bcc
Subject Re: Letter to Mr. Reynolds Re: Voter Fraud Report

I will do that.

Amie J. Sherrill
Special Assistant to Chairman Paul S. DeGregorio
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York NW - Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 566 3106
Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV



Paul DeGregorio /EAC/GOV
10/20/2006 04:25 PM

To Amie J. Sherrill/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
Subject Re: Letter to Mr. Reynolds Re: Voter Fraud Report

Let's wait until Monday AM.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
Amie J. Sherrill
----- Original Message -----

From: Amie J. Sherrill
Sent: 10/20/2006 04:26 PM
To: Paul DeGregorio
Subject: Fw: Letter to Mr. Reynolds Re: Voter Fraud Report

Attached is a draft letter from Julie to Mr. Reynolds of the Comm. on Civ Rights. It contains the same language as the other letters we have sent. Please let me know if you would like for me to use your e-signature and get it faxed to them this afternoon.

Amie J. Sherrill
Special Assistant to Chairman Paul S. DeGregorio
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York NW - Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 566 3106

----- Forwarded by Amie J. Sherrill/EAC/GOV on 10/20/2006 04:23 PM -----



DeAnna M. Smith/EAC/GOV
10/20/2006 04:02 PM

To Amie J. Sherrill/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
Subject Letter to Mr. Reynolds Re: Voter Fraud Report

[attachment "draft letter to Mr Reynolds.doc" deleted by Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV]

DeAnna M. Smith
Paralegal Specialist
Office of the General Counsel
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
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026419



Gracia Hillman /EAC/GOV
10/23/2006 09:13 PM

To "Paul DeGregorio" <pdegregorio@eac.gov>, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC, "Donetta Davidson" <Ddavidson@eac.gov>
cc Juliet E. Thompson/EAC/GOV@EAC, "Jeannie Layson" <jlayson@eac.gov>
bcc

Subject The Fraud "Report"

History:  This message has been replied to

I am recommending that we use Thursday's meeting, a public forum, to be on the record about this report.

My thought is that Tom should report the matter to us in his report. New Business?? Just stating the facts as they exist, including the nature of the study, how we have handled the numerous requests and inquiries that we have received, etc.

Please let me know what you think about this suggestion. Thanks.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

026420

Jeannie Layson /EAC/GOV
10/23/2006 10:18 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
bcc
Subject Re: The Fraud "Report" 

Absolutely agree.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
Paul DeGregorio
----- Original Message -----

From: Paul DeGregorio
Sent: 10/23/2006 10:15 PM
To: Gracia Hillman; Thomas Wilkey; Donetta Davidson
Cc: Juliet Hodgkins; Jeannie Layson
Subject: Re: The Fraud "Report"

I think it's good idea, especially considering the media coverage and controversy. I spoke with Todd Rokita today and he was not happy at all about what he has read and feels the status report was misleading as the working group session held the day after the report was given came to different conclusions.

We also should make mention on Thursday about the 4th anniversary of HAVA, which is this Friday. It could give us an opportunity to talk about the positive things that have happened in election reform since its passage. Much of the talking points our media advisors drafted talk about this.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
Gracia Hillman
----- Original Message -----

From: Gracia Hillman
Sent: 10/23/2006 09:13 PM
To: Paul DeGregorio; Thomas Wilkey; Donetta Davidson
Cc: Juliet Hodgkins; Jeannie Layson
Subject: The Fraud "Report"

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My thought is that Tom should report the matter to us in his report. New Business?? Just stating the facts as they exist, including the nature of the study, how we have handled the numerous requests and inquiries that we have received, etc.

Please let me know what you think about this suggestion. Thanks.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

026421



Gracia Hillman /EAC/GOV

10/24/2006 07:47 AM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC, Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Jeannie Layson/EAC/GOV@EAC, "Sheila Banks" <sbanks@eac.gov>

bcc

Subject Re: The Fraud "Report"

I agree about mention of the 4th Anniversary.

Also at Thursday's meeting, I intend to say something in special recognition of Poll Workers.

Julie: Is it too late to do a Commissioners' Proclamation on this?

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

026422

Jeannie Layson /EAC/GOV
09/19/2006 11:17 AM

To pdegregorio@eac.gov
cc asherrill@eac.gov
bcc
Subject Interview Requests for Tomorrow

Mr. Chairman,

Two more interview requests for tomorrow:

1. NPR's News and Notes would like to have you as a guest on their program tomorrow morning at 8 a.m. EST for five to eight minutes. Topic: Your thoughts on the states that are cracking down on voter fraud through voter ID laws, registration policies, etc. Also, they want your take on the Fed. Election Integrity Act, the bill sponsored by Hyde regarding voter ID which will be dropped this week. The interview would be taped, and it would run at 9 a.m. EST. News and Notes explores issues that impact the African American community. You will be interviewed by Farai Chideya (Fah-rah Chu-day-ah). Go here <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=11> to read more about the program and the host. You are to call 310-815-4302 from a land line. Backup: Producer Devin Robbins at 310-815-4379.

2. Mary Ann McGee of Information Week is working on a story about voting system security. I talked to her about our efforts to help election officials focus on the entire process, not just the voting machine. I sent her the Quick Start guide. She's interested in hearing more about this from you. This is a good opportunity to get the message out that the real challenges we face in Nov. are having enough people and making sure they are properly trained. She wants to talk to you at 10:30 am EST. You are to call her at 508-697-0083.

Please let me know if you will be able to accomodate these reporters, and I'll take it from there. Thank you.

Jeannie Layson
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Phone: 202-566-3100
www.eac.gov

026423



Amie J. Sherrill/EAC/GOV

09/26/2006 05:05 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC

cc

bcc

Subject Speech for Election Fraud Conference

Chairman,

Here is the speech I have prepared for the Election Fraud Conference. There is room to expand if there are comments that you would like to add. I used what information I could to bring together the topics. Let me know what else you would like to add. Also, there is powerpoint available at the conference if you would like me to put together a slide presentation. Thanks.

Matthew V. Masterson
Legal Research Specialist to Chairman Paul S. DeGregorio
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
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(202) 566 3106



Voter Fraud Speech.doc

026424

09/26/2006

CPPA
Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Remarks

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Paul DeGregorio and I am the acting Chairman of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. It is a pleasure to be a part of this conference and be offered a chance to briefly address you today. I would also like to extend my thanks to Michael Alvarez, Thad Hall and Susan Hyde for organizing this fantastic conference.

My remarks today will focus on Voter Fraud and Voter Intimidation and how HAVA and the EAC combat these issues.

The subject of voter fraud and intimidation is a highly contentious issue. Since the 2004 election there has been a lot of discourse and writing about what constitutes election fraud and intimidation and how prevalent each is in our society. While there are no clear numbers on the incidents of voter fraud and intimidation what is clear is that the American public is concerned about both issues and something needs to be done to combat them.

The EAC was created by The Help America Vote Act or "HAVA". HAVA represents the first major piece of federal legislation on national election reforms. Among other provisions, Section 241 of HAVA requires the EAC to conduct research on election administration issues. Among the tasks the EAC is to execute is the development of nationwide statistics and methods of identifying, deterring, and investigating voting fraud and intimidation in elections for Federal office.

In September of 2005 the Commission hired consultants to begin a comprehensive study of election fraud and intimidation. This

research project is charged with the development of a clear definition of what constitutes voting fraud and voter intimidation in Federal elections, identifying current activities of key government agencies, civic advocacy groups, and other organizations regarding these topics, the establishment of a working group of experts to discuss these issues, and production of a report to the EAC summarizing the findings that includes recommendations for future research if any. We are eagerly awaiting the final report from the working group so that we can gain a better understanding of the form that voter fraud and intimidation is taking and what can be done to combat those practices.

The lack of any solid statistics regarding voter fraud and intimidation can be attributed to two major factors. First is because there is wide disagreement about the definitions for the terms “fraud” and “intimidation.” Some only consider it fraud if it falls under the criminal definitions of fraud. While others consider any form of ineligible voter as fraud. The term intimidation is also wrought with ambiguity. Some only consider it intimidation if there is a physical or mental advantage of one party over the other, while others consider any difficulty in the voting process as being intimidation. Because of these definitional differences there has been no clear way to study the amount of fraud or intimidation because everyone is using a different definition to help shape the statistics.

Also skewing the statistics about election fraud and voter intimidation is the political agenda or bias from both sides that accompanies much of the literature about the topic. As a result of this political bias and the ambiguity that accompanies the terms “fraud” and “intimidation” it is difficult to know when something has risen to the level to be considered fraud or simply is an accusation with no backing.

HAVA has several provisions that not only help to combat fraud but also make voting easier. Most notably section 303 of HAVA which requires each state to create "... a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive, computerized statewide voter registration list..." This database is to be maintained at the state level and is to contain the name and registration information of every legally registered voter in the State.

The Voter Database is to serve as the single system for storing and managing the official list of registered voters throughout the state. It will be coordinated with other agencies databases within the state in order to insure the residence status of the voter.

This Voter Database will serve two purposes. First it helps to prevent voter fraud by allowing state election officials to check their registration information against the databases of other agencies in order to insure the status of the voters. This would eliminate the problem of the use of dead person's names to vote, or the use of inmate's names to vote. Under HAVA state election officials are given the right to remove those names that have been checked against inmate lists and state agency records on death.

Second, the Voter Database will ease the burden on voters by allowing them to easily check their voting status and update their information when necessary. Therefore a person who moves within the state from one county to another can easily check their voting status i.e. what county they are registered in and update that information via a new registration if necessary.

Also according to HAVA section 303 State election officials are required to regularly update the Voter Database removing only those individuals who are ineligible to vote in that election while updating the status of those eligible to vote. It is in this way that HAVA is helping to crack down on fraud by eliminating ineligible

voters from registration lists, while easing the process for those voters who are eligible.

Another issue that has become particularly contentious is the issue of voter identification to combat voter fraud. As many of you know voter identification laws have lead to suits in Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio and Arizona with more to follow as states pass more identification laws.

In May of 2005 the EAC contracted with an independent group of scholars to conduct a study on voter identification practices in the 2004 election and recommend some best practices for voter identification laws for upcoming elections. To the surprise of no one the study found a lot of disagreement regarding the need for voter identification laws and the way these laws should be applied.

Those in favor of voter identification laws argue that their goal is to ensure that only those legally entitled to vote do so, and do so only once at each election. They propose stricter voter identification requirements to prevent one form of voter fraud -- that being multiple voting or voting by those who are not eligible.

However, opponents argue that stricter ID laws interfere with legitimate voter's access to the ballot. They fear that some voters most notably racial and ethnic minorities, the young, and elderly voters, may lack convenient access to the required ID documents. Both sides assert that their policy will engender faith in the electoral process among citizens.

At the heart of this entire debate is the balance that needs to be struck between allowing those who are eligible to vote the ability to vote while preventing those who are not eligible to vote from voting.

The first step that needs to be taken in order to find this balance is more research needs to be conducted on the issue of voter identification. As was noted by the EAC's 2005 study the amount of evidence available on how voter identification laws impacted both voter turnout and voter fraud is scant at best. As more and more states implement these laws more information needs to be gathered in order to discover if these laws are preventing fraud, and what their impact is on voter turnout.

Courts have also greatly disagreed on the impact of voter identification laws. A recent decision in Georgia granted a preliminary injunction to enjoin the State of Georgia from requiring photo identification to be able to cast a ballot in person. The court in reaching its decision concluded that the injury to a voter who couldn't get the proper identification in time to vote was great and could not be tolerated. The court did point out that a State has a legitimate and important interest in attempting to combat voter fraud and in turn ensure the integrity of its elections.

In sharp contrast to the Georgia decision was a case involving a challenge to Indiana's voter identification law. In this case a Federal District Court found no basis for the plaintiffs challenge to an Indiana statute requiring picture ID in order to vote in person. In its judgment the court held that the State of Indiana had a legitimate and important interest in protecting the integrity of its elections. The court explained further that any burden placed on voters to obtain ID was not unduly burdensome and was necessary in order to provide a fair and just election. The court saw no indication of bias or discrimination and felt the law to be necessary to achieve the states goal of a fair election.

These two cases are a perfect example of the struggle that legislatures, election officials, and courts are having with the issue of voter fraud and voter identification. Where some see fraud others do not, and where some see discrimination others do not.

Most, if not all, recognize voter fraud as something that compromises the integrity of elections, but to what level are we willing to burden the legitimate voter to prevent this fraud from occurring?

The EAC's 2005 study recognized these problems and in its best practices guidelines made several suggestions on how to deal with them:

First, as stated above the study suggested further research to clarify the connection the connection of the relationship requirements and the number of potential voters actually able to cast a ballot that is actually counted.

Second, the study suggested as a best practice the publication of a "Voting Impact Statement" by States as they assess their voter ID requirements to protect the integrity of the ballot. This analysis will help to ensure that efforts to increase ballot security have a neutral effect on electoral participating by eligible voters.

Finally, starting with the 2006 election states should collect and report reliable, credible information on the relationship between ballot access and ballot security. In turn the EAC can use this data to publish an analysis of this information to provide sound factual data as a basis for the states to consider as they estimate the incidence of the kinds of vote fraud that stricter voter ID laws may prevent.

The problem of in person voter fraud is often debated. Many feel it is not a problem at all. While others, like the citizens of Arizona when they passed Proposition 200 a voter ID law requiring ID to both register and vote, feel it is a big enough problem to vote in favor of laws to prevent it. The only way to clear up this debate and provide real answers to our questions thorough clear analysis

of the issues without the ambiguity of terms or political biases that have corrupted this entire discussion.

In conclusion, the EAC is working on compiling data on voter fraud and intimidation to help aid states in their assessment of voter issues. With the release of EAC's working group on voter fraud final report the EAC will be better prepared to help states understand the extent of voter fraud and the next steps to be taken to combat it. While legitimate data still does not exist to combat these issues there are measures that states can take to counteract voter fraud. The first step is to follow the HAVA mandated requirement of forming a voter registration database. This will allow states to know who is and is not eligible to vote and will allow voters to easily access their registration status. Finally with the passage of more voter ID laws throughout the states it is important for state election officials to remain up to date on the holdings of the court cases involving these laws and the effect that these laws are having on voter turnout and voter fraud issues.

I thank you all for your time and patience. If should need any further information on the EAC, HAVA or other voting issues please feel free to check our web site at www.eac.gov.

Thank you.



Amie J. Sherrill/EAC/GOV
09/27/2006 11:58 AM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
bcc
Subject Voter Fraud Speech

Chairman:

Here is the latest version of the voter fraud speech. I have included all changes that you requested and added the comments about accomplishments. Please let me know what else you would like to add. Also I have printed up a hard copy if you would prefer to read that. Thank you for your patience.

Matthew V. Masterson
Legal Research Specialist to Chairman Paul S. DeGregorio
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York NW - Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 566 3106



Voter Fraud Speech #2.doc

026432

9/27/2006

**CPPA
Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Remarks**

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Paul DeGregorio and I am the Chairman of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. It is a pleasure to be a part of this conference and be offered a chance to briefly address you today. I would also like to extend my thanks to Michael Alvarez, Thad Hall and Susan Hyde for organizing this conference.

My remarks today will focus on Voter Fraud and Voter Intimidation and how HAVA and the EAC address these issues.

The subject of voter fraud and voter intimidation is a highly contentious issue. Since the 2004 election there has been a lot of discourse and writing about what constitutes election fraud and voter intimidation and how prevalent each is in our society. While there are no clear numbers on the incidents of voter fraud and voter intimidation what is clear is that the many groups are concerned about both issues and it is imperative that we continue to study and address them.

The EAC was created by The Help America Vote Act or "HAVA". HAVA represents the first major piece of federal legislation on national election reforms. Among other provisions, Section 241 of HAVA requires the EAC to conduct research on election administration issues. Among the tasks the EAC is to execute is the development of nationwide statistics and methods of identifying, deterring, and investigating voting fraud and intimidation in elections for Federal office.

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The Statewide voter registration database is to serve as the single system for storing and managing the official list of registered voters throughout the state. It will be coordinated with other agencies databases within the state in order to insure the residence status of the voter.

The Statewide Voter Database serves a very important and specific function. It helps to prevent opportunities for fraud by allowing state election officials to check their registration information against the databases of other agencies in order to insure the status of the voters. This would eliminate the problem of the use of a deceased person's name to vote. Under HAVA state election officials are given the right to remove those names that have been checked against state agency records on death.

Also according to HAVA section 303 State election officials are required to regularly update the registration list removing only those individuals who are ineligible to vote in that election while updating the status of those eligible to vote. It is in this way that HAVA is helping to eliminate opportunities for fraud by eliminating ineligible voters from registration lists, while easing the process for those voters who are eligible.

One issue that has become particularly contentious is the issue of voter identification to combat voter fraud. As many of you know voter identification laws have lead to suits in Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio and Arizona with more to follow as states pass more identification laws.

In May of 2005 the EAC contracted with an institution to conduct a study on voter identification practices in the 2004 election and recommend some best practices for voter identification laws for upcoming elections. To the surprise of no one the study found a lot of disagreement regarding the need for voter identification laws and the way these laws should be applied.

Those in favor of voter identification laws argue that their goal is to ensure that only those legally entitled to vote do so, and do so only once at each election. They propose stricter voter identification requirements to prevent one form of voter fraud -- that being multiple voting or voting by those who are not eligible.

However, opponents argue that stricter ID laws interfere with legitimate voter's access to the ballot. They fear that some voters most notably racial and ethnic minorities, the young, and elderly voters, may lack convenient access to the required ID documents. Both sides assert that their policy will engender faith in the electoral process among citizens.

At the heart of this entire debate is the balance that needs to be struck between allowing those who are eligible to vote the ability to vote while preventing those who are not eligible to vote from voting.

From my own personal experience in traveling the world observing elections, especially in emerging democracies, I witnessed little if any resistance to ID requirements including photo ID requirements. In Haiti...

The first step that needs to be taken in order to find this balance is more research needs to be conducted on the issue of voter identification. As was noted by the EAC's 2005 study the amount of evidence available on how voter identification laws impacted both voter turnout and voter fraud is scant at best. As more and more states implement these laws more information needs to be gathered in order to discover if these laws are preventing fraud, and what their impact is on voter turnout.

Courts have also greatly disagreed on the impact of voter identification laws. A recent decision in Georgia granted a preliminary injunction to enjoin the State of Georgia from requiring photo identification to be able to cast a ballot in person. The court in reaching its decision concluded that the injury to a voter who couldn't get the proper identification in time to vote was great and could not be tolerated. The court did point out that a State has a legitimate and important interest in attempting to combat voter fraud and in turn ensure the integrity of its elections.

This case is a perfect example of the struggle that legislatures, election officials, and courts are having with the issue of voter fraud and voter identification. Most, if not all, recognize voter fraud as something that compromises the integrity of elections, but to what level are we willing to burden the legitimate voter to prevent this fraud from occurring?

Recognizing this struggle the EAC's study on voter identification made suggestions on how to better understand the need for these laws and how best to implement them:

First, as stated above the study suggested further research to clarify the connection the connection of the relationship requirements and the number of potential voters actually able to cast a ballot that is actually counted.

Second, the study suggested as a best practice the publication of a “Voting Impact Statement” by States as they assess their voter ID requirements to protect the integrity of the ballot. This analysis will help to ensure that efforts to increase ballot security have a neutral effect on electoral participating by eligible voters.

Finally, starting with the 2006 election states should collect and report reliable, credible information on the relationship between ballot access and ballot security. In turn the EAC can use this data to publish an analysis of this information to provide sound factual data as a basis for the states to consider as they estimate the incidence of the kinds of vote fraud that stricter voter ID laws may prevent.

Voter intimidation also has little valuable statistical information available. Again this is because “voter intimidation” is difficult to define and can rarely be prosecuted. Like voter fraud it is a widely held belief that most alleged incidents of voter intimidation continue to be focused on minority and underprivileged communities.

Many of the accusations of voter intimidation are brought against poll workers many of whom are unaware of the possible intimidation taking place. For instance many of the accusations of intimidation by poll workers stem from poll workers making improper demands for identification, or poll workers questioning voters in what is a manner perceived as aggressive or intimidating. The solution to this problem is simple, proper poll worker training. Through proper training poll workers will know when and how ID is to be presented and the proper way to question voters at the polls. Also revisions to challenger laws can bring about more clarity about appropriate challenges and therefore less accusations of voter intimidation.

As more statistics are kept and the form and frequency of voter intimidation is better understood states will be better prepared to prevent instances of voter intimidation and further improve the integrity of their elections.

Finally, I would like to take just a brief moment to discuss the immense accomplishments of the EAC since I became a commissioner in December of 2003:

First, we have distributed more than 3 Billion Dollars to states to improve their voting equipment and processes.

Also, the EAC delivered the HAVA mandated voluntary voting system guidelines (VVSG) within the 9 month deadline. We are currently working on future versions of the VVSG. In developing these future versions we are looking into the use of wireless technology in voting and testing future software and hardware that might be used in future elections.

We have issued guidance to states on statewide databases, accessibility and how to use HAVA funds. On a daily basis we answer questions and offer guidance every day for election officials all over the world.

In order to further support local election officials we recently released our quick start guide to help officials who are introducing new voting systems. This guide provides a snapshot of processes and procedures for local election administrators to use when implementing new voting systems. It includes tips on receiving and testing equipment, poll worker training, security, and Election Day operations.

In addition to the research project that we have begun regarding election fraud and intimidation we have several other research projects underway that will provide election officials and the

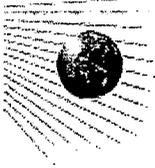
public with valuable data to be used to improve the integrity of our elections. Already underway are studies on a number of topics including effective designs for ballots and polling places, best practices for poll worker training, recruitment and retention and a study on vote count and recount procedures.

The HAVA College Poll Worker Program has awarded a total of almost \$1 Million in grants. Research is underway to find the best ways to recruit train and retain college poll workers.

We are also working hard to make sure the public is kept up to date on the future of elections and how it will affect the voting process. Already in 2006 we have held six public meetings throughout the country. The topics that we have covered in these meetings include: How voting systems are certified, The National Voter Registration Act, Vote Count and Recount Procedures, Poll Workers, Effective management guidelines for voting systems, effective ballot and polling place designs, better ways to serve military and other overseas voters, public access portals, and the EAC certification program.

In conclusion, the past four years have seen significant changes in the electoral process. New voting systems have been purchased, replacing the antiquated systems that had been in place for decades. As discussed earlier states should now have a single list of registered voters to better identify those who are eligible to vote, and provisional voting is now available throughout the nation. As these changes take place the EAC is working hard every day to smooth the transition from old to new and bring about a more efficient and fair electoral process for all Americans.

Thank You.



Paul DeGregorio /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 05:08 PM

To Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV

cc Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC, Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R.

bcc

Subject Re: draft text for USA Today 

Bryan,

Do we need to make some mention that none of these reports are overdue? (since he thinks that they are based on what he read in electionline.org)?

Paul DeGregorio
Chairman
US Election Assistance Commission
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Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV

Bryan Whitener /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 04:39 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC, Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC

Subject draft text for USA Today

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026441

the status of the research conducted by the EAC contractors. A report and recommendations on future actions regarding this topic will be produced after EAC review of the preliminary research.

###

Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV
09/27/2006 05:24 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
bcc

Subject Re: draft text for USA Today 

I don't really know how to respond to his misconception without us sounding somewhat defensive. The reality is that the provisional voting guidance was due before we existed and that for all intents and purposes provisional voting was implemented prior to our existence. Thus, the deadline became irrelevant. So, how do we say that without sounding defensive?

The other study is one in a laundry list that has not specific date. So, we could say that, but, again, that seems to beg the question if we only talk about the voter fraud timeline and avoid the provisional voting timeline.

Isn't it better to just remain silent on that point?

Juliet Thompson Hodgkins
General Counsel
United States Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York Ave., NW, Ste 1100
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 566-3100
Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV



Paul DeGregorio /EAC/GOV
09/27/2006 05:08 PM

To Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC, Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC
Subject Re: draft text for USA Today 

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026443

Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV

Bryan Whitener /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 04:39 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC, Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC
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###

026444

Bryan Whitener /EAC/GOV
09/27/2006 05:41 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC, Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R.
bcc
Subject Re: draft text for USA Today 

History:  This message has been replied to

Mr. Chairman,

I recommend that we not address the issue of deadlines in this particular response. I found the following information in the FY 03 and 04 annual reports. I've indicated the sections where provisional voting is referenced.

####

Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Report

At the same time, the delayed establishment of EAC and operating budget constraints restricted its ability to conduct some HAVA-mandated activities within the prescribed timeline. EAC was forced to postpone or limit the following work:...Issuance of HAVA Title III guidance on voting systems standards, statewide voter registration systems, provisional voting, voter education, and voters who register by mail;...

####

Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report

HAVA required that EAC be established in February 2003, but the appointment of EAC Commissioners did not occur until December 13, 2003. While other federal agencies and the States carried out their responsibilities under HAVA, the delay in establishing EAC meant that certain HAVA mandated activities could not be completed in a timely fashion, including :

Guidance on the implementation of the uniform and nondiscriminatory election technology and administration requirements in HAVA Title III, including voting systems standards, computerized statewide voter registration lists, and information on provisional voting, voter education, and for voters who register by mail;

Responsibilities of EAC HAVA requires EAC to serve as a national clearinghouse and resource for the compilation of information and the review of procedures relevant to the administration of federal elections. The Act also requires the Commission to: ...Produce voluntary guidance on the implementation of HAVA Title III requirements (voting systems standards, computerized statewide voter registration lists, and public information on provisional voting, voter education, and for voters who register by mail).

Missed Deadlines Caused By The Delay In The Appointment Of EAC Commissioners

EAC has missed several HAVA deadlines, primarily because it was not established until mid-December 2003. EAC continues to be challenged to meet these deadlines due to FY04 budget constraints. Further, EAC's ability to make up for lost time in meeting these and its ability to meet other responsibilities is fully dependent on receiving the \$10 million that is requested in the President's budget submission for FY 2005. **Statutory Deadline Action Required by the EAC** October 1, 2003 Adopt recommendations and voluntary guidance on HAVA Section 302 requirements for provisional voting and voting information (HAVA Section 311(b)(2))

####

026445

Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV



Paul DeGregorio /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 05:08 PM

To Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV@EAC

cc Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC, Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC

Subject Re: draft text for USA Today 

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Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV

Bryan Whitener /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 04:39 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC, Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC

Subject draft text for USA Today

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026446

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###



Paul DeGregorio /EAC/GOV
09/27/2006 05:47 PM

To Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV
cc
bcc
Subject Re: draft text for USA Today

OK. Go with what you send earlier.

Paul DeGregorio
Chairman
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Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV

Bryan Whitener /EAC/GOV
09/27/2006 05:41 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC, Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC, Jeannie Layson/EAC/GOV@EAC
Subject Re: draft text for USA Today

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026448

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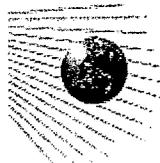
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####

Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV



Paul DeGregorio /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 05:08 PM

To Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV@EAC

cc Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC, Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC

Subject Re: draft text for USA Today

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026449

Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV

Bryan Whitener /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 04:39 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC, Donetta L.
Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC, Gracia Hillman/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R.
Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC
Subject draft text for USA Today

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###

026450



Gracia Hillman /EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 08:54 PM

To Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV@EAC, Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC, Donetta L. Davidson/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC, Thomas R. Wilkey/EAC/GOV@EAC

bcc

Subject Re: draft text for USA Today 

Sorry for delayed response. It is fine with me.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
Bryan Whitener
----- Original Message -----

From: Bryan Whitener
Sent: 09/27/2006 04:39 PM
To: Paul DeGregorio; Donetta Davidson; Gracia Hillman
Cc: Juliet Hodgkins; Thomas Wilkey
Subject: draft text for USA Today

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###

026451

Jeannie Layson /EAC/GOV
10/05/2006 03:51 PM

To pdegregorio@eac.gov
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Board agenda docs

Mr. Chairman,

Below is the info that was sent to Rich last week. He asked about the status of our vote fraud and voter intimidation study. Peg and Edgardo presented an update on the project at the May public meeting, and the attached reports were presented to the St. Bd. and the BoA, making them public documents. Sec. 241 requires us to study both topics, and the BoA requested that we make this a research priority. Basically, your speech outlines what has been identified so far -- that there is little solid evidence on both of these topics, and even the definition of these terms varies widely. Our consultants basically conclude that more research needs to be done, and that it will involve a combination of examining local laws, enforcement activities as well as the implementation of the new statewide voter reg. lists.

----- Forwarded by Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV on 10/05/2006 03:46 PM -----

Bryan Whitener/EAC/GOV

09/27/2006 05:56 PM

To rwolf [REDACTED]
cc Jeannie Layson/EAC/GOV@EAC
Subject Board agenda docs

Rich,

When you get to the point you need to speak with anyone for attribution, please let me know and I'll check with our spokesperson, Jeannie Layson. As we discussed, here are the docs you asked about that were presented at the board meetings in May and links to the meeting agenda. There are two reports: (1) a draft report produced by Eagleton Institute concerning provisional voting; and (2) a status report produced by EAC contractors regarding research being conducted on voter fraud and intimidation. The reports were presented by the contractors to the Standards Board and Board of Advisors for their input. This type of input is required for any guidance issued by EAC and is desired for any product that we provide to the election community and the public. Based on the input that was received from these boards, particularly regarding the questionable information contained in Eagleton's provisional voting report, EAC has not issued the Eagleton draft report as a final EAC document. As for the voter fraud and intimidation status report, it is merely an update by EAC staff on the status of the research conducted by the EAC contractors. A report and recommendations on future actions regarding this topic will be produced after EAC review of the preliminary research.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Bryan Whitener
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
(202) 566-3118
(866) 747-1471 (toll free)

026452

05/23/06 to 05/24/06 - Agenda: EAC Standards Board Meeting

05/23/06 to 05/24/06 - Agenda: EAC Board of Advisors Meeting



VF-VI Study Status 5-17-06.pdf PV-Standard Board 5-12-06.pdf



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

**Status Report on the
Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Research
Project**

May 17, 2006

026454

INTRODUCTION

Section 241 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) requires EAC to conduct research on election administration issues. Among the tasks listed in the statute is the development of:

- nationwide statistics and methods of identifying, deterring, and investigating voting fraud in elections for Federal office [section 241(b)(6)]; and
- ways of identifying, deterring, and investigating methods of voter intimidation [section 241(b)(7)].

EAC's Board of Advisors recommended that the agency make research on these matters a high priority.

FOCUS OF CURRENT RESEARCH

In September 2005, the Commission hired two consultants with expertise in this subject matter, Job Serebrov and Tova Wang, to:

- develop a comprehensive description of what constitutes voting fraud and voter intimidation in the context of Federal elections;
- perform background research (including Federal and State administrative and case law review), identify current activities of key government agencies, civic and advocacy organizations regarding these topics, and deliver a summary of this research and all source documentation;
- establish a project working group, in consultation with EAC, composed of key individuals and representatives of organizations knowledgeable about the topics of voting fraud and voter intimidation;
- provide the description of what constitutes voting fraud and voter intimidation and the results of the preliminary research to the working group, and convene the working group to discuss potential avenues for future EAC research on this topic; and
- produce a report to EAC summarizing the findings of the preliminary research effort and working group deliberations that includes recommendations for future research, if any;

As of the date of this report, the consultants have drafted a definition of election fraud, reviewed relevant literature and reports, interviewed persons from government and private sectors with subject matter expertise, analyzed news reports of alleged election fraud, reviewed case law, and established a project working group.

DEFINITION OF ELECTION FRAUD

The consultants drafted a definition of election fraud that includes numerous aspects of voting fraud (including voter intimidation, which is considered a subset of voting fraud) and voter registration fraud, but excludes campaign finance violations and election administration mistakes. This draft will be discussed and probably refined by the project working group, which is scheduled to convene on May 18, 2006.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The consultants found many reports and books that describe anecdotes and draw broad conclusions from a large array of incidents. They found little research that is truly systematic or scientific. The most systematic look at fraud appears to be the report written by Lori Minnite, entitled "Securing the Vote: An Analysis of Election Fraud". The most systematic look at voter intimidation appears to be the report by Laughlin McDonald, entitled "The New Poll Tax". The consultants found that books written about this subject all seem to have a political bias and a pre-existing agenda that makes them somewhat less valuable.

Moreover, the consultants found that reports and books make allegations but, perhaps by their nature, have little follow up. As a result, it is difficult to know when something has remained in the stage of being an allegation and gone no further, or progressed to the point of being investigated or prosecuted or in any other way proven to be valid by an independent, neutral entity. This is true, for example, with respect to allegations of voter intimidation by civil rights organizations, and, with respect to fraud, John Fund's frequently cited book, "Stealing Elections".

Consultants found that researchers agree that measuring something like the incidence of fraud and intimidation in a scientifically legitimate way is extremely difficult from a methodological perspective and would require resources beyond the means of most social and political scientists. As a result, there is much more written on this topic by advocacy groups than social scientists.

Other items of note:

- There is as much evidence, and as much concern, about structural forms of disenfranchisement as about intentional abuse of the system. These include felon disenfranchisement, poor maintenance of databases and identification requirements.
- There is tremendous disagreement about the extent to which polling place fraud, e.g. double voting, intentional felon voting, noncitizen voting, is a serious problem. On balance, more researchers find it to be less of a problem than is commonly described in the political debate; but some reports say it is a major problem, albeit hard to identify.

- There is substantial concern across the board about absentee balloting and the opportunity it presents for fraud.
- Federal law governing election fraud and intimidation is varied and complex and yet may nonetheless be insufficient or subject to too many limitations to be as effective as it might be.
- Deceptive practices, e.g. targeted flyers and phone calls providing misinformation, were a major problem in 2004.
- Voter intimidation continues to be focused on minority communities, although the American Center for Voting Rights uniquely alleges it is focused on Republicans.

Recommendations

The consultants recommend that subsequent EAC research include a follow up study of allegations made in reports, books and newspaper articles. They also suggest that the research should focus on filling the gap between the lack of reports based on methodical studies by social or political scientists and the numerous, but less scientific, reports published by advocacy groups.

INTERVIEWS

The consultants jointly selected experts from the public and private sector for interviews. The consultants' analysis of their discussions with these members of the legal, election official, advocacy, and academic communities follows.

Common Themes

- There is virtually universal agreement that absentee ballot fraud is the biggest problem, with vote buying and registration fraud coming in after that. The vote buying often comes in the form of payment for absentee ballots, although not always. Some absentee ballot fraud is part of an organized effort; some is by individuals, who sometimes are not even aware that what they are doing is illegal. Voter registration fraud seems to take the form of people signing up with false names. Registration fraud seems to be most common where people doing the registration were paid by the signature.
- There is widespread but not unanimous agreement that there is little polling place fraud, or at least much less than is claimed, including voter impersonation, "dead" voters, noncitizen voting and felon voters. Those few who believe it occurs often enough to be a concern say that it is impossible to show the extent to which it happens, but do point to instances in the press of such incidents. Most people believe that false registration forms have not resulted in polling place fraud,

although it may create the perception that vote fraud is possible. Those who believe there is more polling place fraud than reported/investigated/prosecuted believe that registration fraud does lead to fraudulent votes. Jason Torchinsky from the American Center for Voting Rights is the only interviewee who believes that polling place fraud is widespread and among the most significant problems in the system.

- Abuse of challenger laws and abusive challengers seem to be the biggest intimidation/suppression concerns, and many of those interviewed assert that the new identification requirements are the modern version of voter intimidation and suppression. However there is evidence of some continued outright intimidation and suppression, especially in some Native American communities. A number of people also raise the problem of poll workers engaging in harassment of minority voters. Other activities commonly raised were the issue of polling places being moved at the last moment, unequal distribution of voting machines, videotaping of voters at the polls, and targeted misinformation campaigns.
- Several people indicate that, for various reasons, DOJ is bringing fewer voter intimidation and suppression cases now, and has increased its focus on matters such as noncitizen voting, double voting, and felon voting. Interviews with DOJ personnel indicate that the Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, focuses on systemic patterns of malfeasance in this area. While the Election Crimes Branch, Public Integrity Section, continues to maintain an aggressive pursuit of systematic schemes to corrupt the electoral process (including voter suppression), it also has increased prosecutions of individual instances of felon, alien, and double voting.
- The problem of badly kept voter registration lists, with both ineligible voters remaining on the rolls and eligible voters being taken off, remains a common concern. A few people are also troubled by voters being on registration lists in two states. They said that there was no evidence that this had led to double voting, but it opens the door to the possibility. There is great hope that full implementation of the new requirements of HAVA – done well, a major caveat – will reduce this problem dramatically.

Common Recommendations:

- Many of those interviewed recommend better poll worker training as the best way to improve the process; a few also recommended longer voting times or voting on days other than election day (such as weekends) but fewer polling places so only the best poll workers would be employed.
- Many interviewed support stronger criminal laws and increased enforcement of existing laws with respect to both fraud and intimidation. Advocates from across the spectrum expressed frustration with the failure of the Department of Justice to pursue complaints.

- With respect to DOJ's Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, John Tanner indicated that fewer cases are being brought because fewer are warranted – it has become increasingly difficult to know when allegations of intimidation and suppression are credible since it depends on one's definition of intimidation, and because both parties are doing it. Moreover prior enforcement of the laws has now changed the entire landscape – race based problems are rare now. Although challenges based on race and unequal implementation of identification rules would be actionable, Mr. Tanner was unaware of such situations actually occurring and his office has not pursued any such cases.
- Craig Donsanto of DOJ's Election Crimes Branch, Public Integrity Section, says that while the number of election fraud related complaints have not gone up since 2002, nor has the proportion of legitimate to illegitimate claims of fraud, the number of cases DOJ is investigating and the number of indictments his office is pursuing are both up dramatically. Since 2002, in addition to pursuing systematic election corruption schemes, DOJ has brought more cases against alien voters, felon voters and double voters than ever before. Mr. Donsanto would like more resources so that his agency can do more and would like to have laws that make it easier for the federal government to assume jurisdiction over voter fraud cases.
- A couple of interviewees recommend a new law that would make it easier to criminally prosecute people for intimidation even when there is not racial animus.
- Several advocate expanded monitoring of the polls, including some associated with the Department of Justice.
- Almost everyone hopes that administrators will maximize the potential of statewide voter registration databases to prevent fraud.
- Challenge laws, both with respect to pre-election day challenges and challengers at the polls, need to be revised by all states to ensure they are not used for purposes of wrongful disenfranchisement and harassment.
- Several people advocate passage of Senator Barak Obama's "deceptive practices" bill.
- There is a split on whether it would be helpful to have nonpartisan election officials – some indicated they thought even if elections officials are elected as non partisan officials, they will carry out their duties in biased ways nonetheless. However, most agree that elections officials pursuing partisan agendas are a problem that must be addressed in some fashion. Suggestions included moving election responsibilities out of the secretary of states' office; increasing transparency in the process; and enacting conflict of interest rules.

- A few recommend returning to allowing use of absentee ballots "for cause" only if it were politically feasible.
- A few recommend enacting a national identification card, including Pat Rogers, an attorney in New Mexico, and Jason Torchinsky from ACVR, who advocates the proposal in the Carter-Baker Commission Report.
- A couple of interviewees indicated the need for clear standards for the distribution of voting machines

NEWS ARTICLES

Consultants conducted a Nexis search of related news articles published between January 1, 2001 and January 1, 2006. A systematic, numerical analysis of the data collected during this review is currently being prepared. What follows is an overview of these articles provided by the consultants.

Absentee Ballots

According to press reports, absentee ballots are abused in a variety of ways:

- Campaign workers, candidates and others coerce the voting choices of vulnerable populations, usually elderly voters.
- Workers for groups and individuals have attempted to vote absentee in the names of the deceased.
- Workers for groups, campaign workers and individuals have attempted to forge the names of other voters on absentee ballot requests and absentee ballots and thus vote multiple times.

It is unclear how often actual convictions result from these activities (a handful of articles indicate convictions and guilty pleas), but this is an area in which there have been a substantial number of official investigations and actual charges filed, according to news reports where such information is available. A few of the allegations became part of civil court proceedings contesting the outcome of the election.

While absentee fraud allegations turn up throughout the country, a few states have had several such cases. Especially of note are Indiana, New Jersey, South Dakota, and most particularly, Texas. Interestingly, there were no articles regarding Oregon, where the entire system is vote by mail.

Voter Registration Fraud

According to press reports, the following types of allegations of voter registration fraud are most common:

- Registering in the name of dead people;
- Fake names and other information on voter registration forms;
- Illegitimate addresses used on voter registration forms;
- Voters being tricked into registering for a particular party under false pretenses; and
- Destruction of voter registration forms depending on the party the voter registered with.

There was only one self evident instance of a noncitizen registering to vote. Many of the instances reported included official investigations and charges filed, but few actual convictions, at least from the news reporting. There have been multiple reports of registration fraud in California, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Voter Intimidation and Suppression

This is the area which had the most articles, in part because there were so many allegations of intimidation and suppression during the 2004 election. Most of these remained allegations and no criminal investigation or prosecution ensued. Some of the cases did end up in civil litigation.

This is not to say that these alleged activities were confined to 2004 – there were several allegations made during every year studied. Most notable were the high number of allegations of voter intimidation and harassment reported during the 2003 Philadelphia mayoral race.

A very high number of the articles were about the issue of challenges to voters' registration status and challengers at the polling places. There were many allegations that planned challenge activities were targeted at minority communities. Some of the challenges were concentrated in immigrant communities.

However, the tactics alleged varied greatly. The types of activities discussed also include the following:

- Photographing or videotaping voters coming out of polling places;
- Improper demands for identification;

- Poll watchers harassing voters;
- Poll workers being hostile to or aggressively challenging voters;
- Disproportionate police presence;
- Poll watchers wearing clothes with messages that seemed intended to intimidate; and
- Insufficient voting machines and unmanageably long lines.

Although the incidents reported on occurred everywhere, not surprisingly, many came from "battleground" states. There were several such reports out of Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

"Dead Voters and Multiple Voting"

There were a high number of articles about people voting in the names of the dead and voting more than once. Many of these articles were marked by allegations of big numbers of people committing these frauds, and relatively few of these allegations turning out to be accurate according to investigations by the newspapers themselves, elections officials, and criminal investigators. Often the problem turned out to be a result of administrative error, poll workers mis-marking voter lists, a flawed registration list and/or errors made in the attempt to match names of voters on the list with the names of the people who voted. In a good number of cases, there were allegations that charges of double voting by political leaders were an effort to scare people away from the voting process.

Nonetheless there were a few cases of people actually being charged and/or convicted for these kinds of activities. Most of the cases involved a person voting both by absentee ballot and in person. A few instances involved people voting both during early voting and on Election Day, which calls into question the proper marking and maintenance of the voting lists. In many instances, the person charged claimed not to have voted twice on purpose. A very small handful of cases involved a voter voting in more than one county and there was one substantiated case involving a person voting in more than one state. Other instances in which such efforts were alleged were disproved by officials.

In the case of voting in the name of a dead person, the problem lay in the voter registration list not being properly maintained, i.e. the person was still on the registration list as eligible to vote, and a person took criminal advantage of that. In total, the San Francisco Chronicle found five such cases in March 2004; the AP cited a newspaper analysis of five such persons in an Indiana primary in May 2004; and a senate committee found two people to have voted in the names of the dead in 2005.

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As usual, there were a disproportionate number of such articles coming out of Florida. Notably, there were three articles out of Oregon, which has one hundred percent vote-by-mail.

Vote Buying

There were a surprising number of articles about vote buying cases. A few of these instances involved long-time investigations concentrated in three states (Illinois, Kentucky, and West Virginia). There were more official investigations, indictments and convictions/pleas in this area.

Deceptive Practices

In 2004 there were numerous reports of intentional disinformation about voting eligibility and the voting process meant to confuse voters about their rights and when and where to vote. Misinformation came in the form of flyers, phone calls, letters, and even people going door to door. Many of the efforts were reportedly targeted at minority communities. A disproportionate number of them came from key battleground states, particularly Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. From the news reports found, only one of these instances was officially investigated, the case in Oregon involving the destruction of completed voter registration applications. There were no reports of prosecutions or any other legal proceeding.

Non-citizen Voting

There were surprisingly few articles regarding noncitizen registration and voting – just seven all together, in seven different states across the country. They were also evenly split between allegations of noncitizens registering and noncitizens voting. In one case, charges were filed against ten individuals. In another case, a judge in a civil suit found there was illegal noncitizen voting. Three instances prompted official investigations. Two cases, from this Nexis search, remained just allegations of noncitizen voting.

Felon Voting

Although there were only thirteen cases of felon voting, some of them involved large numbers of voters. Most notably, of course, are the cases that came to light in the Washington gubernatorial election contest (see Washington summary) and in Wisconsin (see Wisconsin summary). In several states, the main problem was the large number of ineligible felons that remained on the voting list.

Election Official Fraud

In most of the cases in which fraud by elections officials is suspected or alleged, it is difficult to determine whether it is incompetence or a crime. There are several cases of ballots gone missing, ballots unaccounted for and ballots ending up in a worker's possession. In two cases workers were said to have changed peoples' votes. The one

instance in which widespread ballot box stuffing by elections workers was alleged was in Washington State. The judge in the civil trial of that election contest did not find that elections workers had committed fraud. Four of the cases are from Texas.

Recommendation

The consultants recommend that subsequent EAC research should include a Nexis search that specifically attempts to follow up on the cases for which no resolution is evident from this particular initial search.

CASE LAW RESEARCH

After reviewing over 40,000 cases from 2000 to the present, the majority of which came from appeals courts, the consultants found comparatively few applicable to this study. Of those that were applicable, the consultants found that no apparent thematic pattern emerges. However, it appears to them that the greatest areas of fraud and intimidation have shifted from past patterns of stealing votes to present problems with voter registration, voter identification, the proper delivery and counting of absentee and overseas ballots, provisional voting, vote buying, and challenges to felon eligibility.

Recommendation

Because so few cases provided a picture of these current problems, consultants suggest that subsequent EAC research include a review of state trial-level decisions.

PROJECT WORKING GROUP

Consultants and EAC worked together to select members for the Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Working Group that included election officials and representatives of advocacy groups and the legal community who have an interest and expertise in the subject matter. (See Attachment A for a list of members.) The working group is scheduled to convene at EAC offices on May 18, 2006 to consider the results of the preliminary research and to offer ideas for future EAC activities concerning this subject.

FINAL REPORT

After convening the project working group, the consultants will draft a final report summarizing the results of their research and the working group deliberations. This report will include recommendations for future EAC research related to this subject matter. The draft report will be reviewed by EAC and, after obtaining any clarifications or corrections deemed necessary, will be made available to the EAC Standards Board and EAC Board of Advisors for review and comment. Following this, a final report will be prepared.

Attachment A

Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Project Working Group

The Honorable Todd Rokita

Indiana Secretary of State

Member, EAC Standards Board and the Executive Board of the Standards Board

Kathy Rogers

Georgia Director of Elections, Office of the Secretary of State

Member, EAC Standards Board

J.R. Perez

Guadalupe County Elections Administrator, TX

Barbara Arnwine

Executive Director, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Leader of Election Protection Coalition

(To be represented at May 18, 2006 meeting by Jon M. Greenbaum, Director of the Voting Rights Project for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law)

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Chair of the Political Law Practice at the law firm of Perkins Coie, DC

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Barry Weinberg

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EAC Invited Technical Advisor:

Craig Donsanto

Director, Election Crimes Branch, U.S. Department of Justice

**Report to the
U. S. Election Assistance Commission
On
Best Practices to Improve Provisional Voting
Pursuant to the
HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2002
Public Law 107-252**

May 12, 2006

Submitted by

The Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

The Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University

FINAL DRAFT
For Review by the Standards Board and Board of Advisors

**Report to the
U. S. Election Assistance Commission**

Best Practices to Improve Provisional Voting

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For Review by the Standards Board and Board of Advisors
The Research Team

This research report on Provisional Voting in the 2004 election is part of a broader analysis that also includes a study of Voter Identification Requirements, a report on which is forthcoming. Conducting the work was a consortium of The Eagleton Institute of Politics of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and The Moritz College of Law of The Ohio State University.

The Eagleton Institute explores state and national politics through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice. It focuses attention on how contemporary political systems work, how they change, and how they might work better. Eagleton regularly undertakes projects to enhance political understanding and involvement, often in collaboration with government agencies, the media, non-profit groups, and other academic institutions.

The Moritz College of Law has served the citizens of Ohio and the nation since its establishment in 1891. It has played a leading role in the legal profession through countless contributions made by graduates and faculty. Its contributions to election law have become well known through its Election Law @ Moritz website. *Election Law @ Moritz* illuminates public understanding of election law and its role in our nation's democracy.

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The Peer Review Group improved the quality of our work by critiquing drafts of our analysis, conclusions and recommendations. While the Group as a whole and the comments of its members individually contributed generously to the research effort, any errors of fact or weaknesses in inference are the responsibility of the Eagleton-Moritz research team. The members of the Peer Review Group do not necessarily share the views reflected in the policy recommendations of the report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Methodology

This report to the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) presents recommendations for best practices to improve the process of provisional voting. It is based on research conducted by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State University under contract to the EAC, dated May 24, 2005.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA, (Public Law 107-252) authorizes the EAC (SEC. 241, 42 USC 15381) to conduct periodic studies of election administration issues. The purpose of these studies is to promote methods for voting and administering elections, including provisional voting, that are convenient, accessible and easy to use; that yield accurate, secure and expeditious voting systems; that afford each registered and eligible voter an equal opportunity to vote and to have that vote counted; and that are efficient. Section 302(a) of HAVA required states to establish provisional balloting procedures by January 2004.¹ The process HAVA outlined left considerable room for variation among the states, arguably including such critical questions as who qualifies as a registered voter eligible to cast a provisional ballot that will be counted and in what jurisdiction (precinct or larger unit) the ballot must be cast in order to be counted.²

The general requirement for provisional voting is that, if a registered voter appears at a polling place to vote in an election for Federal office, but either the potential voter's name does not appear on the official list of eligible voters for the polling place, or an election official asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote, that potential voter must be permitted to cast a provisional ballot. In some states, those who should receive a provisional ballot include, in the words of the EAC's Election Day Survey, "first-time voters who registered by mail without identification and cannot provide identification, as required under HAVA. . ." ³ HAVA also provides that those who vote pursuant to a court order keeping the polls open after the established closing hour shall vote by provisional ballot. Election administrators are required by HAVA to notify individuals of their opportunity to cast a provisional ballot.

¹The Election Center's National Task Force Report on Election Reform in July 2001 had described provisional ballots as providing "voters whose registration status cannot be determined at the polls or verified at the election office the opportunity to vote. The validity of these ballots is determined later, thus ensuring that no eligible voter is turned away and those truly ineligible will not have their ballots counted." It recommended "in the absence of election day registration or other solutions to address registration questions, provisional ballots must be adopted by all jurisdictions." See www.electioncenter.org.

² The 2004 election saw at least a dozen suits filed on the issue of whether votes cast in the wrong precinct but the correct county should be counted. One federal circuit court decided the issue in *Sandusky County Democratic Party v. Blackwell*, 387 F.3d565 (6th Cir. 2004), which held that votes cast outside the correct precinct did not have to be counted. The court relied on the presumption that Congress must be clear in order to alter the state-federal balance; thus Congress, the court concluded would have been clearer had it intended to eliminate state control over polling location (387 F.3d at 578). An alternative argument, that HAVA's definition of "jurisdiction" incorporates the broader definition in the National Voting Rights Act, however, has not been settled by a higher court. But for now states do seem to have discretion in how they define "jurisdiction" for the purpose of counting a provisional ballot.

³ The definition of who was entitled to a provisional ballot could differ significantly among the states. In California, for example, the Secretary of State directed counties to provide voters with the option of voting on a provisional paper ballot if they felt uncomfortable casting votes on the paperless e-voting machines. "I don't want a voter to not vote on Election Day because the only option before them is a touch-screen voting machine. I want that voter to have the confidence that he or she can vote on paper and have the confidence that their vote was cast as marked," Secretary Shelley said. See <http://wired.com/news/evote/0,2645,63298,00.html>. (Our analysis revealed no differences in the use of provisional ballots in the counties with these paperless e-voting machines.) In Ohio, long lines at some polling places resulted in legal action directing that voters waiting in line be given provisional ballots to enable them to vote before the polls closed. (Columbus Dispatch, November 3, 2004.)

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Our research began in late May 2005. It focused on six key questions raised by the EAC.

1. How did the states prepare for the onset of the HAVA provisional ballot requirement?
2. How did this vary between states that had previously had some form of provisional ballot and those that did not?
3. How did litigation affect implementation?
4. How effective was provisional voting in enfranchising qualified voters?
5. Did state and local processes provide for consistent counting of provisional ballots?
6. Did local election officials have a clear understanding of how to implement provisional voting?

To answer those questions, we:

1. Surveyed 400 local (mostly county) election officials to learn their views about the administration of provisional voting and to gain insights into their experience in the 2004 election.
2. Reviewed the EAC's Election Day Survey, news and other published reports in all 50 states to understand the local background of provisional voting and develop leads for detailed analysis.⁴
3. Analyzed statistically provisional voting data from the 2004 election to determine associations between the use of provisional voting and such variables as states' experience with provisional voting, use of statewide registration databases, counting out-of-precinct ballots, and use of different approaches to voter identification.
4. Collected and reviewed the provisional voting statutes and regulations in all 50 states.
5. Analyzed litigation affecting provisional voting or growing out of disputes over provisional voting in all states.

Our research is intended to provide EAC with a strategy to engage the states in a continuing effort to strengthen the provisional voting process and increase the consistency with which provisional voting is administered, particularly within a state. As EAC and the states move forward to assess and adopt the recommendations made here, provisional voting merits continuing observation and research. The situation is fluid. As states, particularly those states that did not offer a provisional ballot before 2004, gain greater experience with the process and as statewide voter databases are adopted, the provisional voting process will demand further, research-based refinement.

KEY FINDINGS

Variation among the states

In the 2004 election, nationwide about 1.9 million votes, or 1.6% of turnout, were cast as provisional ballots. More than 1.2 million, or just over 63%, were counted. Provisional ballots accounted for a little more than 1% of the final vote tally. These totals obscure the wide variation in provisional voting among the states.⁵

⁴ Attachment 1 provides detailed information on how this study classifies the states according to the characteristics of their provisional voting procedures. It also describes how the data used in the statistical analysis may differ from the data in the Election Day Survey, which became available as our research was concluding.

⁵ HAVA allows the states considerable latitude in how to implement provisional voting, including deciding who beyond the required categories of voters should receive provisional ballots and how to determine which provisional ballots should be counted.

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- Six states accounted for two-thirds of all the provisional ballots cast.⁶
- The percentage of provisional ballots in the total vote varied by a factor of 1,000 -- from a high of 7% in Alaska to Vermont's 0.006%.
- The portion of provisional ballots cast that were counted ranged from 96% in Alaska to 6% in Delaware.
- States with voter registration databases counted, on average, 20% of the provisional ballots cast.
- States without databases counted ballots at more than twice that rate: 44%.⁷
- States that provided more time to evaluate provisional ballots counted a greater proportion of those ballots. Those that provided less than one week counted an average of 35.4% of their ballots, while states that permitted more than 2 weeks, counted 60.8%.

An important source of variation among states was a state's previous experience with provisional voting. The share of provisional ballots in the total vote was six times greater in states that had used provisional ballots before than in states where the provisional ballot was new. In the 25 states that had some experience with provisional voting before HAVA, a higher portion of the total vote was cast as provisional ballots and a greater percentage of the provisional ballots cast were counted than in the 18 new to provisional balloting.⁸

Variation within states

Within states, too, there was little consistency among different jurisdictions. Of the 20 states for which we have county-level provisional ballot data, the rate of counting provisional ballots varied by as much as 90% to 100% among counties in the same state. This suggests that additional factors (including the training of election judges or poll workers) beyond statewide factors, such as experience or the existence of voter registration databases, also influence the use of provisional ballots.

- In Ohio some counties counted provisional ballots not cast in the assigned precinct even though the state's policy was to count only those ballots cast in the correct precinct.
- Some counties in Washington tracked down voters who would otherwise have had their provisional ballots rejected because they had failed to complete part of their registration form, gave them the chance to correct those omissions, and then counted the provisional ballot.

Resources available to administer provisional voting varied considerably among and within states. Differences in demographics and resources result in different experiences with provisional voting. For example, the Election Day Survey found that staffing problems appeared to be particularly acute for jurisdictions in the lowest income and education categories. Small, rural jurisdictions and large, urban jurisdictions tended to report higher rates of an inadequate number of poll workers within polling places or precincts.

- Jurisdictions with lower education and income tend to report more inactive voter registrations, lower turnout, and more provisional ballots cast.

⁶ California, New York, Ohio, Arizona, Washington, and North Carolina. The appearance of Arizona, Washington and North Carolina on this list shows that the number of provisional ballots cast depends on factors other than the size of the population.

⁷ As the Carter-Baker Commission report put it, "provisional ballots were needed half as often in states with unified databases as in states without." Report on the Commission on Federal Election Reform, "Building Confidence in U. S. Elections," September 2005, p. 16.

⁸ See the appendix for our classification of "old" and "new" states and explanation of why the total is less than 50.

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- Jurisdictions with higher levels of income and education reported higher average numbers of poll workers per polling place or precinct and reported lower rates of staffing problems per precinct.

In precincts located in districts where many voters live in poverty and have low levels of income and education, the voting process, in general, may be managed poorly. Provisional ballots cannot be expected to work much better. In these areas, the focus should be on broader measures to improve the overall functionality of struggling voting districts, although improving the management of provisional balloting may help at the margin.

The lessons of litigation

Successful legal challenges highlight areas where provisional voting procedures were wanting. A flurry of litigation occurred around the country in October 2004 concerning the so-called "wrong precinct issue" – whether provisional ballots cast by voters in a precinct other than their designated one would be counted for statewide races. Most courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (the only federal appeals court to rule on the issue), rejected the contention that HAVA requires the counting of these wrong-precinct provisional ballots. This litigation was significant nonetheless.

- First, the Sixth Circuit decision established the precedent that voters have the right to sue in federal court to remedy violations of HAVA.
- Second --and significantly-- the litigation clarified the right of voters to receive provisional ballots, even though the election officials were certain they would not be counted. The decision also defined an ancillary right --the right to be directed to the correct precinct. There voters could cast a regular ballot that would be counted. If they insisted on casting a provisional ballot in the wrong precinct, they would be on notice that it would be a symbolic gesture only.
- Third, these lawsuits prompted election officials to take better care in instructing precinct officials on how to notify voters about the need to go to the correct precinct in order to cast a countable ballot.

States move to improve their processes

Shortly after the 2004 election, several states came to the conclusion that the administration of their provisional voting procedures needed to be improved, and they amended their statutes. The new legislation highlights areas of particular concern to states about their provisional voting process.

- Florida, Indiana, Virginia, and Washington have clarified or extended the timeline to evaluate the ballots.
- Colorado, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Washington have passed legislation focused on improving the efficacy and consistency of the voting and counting process.
- Colorado, Arkansas, and North Dakota took up the issue of counting provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct.

The wide variation in the implementation of provisional voting among and within states suggests that EAC can help states strengthen their processes. Research-based recommendations for best, or at least better, practices that draw on the experience gained in the 2004 election can be useful in states' efforts to achieve greater consistency in the administration of provisional voting. The important effect of experience on the administration of the provisional ballot process indicates that the states have much they can learn from each other.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICES

State efforts to improve the provisional voting process have been underway since the 2004 election. By recommending best practices, the EAC will offer informed advice while respecting diversity among the states.

Take a quality-improvement approach

Defining what constitutes a successful provisional voting system is difficult. Defining quality requires a broad perspective about how well the system works, how open it is to error recognition and correction, and how well provisional voting processes are connected to the registration and voter identification regimes. A first step is for states to recognize that improving quality begins with seeing the provisional voting process as a system and taking a systems approach to regular evaluation through standardized metrics with explicit goals for performance. EAC can facilitate action by the states by recommending as a best practice that:

- Each state collect data systematically on the provisional voting process to permit evaluation of its voting system and assess changes from one election to the next. The data collected should include: provisional votes cast and counted by county; reasons why provisional ballots were not counted, measures of variance among jurisdictions, and time required to evaluate ballots by jurisdiction

Emphasize the importance of clarity

Above all else, the EAC should emphasize the importance of clarity in the rules by which each state governs provisional voting. As state legislators and election officials prepare for the 2006 election, answers to the questions listed in the recommendation section of this report could be helpful. Among those questions are:

- Does the provisional voting system distribute, collect, record, and tally provisional ballots with sufficient accuracy to be seen as procedurally legitimate by both supporters and opponents of the winning candidate?
- Do the procedural requirements of the system permit cost-efficient operation?
- How great is the variation in the use of provisional voting in counties or equivalent levels of voting jurisdiction within the state? Is the variation great enough to cause concern that the system may not be administered uniformly across the state?

Court decisions suggest areas for action

The court decisions following the 2004 election also suggest procedures for states to incorporate into their procedures for provisional voting. EAC should recommend to the states that they:

- Promulgate clear standards for evaluating provisional ballots, and provide training for the officials who will apply those standards.
- Provide effective materials to be used by local jurisdictions in training poll workers on such procedures as how to locate polling places for potential voters who show up at the wrong place.
- Make clear that the only permissible requirement to obtain a provisional ballot is an affirmation that the voter is registered in the jurisdiction and eligible to vote in an election for federal office. Poll workers need appropriate training to understand their duty to give such voters a provisional ballot.

Assess each stage of the provisional voting process

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Beyond the procedures suggested by court decisions, states should assess each stage of the provisional voting process. They can begin by assessing the utility and clarity of the information for voters on their websites and by considering what information might be added to sample ballots mailed to voters before elections. The better voters understand their rights and obligations, the easier the system will be to manage, and the more legitimate the appearance of the process.

Avoiding error at the polling place will allow more voters to cast a regular ballot and all others who request it to cast a provisional ballot. Our recommendations for best practices to avoid error at the polling place include:

- The layout and staffing of the multi-precinct polling place is important. States should ensure that training materials distributed to every jurisdiction make poll workers familiar with the options available to voters.
- The provisional ballot should be of a design or color sufficiently different from a regular ballot to avoid confusion over counting and include take-away information for the voter on the steps in the ballot evaluation process.
- Because provisional ballots offer a fail-safe, supplies of the ballots at each polling place should be sufficient for all the potential voters likely to need them. Best practice would be for states should provide guidelines (as do Connecticut and Delaware) to estimate the supply of provisional ballots needed at each polling place.

The clarity of criteria for evaluating voter eligibility is critical to a sound process for deciding which of the cast provisional ballots should be counted.

- State statutes or regulations should define a reasonable period for voters who lack the HAVA-specified ID or other information bearing on their eligibility to provide it in order to facilitate the state's ability to verify that the person casting the provisional ballot is the same one who registered. At least 11 states allow voters to provide ID or other information one to 13 days after voting. Kansas allows voters to proffer their ID by electronic means or by mail, as well as in person.
- More provisional voters have their ballots counted in those states that count ballots cast outside the correct precinct. While HAVA arguably leaves this decision up to the states, pointing out the effect of the narrower definition on the portion of ballots counted could be useful to the states in deciding this question. States should be aware, however, of the additional burden placed on the ballot-evaluation process when out-of-precinct ballots are considered. And tradeoffs are involved if out-of-precinct voters are unable to vote for the local offices that might appear on the ballot in their district of residence.
- If a state does require voters to appear at their assigned precinct, where the same polling site serves more than one precinct, a voter's provisional ballot should count so long as the voter cast that ballot at the correct polling site even if at the wrong precinct within that location. While the best practice might be for poll workers to direct the voter to correct precinct poll workers' advice is not always correct, and the voter should be protected against ministerial error.
- Officials should follow a written procedure, and perhaps a checklist, to identify the reason why a provisional ballot is rejected. Colorado's election rules offer particularly clear guidance to the official evaluating a provisional ballot.

In verifying provisional ballots, the time by which election officials must make their eligibility determinations is particularly important in presidential elections because of the need to certify electors to the Electoral College. Our research did not identify an optimum division of the five weeks available.

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- The best practice here is for states to consider the issue and make a careful decision about how to complete all steps in the evaluation of ballots and challenges to those determinations within the five weeks available.

After the election, timely information to voters about the disposition of their provisional ballot can enable voters to determine if they are registered for future elections and, if not, what they need to do to become registered.

- Best practice for the states is to establish mechanisms to ensure that voters casting provisional ballots are informed whether they are now registered for future elections and, if not, what they need to do to become registered.

Final observation

The detailed examination of each stage in the provisional voting process can lay the foundation each state needs to improve its system. Efforts to improve provisional voting may be most effective as part of a broader effort by state and local election officials to strengthen their systems. Collecting and analyzing data about those systems will enable states to identify which aspects of the registration and electoral system are most important in shunting voters into the provisional ballot process. Responsible officials can then look to their registration system, identification requirements or poll worker training as ways to reduce the need for voters to cast their ballots provisionally.

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Provisional Voting in 2004

In the 2004 election, nationwide about 1.9 million votes, or 1.6% of turnout, were cast as provisional ballots. More than 1.2 million or just over 63% were counted. Provisional ballots accounted for a little more than 1% of the final vote tally.

These totals obscure the wide variation in provisional voting among the states.⁹ Six states accounted for two-thirds of all the provisional ballots cast.¹⁰ State by state, the percentage of provisional ballots in the total vote varied by a factor of 1,000 -- from a high of 7% in Alaska to Vermont's 0.006%. The portion of provisional ballots cast that were actually counted also displayed wide variation, ranging from 96% in Alaska to 6% in Delaware. States with voter registration databases counted, on average, 20% of the provisional ballots cast. Those without databases counted provisional ballots at more than twice that rate, 44%.

An important source of variation was a state's previous experience with provisional voting. The share of provisional ballots in the total vote was six times greater in states that had used provisional ballots before than in states where the provisional ballot was new. In the 25 states that had some experience with provisional voting before HAVA, a higher portion of the total vote was cast as provisional ballots and a greater percentage of the provisional ballots cast were counted than in the 18 new to provisional balloting.¹¹

- The percentage of the total vote cast as provisional ballots averaged more than 2% in the 25 experienced states. This was 4 times the rate in states new to provisional voting, which averaged 0.47%.¹²
- The experienced states counted an average of 58% of the provisional ballots cast, nearly double the proportion in the new states, which counted just 33% of cast provisional ballots.
- The combined effect of these two differences was significant. In experienced states 1.53% of the total vote came from counted provisional ballots. In new states, provisional ballots accounted for only 0.23% of the total vote.

Those voting with provisional ballots in experienced states had their ballots counted more frequently than those in the new states. This experience effect is evidence that there is room for improvement in provisional balloting procedures, especially in those states new to the process.¹³ That conclusion gains support from the perspectives of the local election officials revealed in the survey conducted as a part of this research. Local (mostly county level) election officials from "experienced" states were more likely to:

⁹ HAVA allows the states considerable latitude in how to implement provisional voting, including deciding who beyond the required categories of voters should receive provisional ballots and how to determine which provisional ballots should be counted.

¹⁰ California, New York, Ohio, Arizona, Washington, and North Carolina. The appearance of Arizona, Washington and North Carolina on this list shows that the number of provisional ballots cast depends on factors other than the size of the population.

¹¹ See the appendix for our classification of "old" and "new" states and explanation of why the total is less than 50.

¹² To compensate for the wide differences in vote turnout among the 50 states the average figures here are calculated as the mean of the percent cast or counted rather than from the raw numbers of ballots cast or counted.

¹³ Managing the provisional voting process can strain the capacity election administrators. For example, Detroit, counted 123 of the 1,350 provisional ballots cast there in 2004. A recent study concluded that Detroit's "6-day time limit to process provisional ballots was very challenging and unrealistic. To overcome this challenge, *the entire department's employees were mobilized to process provisional ballots.*" (emphasis added.) GAO Report-05-997, "Views of Selected Local Officials on Managing Voter Registration and Ensuring Citizens Can Vote," September 2005.

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- Be prepared to direct voters to their correct precincts with maps;
- Regard provisional voting as easy to implement;
- Report that provisional voting sped up and improved polling place operations
- Conclude that the provisional voting process helped officials maintain accurate registration databases.

Officials from "new" states, on the other hand, were more likely to agree with the statement that provisional voting created unnecessary problems for election officials and poll workers.

If experience with provisional voting does turn out to be a key variable in performance, that is good news. As states gain experience with provisional ballots their management of the process could become more consistent and more effective over subsequent elections. Further information from the EAC on best practices and the need for more consistent management of the election process could sharpen the lessons learned by experience. The EAC can facilitate the exchange of experience among the states and can offer all states information on more effective administration of provisional voting.

Concluding optimistically that experience will make all the difference, however, may be unwarranted. Only if the performance of the "new" states was the result of administrative problems stemming from inexperience will improvement be automatic as election officials move along the learning curve. Two other possibilities exist. Our current understanding of how provisional voting worked in 2004 is not sufficient to determine unambiguously which view is correct.

1. "New" states may have a political culture different from "old" states. That is, underlying features of the "new" states political system may be the reason they had not adopted some form of provisional voting before HAVA. The "new" states may strike a different balance among the competing objectives of ballot access, ballot security and practical administration. They may ascribe more responsibility to the individual voter to take such actions as registering early, finding out where the right precinct is, or re-registering after changing address. They may value keeping control at the local level, rather than ceding authority to state or federal directives. The training they offer poll workers about provisional ballots may not be as frequent or effective as in other states. If the inconsistent performance in the "new" states arises out of this kind of political culture, improving effectiveness in the use of the provisional ballots -- as measured by intrastate consistency in administration--- will be harder and take longer to achieve.¹⁴
2. "Old" states may devote fewer resources to updating their registration files or databases because they consider provisional ballots as a reasonable fall safe way for voters with registration problems a way to cast a ballot. The adoption of statewide voter registration databases in compliance with HAVA therefore may reduce the variation in the use of provisional ballots among the states.

Other influences decreasing consistency among the states include:

¹⁴ Despite differing political cultures among states and the latitude HAVA provides states, the statute does, indeed impose some degree of uniformity on issues that Congress thought essential. For example, before HAVA, took effect, "no state gave the voter the right to find out the status of their ballot after the election." Now all offer that opportunity. See Bali and Silver, "The Impact of Politics, Race and Fiscal Strains on State Electoral Reforms after Election 2000," manuscript, Department of Political Science, Michigan State University. Resisting HAVA's mandates through foot-dragging lacks any legitimate foundation in law or policy.

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- The more rigorous the verification requirements, the smaller the percentage of provisional ballots that were counted. Some states verified provisional ballots by comparing the voter's signature to a sample, some matched such identifying data as address, birth date, or social security number, others required voters who lacked ID at the polling place to return later with the ID to evaluate the provisional ballot, and some required provisional voters to execute an affidavit.¹⁵
 - In the 4 states that simply matched signatures, nearly 3.5% of the total turnout consisted of provisional ballots, and just under three-fourths of those ballots (73%) were counted.
 - In the 14 states that required voters to provide such additional information as address or date of birth just over 1.5% of the total turnout consisted of provisional ballots, and 55% of those ballots were counted.
 - In the 14 states that required an affidavit (attesting, for example, that the voter was legally registered and eligible to vote in the jurisdiction) just over one-half of a percent (0.6%) of turnout came from provisional ballots, and less than one-third of those (30%) were counted. (But note that HAVA requires all voters to certify that they are eligible and registered in order to cast a provisional ballot, which is functionally an affidavit. The 14 states described here used an explicit affidavit form.)
 - In the 10 states that required voters to return later with identifying documents just under 1.5% of the total turnout came from provisional ballots, and more than half (52%) of these were counted. Voters apparently found this requirement less onerous than the affidavit, even though it required a separate trip to a government office
- Voter registration databases provided information that reduced the number of provisional ballots counted.¹⁶ In states using provisional voting for the first time, states with registered-voter databases counted only 20% of the ballots that were cast. States without such databases counted more than double that rate (44%). As HAVA's requirement for adoption of statewide databases spreads across the country, this variation among states is likely to narrow. Real-time access to a continually updated, statewide list of registered voters should reduce the number of provisional ballots used and reduce the percentage counted since most of those who receive them will be less likely to be actually registered in the state.
- States that counted out-of-precinct ballots counted 56% of the provisional ballots cast. States that counted ballots cast only in the proper precinct counted an average of 42% of provisional ballots.¹⁷

¹⁵ See Table 2 in Appendix 2 for information on the verification method used in each state.

¹⁶ The Election Day Survey found that states using statewide voter registration databases reported a lower incidence of casting provisional ballots than states without voter registration databases, suggesting that better administration of voter registration rolls might be associated with fewer instances where voters would be required to cast a provisional ballot due to a problem with their voter registration.

¹⁷ The Election Day Survey concluded that: "Jurisdictions with jurisdiction-wide provisional ballot acceptance reported higher rates of provisional ballots cast, 2.09 percent of registration or 4.67 percent of ballots cast in polling places, than those with in-precinct-only acceptance, 0.72 and 1.18 percent, respectively. Predictably, those jurisdictions with more permissive jurisdiction-wide acceptance reported higher rates of counting provisional ballots, 71.50 percent, than other jurisdictions, 52.50 percent."

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- In experienced states, the disparity was even more pronounced: 52% of provisional ballots cast were counted in states requiring in-district ballots, while 70% were counted in those allowing out-of-precinct ballots.
- If all states had counted out-of-precinct ballots, perhaps 290,000 more provisional ballots would have been counted across the country.¹⁸
- States that provide a longer the time to evaluate provisional ballots counted a higher proportion of those ballots.¹⁹
 - Fourteen states permitted less than one week to evaluate provisional ballots, 15 states permitted between one and two weeks, and 14 states permitted greater than two weeks²⁰.
 - Those states that permitted less than one week counted an average of 35.4% of their ballots.
 - States that permitted between one and two weeks counted 47.1%.
 - States that permitted more than 2 weeks, counted 60.8% of the provisional ballots cast²¹.
 - The effect of allowing more time for evaluation is felt most strongly in states where more than 1% of the overall turnout was of provisional ballots. In states where provisional ballots were used most heavily, those that permitted less than one week to evaluate ballots counted 58.6% while those that permitted one to two weeks counted 65.0% of ballots, and those states that permitted greater than three weeks verified the highest proportion of provisional ballots, at 73.8%.

Variation Within States

Not only was there little consistency among states in the use of provisional ballots, there was also little consistency within states. This was true in both new and old states. Of the 20 states for which we have county-level provisional ballot data, the rate of counting provisional ballots varied by as much as 90% to 100% among counties in the same state. This suggests that additional factors beyond statewide factors, such as verification requirements or the time provided for ballot evaluation, also influence the provisional voting process. Reacting to the lack of consistency within states, the Carter-Baker Commission recommended that "states, not counties or municipalities, should establish uniform procedures for the verification and counting of provisional ballots, and that procedure should be applied uniformly throughout the state."²²

Election Line reported that:

¹⁸ This estimate is a rough approximation. States that recognize out-of-precinct ballots counted, on average, 56% of the provisional votes cast. Applying that ratio to the 1.9 million provisional ballots cast nationwide would result in 1.1 million provisional ballots that would have been counted if all states accepted out-of-precinct votes. States that did not recognize out-of-precinct ballots counted 42% of the provisional ballots cast, or about 813,000 ballots, for a difference of about 290,000 votes.

¹⁹ See Appendix __, Relationship Between Time Allotted to Verify Provisional Ballots and the Level of Ballots that are Verified, David Andersen, The Eagleton Institute of Politics

²⁰ Many thanks to Ben Shepler, of the Moritz College of Law, for assembling complete data on the time requirements states permitted for the counting of provisional ballots.

²¹ 43 states are included in this analysis, including Washington D.C. The 7 election-day registration states are omitted, as is Mississippi, which never provided data on provisional ballots. North Carolina is also omitted from the regressions, as it does not have a statewide policy on how it verifies provisional ballots.

²² Recommendation 2.3.2 of the Report of the Commission on Federal Election Reform, "Building Confidence in U.S. Elections," September 2005, p.16. The report also observed that, "...different procedures for counting provisional ballots within and between states led to legal challenges and political protests. Had the margin of victory for the presidential contest been narrower, the lengthy dispute that followed the 2000 election could have been repeated."

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- In Ohio some counties counted provisional ballots not cast in the assigned precinct even though the state's policy was to count only those ballots cast in the correct precinct.
- Some counties in Washington tracked down voters who would otherwise have had their provisional ballots rejected because they had failed to complete part of their registration form, gave them the chance to correct those omissions, and then counted the provisional ballot. This would probably not have come to light except for the sharp examination caused by the very close election for governor.

Resources available to administer provisional voting varied considerably among and within states. The result is that differences in demographics and resources result in different experiences with provisional voting. For example, the Election Day Survey found that:

- Jurisdictions with lower education and income tend to report more inactive voter registrations, lower turnout, and more provisional ballots cast.
- Jurisdictions with higher levels of income and education reported higher average numbers of poll workers per polling place or precinct and reported lower rates of staffing problems per precinct.
- Staffing problems appeared to be particularly acute for jurisdictions in the lowest income and education categories. Small, rural jurisdictions and large, urban jurisdictions tended to report higher rates of an inadequate number of poll workers within polling places or precincts.
- Predominantly non-Hispanic, Black jurisdictions reported a greater percentage of polling places or precincts with an inadequate number of poll workers. Predominantly non-Hispanic, Native American jurisdictions reported the second highest percentage of staffing problems.

The conclusions to be drawn from these findings are clear. In voting districts with lower education levels, poverty, and inadequately staffed polling places, the voting process is unlikely to function well. More people will end up casting provisional ballots. That makes the provisional voting process especially important in such districts. But if jurisdictions struggle with regular voting, how well are they likely to do with the more complicated provisional balloting process? In precincts where the voting process, in general, is managed poorly, provisional ballots cannot be expected to work much better. In these areas, the focus should be on broader measures to improve the overall functionality of struggling voting districts, although improving the management of provisional balloting may help at the margin.

Effectiveness of Provisional Voting

The certainty of our conclusions about the effectiveness of provisional voting is limited because of the complexity of the problem and a lack of important information. An ideal assessment of how well provisional ballots worked in 2004 would require knowing the decisions of local officials in 200,000 precincts on how to inform voters about provisional voting; their performance in providing a provisional ballot to those qualified to receive one, and their decisions whether to count a provisional ballot. Information needed about the eligibility or registration status of provisional voters is also not available.

We see no automatic correlation between the quality of a state's voting system and either the number of provisional ballots cast or counted. Low numbers could reflect accurate statewide voting data and good voter education. Or they could suggest that provisional ballots were not

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made easily available. High numbers could be seen as signifying an effective provisional voting system or a weak registration process. But we do know that in 2004 provisional ballots allowed 1.2 million citizens to vote, citizens who would otherwise have been turned away from the polls.

Since we do not know the total number of registered voters who might have voted but could not makes a precise, quantitative estimate of the effectiveness of provisional voting impossible. The Cal Tech – MIT Voting Technology Project, however, estimated that 4 – 6 million votes were lost in the 2000 presidential election for the reasons shown in Table 1 below. The estimate is an approximation, but it may provide data good enough for a general assessment of the size of the pool of potential voters who might have been helped by the provisional ballot process.

Votes Lost (Millions)	Cause
1.5 – 2	Faulty equipment and confusing ballots
1.5 – 3	Registration mix-ups
<1	Polling place operations
?	Absentee ballot administration

Table 1 Cal Tech – MIT Voting Technology Project Estimates
4 – 6 million votes are lost in presidential elections due to the causes shown in the table. Registration mix-ups (e.g., name not on list) and polling place operations (e.g., directed to wrong precinct) are the causes most likely to be remedied by provisional voting.

The table shows that the universe of voters who could be helped by provisional voting might be 2.5 – 3 million voters. In 2004, about 1.2 million provisional voters were counted. A rough estimate, then, of the effectiveness of provisional voting in 2004, then, might be 40% to 50% (ballots counted/votes lost)²³. Whatever the precise figure, it seems reasonable to conclude that there is considerable room for improvement in the administration of provisional voting.

Legislative Response

Indeed, several states²⁴ came to the conclusion that the administration of their provisional voting procedures needed to be improved and amended their statutes after the 2004 election. State legislation adopted since the election points to particular areas of concern.

²³ Another interpretation of the data should be considered. The Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) developed the category of "registration mix-ups" to assess the states' registration systems. After each election the CPS asks people if they were registered and if they voted. The CPS gives breakdowns of reasons why people did not vote. Survey responders tend to deflect blame when answering questions about voting. In the narrow context of provisional ballots, 'registration problems' would cover only voters who went to the polls where the determination that they were not registered was wrong or they were registered, but in the wrong precinct. If they were in the wrong precinct, provisional voting can help them in only 17 states. In 2004, only 6.8% of those not voting and registered blamed registration problems, while 6.9% reported so in 2000.

²⁴ Twelve states made statutory or regulatory changes: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Virginia and Wyoming. See Table 4 in Appendix 2.

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Not enough time to examine and count the provisional ballots. Florida, Indiana, Virginia, and Washington all have clarified or extended the timeline to evaluate the ballots. But taking more time can prove a problem, particularly in presidential elections with the looming deadline to certify the vote for the Electoral College.²⁵

Lack of uniform rules for counting ballots and effective training of the election officials in interpreting and applying those rules to determine the validity of ballots. Colorado, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Washington have all passed legislation focused on improving the efficacy and consistency of the voting and counting process.

Litigation

Successful legal challenges to the process highlight areas where provisional voting procedures were wanting. A flurry of litigation occurred around the country in October 2004 concerning the so-called "wrong precinct issue" – whether provisional ballots cast by voters in a precinct other than their designated one would be counted for statewide races. These lawsuits were largely unsuccessful in their stated goal: most courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (the only federal appeals court to rule on the issue), rejected the contention that HAVA requires the counting of these wrong-precinct provisional ballots.

This litigation was significant nonetheless.

- First, the Sixth Circuit decision established the precedent that voters have the right to sue in federal court to remedy violations of HAVA.
- Second --and significantly-- the litigation clarified the right of voters to receive provisional ballots, even though the election officials were certain they would not be counted. The decision also defined an ancillary right --the right to be directed to the correct precinct. There voters could cast a regular ballot that would be counted. If they insisted on casting a provisional ballot in the wrong precinct, they would be on notice that it would be a symbolic gesture only.
- Third, these lawsuits prompted election officials to take better care in instructing precinct officials on how to notify voters about the need to go to the correct precinct in order to cast a countable ballot – although the litigation regrettably came too late to be truly effective in this regard. In many states, on Election Day 2004, the procedures in place for notifying voters about where to go were less than ideal, reflecting less-than-ideal procedures for training poll workers on this point.

There was also pre-election litigation over the question whether voters who had requested an absentee ballot were entitled to cast a provisional ballot. In both cases (one in Colorado and one, decided on Election Day, in Ohio), the federal courts ruled that HAVA requires that these voters receive a provisional ballot. Afterwards, it is for state officials under state law to

²⁵ The resources available to evaluate and count provisional ballots within a tight schedule may not be easily available. The General Accounting Office reports that Detroit, where 1,350 provisional ballots were cast and 123 counted, found the 6-day time frame for processing provisional ballots "very challenging and unrealistic. To overcome this challenge, the *entire department's employees were mobilized to process provisional ballots.*" The report also found that in Los Angeles County, "staff had to prepare duplicate ballots to remove ineligible or invalid contests when voters cast their ballots at the wrong precinct. To overcome this challenge, staffing was increased to prepare the duplicate ballots." In a close, contested election, "duplicate" ballots would doubtless receive long and careful scrutiny." See Appendix 7, GAO, "Views of Selected Local Election Officials on Managing Voter Registration and Ensuring Eligible Citizens Can Vote," September 2005. (GAO Report-05-997)

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determine whether these provisional ballots will be counted, in part by determining if these provisional voters already had voted an absentee ballot (in which case one ballot should be ruled ineligible, in order to avoid double voting). These decisions confirm the basic premise that provisional ballots should be available whenever voters believe they are entitled to them, so that their preferences can be recorded, with a subsequent determination whether these preferences count as valid votes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because every provisional ballot counted represents a voter who, if the system had worked perfectly, should have voted by regular ballot, the advent of statewide registration databases is likely to reduce the use of provisional ballots. The one area in which such databases may not make a difference is for those who voted by provisional ballot because they did not bring required identification documents to the polling place. The statewide voter registration database will facilitate verifying that ballot, but the voter will still have voted provisionally. Beyond that exception, even with statewide registries in every state, provisional voting will remain an important failsafe, and voters should have confidence that the failsafe will operate correctly.

The wide variation in the implementation of provisional voting among and particularly within states suggests that EAC can help states strengthen their processes. Research-based recommendations for best, or at least better, practices based on the experience gained in the 2004 election can be useful in states' efforts to achieve greater consistency in the administration of provisional voting.

Recommendations for Best Practices

Recent legislative activity shows that state efforts to improve the provisional voting process are underway. Those states, as well as others that have not yet begun to correct shortcomings that became apparent in 2004, can benefit from considering the best practices described here. By recommending best practices, the EAC will offer informed advice while respecting diversity among the states. One way to strengthen the recommendations and build a constituency for them would be for EAC to ask its advisory committee members to recommend as best practices procedures that have worked in their states.

Self-evaluation of Provisional Voting –4 Key Questions

The first need to achieve greater consistency within each state is to think about provisional voting systematically. As legislators, election officials, and citizens in the states prepare for the 2006 election, they should ask themselves these questions about their provisional voting systems.

1. Does the provisional voting system distribute, collect, record, and tally provisional ballots with sufficient accuracy to be seen as procedurally legitimate by both supporters and opponents of the winning candidate? Does the tally include all votes cast by properly registered voters who correctly completed the steps required?
2. Is the provisional voting system sufficiently robust to perform well under the pressure of a close election when ballot evaluation will be under scrutiny and litigation looms?
3. Do the procedural requirements of the system permit cost-efficient operation? Are the administrative demands of the system reasonably related to the staff and other resource requirements available?

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4. How great is the variation in the use of provisional voting in counties or equivalent levels of voting jurisdiction within the state? Is the variation great enough to cause concern that the system may not be administered uniformly across the state?

If the answers to these questions leave room for doubt about the effectiveness of the system or some of its parts, the EAC's recommendation of best practices should provide the starting point for a state's effort to improve its provisional voting system.

Best Practices For Each Step In The Process

We examined each step of the provisional voting process to identify specific areas where the states should focus their attention to reduce the inconsistencies noted in our analysis. We offer recommendations in each area appropriate to the responsibilities that HAVA assigns the EAC for the proper functioning of the provisional voting process.

The Importance of Clarity

The EAC should emphasize above all else the importance of clarity in the rules governing every stage of provisional voting. As the Century Foundation's recent report observed, "Close elections increasingly may be settled in part by the evaluating and counting of provisional ballots. . . . To avoid post election disputes over provisional ballots—disputes that will diminish public confidence in the accuracy and legitimacy of the result-- well in advance of the election, states should establish, announce, and publicize clear statewide standards for every aspect of the provisional ballot process, from who is entitled to receive a provisional ballot to which ones are counted."²⁶

Litigation surrounding the 2004 election resulted in decisions that, if reflected in state statutes or regulations and disseminated in effective training for poll workers, can increase the clarity of provisional ballot procedures, increase predictability, and bolster confidence in the system. By taking the following steps, states can incorporate those court rulings into their procedures.

- Promulgate, ideally by legislation, clear standards for evaluating provisional ballots, and provide training for the officials who will apply those standards. For example, in Washington State, the court determined that an election official's failure in evaluating ballots to do a complete check against all signature records is an error serious enough to warrant re-canvassing.²⁷ Clear direction by regulation or statute on what records to use in evaluating ballots could have saved precious time and effort and increased the reliability of the provisional voting system.
- States should provide poll workers standard information resources for the training of poll workers by local jurisdictions. Training materials might include, for example, maps or databases with instruction on how to locate polling places for potential voters who show up at the wrong place. Usable and useful information in the hands of poll workers can protect voters from being penalized by ministerial errors at the polling place.²⁸

²⁶ The Century Foundation, *Balancing Access and Integrity*, Report of the Working Group on State Implementation of Election Reforms, July 2005.

²⁷ See *Washington State Republican Party v. King County Division of Records*, 103 P3d 725, 727-728 (Wash. 2004)

²⁸ See *Panio v. Sunderland* 824 N.E.2d 488, 490 (NY, 2005) See also Order, *Hawkins v. Blunt*, No.04-4177-CV-C-RED (W.D. Mo. October 12, 2004). While rejecting the notion that all ballots cast in the wrong precinct should be counted, the court ruled that provisional votes cast in the wrong precinct should be thrown out provided that the voter had been directed to the correct precinct. This meant that provisional votes cast in the wrong precinct (and even the

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- State training materials provided to local jurisdictions should make clear that the only permissible requirement to obtain a provisional ballot is an affirmation that the voter is registered in the jurisdiction and eligible to vote in an election for federal office.²⁹ Recent legislation in Arizona indicates that recommendations should emphasize HAVA's requirement that persons appearing at the polling place claiming to be registered voters cannot be denied a ballot because they do not have identification with them. Poll workers may need appropriate training to understand their duty to give such voters a provisional ballot.³⁰

A. Registration and Pre-Election Information for Voters

Providing crisp, clear information to voters before the election is important to the success of the provisional voting process. The better voters understand their rights and obligations, the easier the system will be to manage, and the more legitimate the appearance of the process. States can begin by assessing the utility and clarity of the information for voters on their websites and by considering what information might be added to sample ballots mailed to voters before elections. Best practices in this area would include:

1. If states require identification at the time of registration, the kind of IDs required should be stated precisely and clearly and be publicly and widely available in a form that all voters can understand. For example, "You must bring your driver's license. If you don't have a driver's license, then you must bring an ID card with your photograph on it and this ID card must be issued by a government agency."³¹
2. The process to re-enfranchise felons should be clear and straightforward. To avoid litigation over the registration status of felons, best practice should be defined as making re-enfranchisement automatic, or no more burdensome than the process required for any new registrant.³²
3. State or county websites for voters should offer full, clear information on boundaries of precincts, location of polling places, requirements for identification, and other necessary guidance that will facilitate registration and the casting of a regular ballot. An 800 number should also be provided. Models are available: the statewide databases in Florida and Michigan provide voters with provisional voting information, registration verification and precinct location information.

B. At the Polling Place

wrong polling place) would count if there were no evidence that the voter had been directed to a different polling place. The court placed a duty upon election officials to make sure the voters were in the correct locations. Note that this question would not arise in a state that counted ballots cast in the wrong polling place but within the correct county.

²⁹ *Sandusky County Democratic Party v. Blackwell*, 387 F.3d 565, 774 (6th Cir. 2004)

³⁰ *The Florida Democratic Party v. Hood*, 342 F. Supp. 2d 1073, 1075-76 (N.D. Fla. 2004). The court explained that provisional voting is designed to correct the situation that occurs when election officials do not have perfect knowledge and when they make incorrect determinations about eligibility (the "fail-safe" notion). Denying voters provisional ballots because of on-the-spot determinations directly contradicts this idea. Even before the cited decision, the Florida Secretary of State's office had determined that any voter who makes the declaration required by federal law is entitled to vote a provisional ballot, even if the voter is in the wrong precinct.

³¹ Websites in 29 states describe, with varying degrees of specificity, the identification voters may need. In 18 states voters can learn something about the precinct in which they should vote. And in 6 states (California, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, and South Carolina) they can verify their registration on the website.

³² The Century Foundation, *op. cit.*

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Avoiding error at the polling place will allow more voters to cast a regular ballot and all others who request it to cast a provisional ballot.

1. The layout and staffing of the polling place, particularly the multi-precinct polling place is important. Greeters, maps, and prominently posted voter information about provisional ballots, ID requirements, and related topics can help the potential voters cast their ballot in the right place. States should require poll workers to be familiar with the options and provide the resources needed for them to achieve the knowledge needed to be helpful and effective. Colorado has clear regulations on polling place requirements, including HAVA information and voting demonstration display.³³ Many states require training of poll workers. In some states that requirement is recent: after the 2004 election, New Mexico adopted a requirement for poll workers to attend an "election school."³⁴ A state statutory requirement for training could facilitate uniform instruction of poll workers in those states that do not already provide it.
2. The provisional ballot should be of a design or color sufficiently different from a regular ballot to avoid confusion over counting, as occurred in Washington State. The ballot might include a tear-off leaflet with information for voters such as: "Reasons Why Your Provisional Ballot Might Not Be Counted" on one side and "What to Do if My Provisional Ballot Is Not Counted" on the other.
3. Because provisional ballots offer a fail-safe, supplies of the ballots at each polling place should be sufficient for all the potential voters likely to need them. In 2004, some polling places ran out of ballots, with unknown effects on the opportunity to vote. In Middlesex County, New Jersey, for example, on Election Day the Superior Court ordered the county clerk to assure that sufficient provisional ballots were available at several heavily used polling places, and it authorized the clerk "in the event additional provisional ballots are required . . . to photocopy official provisional ballots."³⁵ At least two states, Connecticut and Delaware, provide guidelines to local election officials on how to estimate the demand for provisional ballots. Connecticut sets the number at 1% of the voters in the district, Delaware at 6%.³⁶ States that do not offer a practical method to guide the supply of provisional ballots at polling places should consider doing so. The guideline should take into account both the number of voters in the district and the number of provisional ballots actually cast in recent elections.
4. To achieve the procedural clarity needed to forestall disputes, states should establish a clear chain of custody for the handling of provisional ballots from production through distribution, collection and, finally, evaluation. A number of states have clear procedures for at least parts of this chain of custody. All states should examine their chain-of-custody requirements for clarity. Illinois includes the potentially beneficial requirement that ballots be transported by bi-partisan teams, which offers the potential to avoid some charges of election fraud.

³³ 8 Colo. Code Regs. § 1505-1, Rule 7.1.

³⁴ 2005 N.M. Laws 270 page no. 4-5.

³⁵ Voting Order, November 2, 2004, Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Middlesex County.

³⁶ Connecticut: "Equal to or not less than 1% of the number of electors who are eligible to vote in any given district, or such other number as the municipal clerk and the registrars agree is sufficient to protect voting rights. Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 9-232j. Delaware: Each County Department of Elections Office is required to provide to each election district a number of provisional ballots equal to 6% of registered voters in that district, with a minimum allocation of 15 ballots. Additional supplies to be delivered when the supply becomes "very low." Del.Code Ann. Tit 15 § 4948(e).

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C. Evaluating Voter Eligibility and Counting Provisional Ballots

The clarity of criteria for evaluating voter eligibility is critical to a sound process for deciding which of the cast provisional ballots should be counted. Public recognition of the validity of those criteria is important to establishing the legitimacy of the system as a whole. The experience in 2004 in North Carolina, Washington, and Ohio underlines the importance of clear criteria. As the Century Foundation report put it, "Whatever procedures the states choose [to determine if a provisional ballot should be counted], the paramount consideration—as with all others concerning provisional voting—is that they be clear and thus not susceptible to post-election manipulation and litigation."³⁷ Nonetheless, the *Panio v. Sutherland*³⁸ decision in New York shows the difficulty of defining the range of administrative errors from which the provisional voters should be held harmless. Even when the standard is "clerical error" judges can differ over what that means exactly. Possibly a state law might be able to clarify a definition by giving examples of clerical errors, but even then the definition is unlikely to be perfect.

1. State statutes or regulations should define a reasonable period for voters who lack the HAVA-specified ID or other information bearing on their eligibility to provide it in order to facilitate the state's ability to verify that the person casting the provisional ballot is the same one who registered. While there may be a concern to ensure that the individual who returns with the ID may not be the same individual who cast the provisional ballot, the spirit of HAVA demands that the opportunity to prove identity be provided after Election Day. A signature match can go far in establishing that the individual who voted and the individual returning later with identification is, in fact, the same person. Encouraging a voter who lacks ID on Election Day to return later to help the verification process by providing proper identification will strengthen the system and increase public confidence in the electoral process. Our data indicate that some voters would prefer to return with ID rather than to sign an affidavit, perhaps because of uncertainty about the legal process involved in the affidavit. At least 11 states allow voters to provide ID or other information one to 13 days after voting. Of particular interest is Kansas, which allows voters to proffer their ID by electronic means or by mail, as well as in person.³⁹
2. More provisional ballots are counted in those states that verify ballots cast outside the correct precinct.⁴⁰ While HAVA arguably leaves this decision up to the states, pointing out the effect of the narrower definition on the portion of ballots counted could be useful to the states in deciding this question. States should be aware, however, of the

³⁷ The Century Foundation, op. cit.

³⁸ 4 N.Y.3d 123, 824 N.E.2d 488 (N.Y. 2005) and Memorandum (LaPlante—Foley) Provisional Ballot Cases by State, July 19, 2005.

³⁹ In Kansas, the voter can provide ID to a County Election Officer any time before the County Board of Canvassers meets to count provisional ballots. KS. ST. 25-1122(d). ID can be presented in person, OR via mail or electronic means. *Id.* The Board must meet either on the Friday or Monday following a Tuesday election. *Id.* at 25-3104. Deadlines in other states are: Alabama -- 5:00 P.M. on the Monday following the election AL ST § 17-10A-2(c)(1) Florida: until 5:00 P.M. on the third day following the election. Fla. Stat. Ann. § 101.048 (adopted after the 2004 election); Georgia—no later than 2 days after the election. GA ST § 21-2-417; 419. Illinois- 2 days to submit additional information 10 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/18A-15(d); Indiana— in 2004 the deadline was the close of the polls IN. ST. §. 3-11.7-5-2(a). The time period was extended to 13 days by the adoption of Indiana Code 3-11-8, Section 25, Subsection (l); Maryland—until the meeting of the Election Board; MD ELEC LAW § 11-303. New Jersey— until the close of business on the second day after the election 19:53C-3(i). Nevada— until 5:00 P.M. on the Friday following the election NV ST 293.3085; New Mexico—until 7:00 P.M. on Election Day NM ADC 1.10.22 (B) (H).

⁴⁰ See Andersen, op. cit, pgs. 23 – 24 for an analysis of the significant effect of counting out-of-precinct ballots. The Election Day Survey found that, "Most notably, jurisdictions that permitted jurisdiction-wide acceptance of provisional ballots reported higher rates of provisional ballots being cast, but also reported a much higher incidence of provisional ballots being counted, than other jurisdictions."

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additional burden placed on the ballot-evaluation process when out-of-precinct ballots are considered. And tradeoffs are involved if out-of-precinct voters are unable to vote for the local offices that might appear on the ballot in their district of residence. One option for states is to involve the voters in the decision by pointing out that voters who cast their provisional ballots in the wrong precinct may not be able to participate in the local election. The voter could then decide to go to the correct precinct or vote provisionally for the higher offices at the top of the ticket only.

3. Alternatively, if a state chooses to require voters to appear at their assigned precinct, where the same polling site serves more than one precinct, a voter's provisional ballot should count so long as the voter cast that ballot at the correct polling site even if at the wrong precinct within that location.⁴¹ Ideally the voter could be directed to the correct machine, but poll worker advice will not always be correct. One way to assess the balance of issues here is to consider that, if a voter in a multi-precinct polling place is sent to the wrong machine, the error is probably the poll worker's, and the voter should not be penalized.
4. Officials should follow a written procedure, and perhaps a checklist, to identify the reason why a provisional ballot is rejected (e.g., check the applicable box "unregistered voter"; "lack of signature match" "wrong precinct," etc.) Those forms should be disclosed publicly when completed. Colorado's election rules offer particularly clear guidance to the official evaluating a provisional ballot.⁴²

Colorado Rejection Codes (Any ballot given a rejection code shall not be counted):

- RFS (Rejection federal or state) No federal or state candidates or issues to duplicate.
- RNS (Rejection not signed) Provisional Ballot Affidavit not signed.
- RIN (Rejection incomplete information provided) Required information is incomplete and the designated election official is unable to confirm voter's eligibility.
- RNR (Rejection not registered) Voter did not register by the voter registration deadline or by emergency registration, Colorado voter registration record was not found, or voter was previously cancelled and has not been reinstated pursuant to 1-2-605(10). C.R.S.
- REE (Rejection envelope empty) Provisional ballot envelope is empty.
- RAB (Rejection voter voted absentee) Designated election official has confirmed that voter voted an absentee ballot.
- REV (Rejection based on ballot cast in early voting) Voter voted early.
- RIP (Rejection based on incorrect party) Incorrect Party in Primary Election.
- RFE (Rejection felon not eligible to vote) Individual was convicted of a felony and is either serving a sentence of confinement or detention or is on parole.
- RWC (Rejection elector not registered in county or State of Colorado) Non-county or non-state resident; therefore voter not eligible to vote in the county where the provisional ballot was voted.
- RID (Rejection first time voter has not supplied identification upon registration or thereafter prior to and during time voter voted) First Time Voter who

⁴¹ Chances are administrative error accounts for the voter being directed to the wrong precinct under these circumstances.

⁴² 8 CCR 1505-1, at 26.5.4, adopted August 4, 2005. See also 1-2-509(3) C.R.S.

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registered by mail or through a voter registration drive, is tagged as id deficient, and did not provide id at the time of voting.

RRD (Rejection registration deficient) Voter had deficient or incomplete registration and required information was not provided prior to or at the time of filling in the provisional ballot envelope. Voter's eligibility cannot be established.

D. Verification of Provisional Ballots

1. States that use the information on the provisional ballot to permit voters who have changed their addresses to update their registrations should adopt clear procedures on that process and specify how the new information will be communicated between different Boards of Elections
2. In verifying provisional ballots, the time by which election officials must make their eligibility determinations is particularly important in presidential elections because of the need to certify electors to the Electoral College. States should consider in particular how to divide the time allowed them by the safe-harbor provisions that apply in presidential elections to the certification to the Electoral College. Some part of this five-week period will be consumed by the eligibility evaluation, but states should take care to provide a sufficient period of time as well for challenges. If a state consumes 21 days following the election in the eligibility evaluations, only two weeks will remain for legal challenges to be concluded. Is that sufficient? Or should the state provide the resources needed to complete the eligibility determinations in 10 days or two weeks, leaving three weeks or more for legal challenges in a close election? Our research did not identify an optimum division of the five weeks available. The prudent course here would be to encourage states to consider the issue and then make a careful decision about how to complete all steps in the evaluation of ballots and challenges to those determinations within the five weeks available.

E. Post-election Information for Voters

Timely information to voters about the disposition of their provisional ballot will provide helpful feedback and more important enable voters to determine if they are registered for future elections and, if not, what they need to do to become registered.

1. Establish mechanisms to ensure that voters casting provisional ballots are informed whether they are now registered for future elections and, if not, what they need to do to become registered.

F. State Laws Governing Litigation over Provisional Voting

1. Establish special, streamlined litigation procedures for Election Day complaints that individuals are being denied the right to cast a provisional ballot

Broader Considerations

G. Integrity and the Appearance of Integrity

1. State laws or regulations providing for non-partisan or bi-partisan bodies to make a public determination of the validity of provisional ballots would increase confidence in the system.

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2. To improve transparency, state laws or regulations should require the purging process for registration to be public and with an opportunity for voters to correct an erroneous determination that they should be purged.
3. State laws or regulation should require the evaluation process for provisional ballots to be public, while protecting the names of those who voted provisionally.

H. Continuous Assessment of the Provisional Ballot -- Process and Performance

Defining what makes for a successful provisional voting system is difficult. The most successful system is probably not the one with the most provisional votes cast (that could indicate problems with the registration system). Nor is the system with the greatest number counted or with the fewest counted necessarily superior because the evaluation process could be flawed.

Defining quality requires a broad perspective about how well the system works, how open it is to error recognition and correction, and how well provisional voting processes are connected to the registration and voter identification regimes. The EAC should consider engaging one of the national quality organizations or processes, such as Six Sigma⁴³ or the Baldrige Quality process⁴⁴ to evaluate the provisional ballot process. Pending such a review, the EAC can recommend that states take the following actions.

1. Recognize that the first step to improving quality is to see the provisional voting process as a system and take a systems approach to regular evaluation through standardized metrics with explicit goals for performance.
2. States should begin by collecting data systematically on the provisional voting process so that they can evaluate their voting system and assess changes from one election to the next. The effort should start in the 2006 election, and the data collected should include:
 - Provisional votes cast and counted by jurisdiction, say counties, with details on why the voter had to vote provisionally (lack of ID, not on list, challenged at polling place, issued absentee ballot, etc) and number of ballots actually counted in each category.
 - Reasons why provisional ballots were not counted, using categories such as those that have been adopted by Colorado, described earlier in this report.
 - Measures of variance among jurisdictions.
 - Number of poll workers trained in administration of provisional voting by polling place
 - Number of jurisdictions posting information on provisional voting in the polling place
 - Time required to evaluate ballots by jurisdiction

⁴³ Six Sigma is a measure of quality that strives for near perfection. Six Sigma is a disciplined, data-driven approach and methodology for eliminating defects (driving towards six standard deviations between the mean and the nearest specification limit) in any process -- from manufacturing to transactional and from product to service.

⁴⁴ The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence provide a systems perspective for understanding performance management. They reflect validated, leading-edge management practices against which an organization can measure itself. With their acceptance nationally and internationally as the model for performance excellence, the Criteria represent a common language for communication among organizations for sharing best practices. The Criteria are also the basis for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award process.

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Improving understanding of the provisional voting process through analysis of detailed information will enable state and local election officials to strengthen their systems. By collecting and analyzing this data states can identify which aspects of the registration and electoral system are most important in shunting voters into the provisional ballot process. Responsible officials can then look to their registration system, identification requirements or poll worker training as a way to reduce the need for voters to cast their ballots provisionally.

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ATTACHMENT 1 – Data Sources for Classification of the States

Our research on provisional voting divided the various states into several categories to allow an assessment of how different factors may have influenced the process of casting and counting provisional ballots. This analysis was conducted before the release of the Election Day Study, and the categories we used may differ in some respects from its work. The variables used to analyze a state's use of provisional ballots:

1. New vs. Old (states that used a provisional ballot before the 2004 election)
2. Use of a statewide database of registered voters vs. no use of a statewide database
3. Counting out-of-precinct ballots vs. not counting out-of-precinct ballots
4. Voter identification requirements
5. Method used to verify provisional ballots
6. Levels of provisional ballots cast and counted

We first assigned states within these categories based on classifications done by Electionline.org in its studies. The Electionline data was the only published information available at the time of our research. We reviewed the Electionline data carefully, and, in select cases, updated it with new, detailed information that had become available after its publication. The changes we made are explained below.

--Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Wyoming were excluded from our analysis. They have election-day registration systems, and did not need to use HAVA-compliant provisional ballots.

--North Dakota does not register voters, so it also was excluded from HAVA requirements and did not use provisional voting.

--Mississippi has not reported its provisional voting results and could not be included in our analysis, though it was compliant in 2004.

--Pennsylvania did not report its totals for the Election Day Study, but we obtained information on Pennsylvania and included it in our analysis.

New vs. Old States

We classified states as "new" or "old" based on the 2001 Electionline study of provisional voting,⁴⁵ but condensed its classifications into a single dichotomous variable, new/old with all other cases excluded. The Electionline study divided states into five categories of their use of provisional ballots in the 2000 election:

1. Use of provisional ballots (P)
2. Limited use of provisional ballots (LP)
3. Affidavit ballots (A)
4. No system in place (N)
5. Unnecessary/Not Applicable (UNA)

We included in the list of "Old States" all states listed as using provisional ballots, limited use of provisional ballots or affidavit ballots. States in all three categories would have been familiar with key aspects of provisional voting. States that had no provisional voting system in place for the 2002 election, and were HAVA compliant in 2004, were listed as "new" states, as 2004 would have been the first year in which they would be offering the option of provisional voting. States that were listed as unnecessary or not applicable were excluded from this study, as they

⁴⁵ This study can be found at: <http://electionline.org/Portals/1/Publications/Provisional%20Voting.pdf>.

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were exempt from the HAVA regulations in 2004 because they either allowed same-day registration or did not register voters.

Rhode Island is the only state categorized as an old state by Electionline that we moved into the list of new states. Electionline's map shows Rhode Island as a state that used provisional voting in 2000, but in the state description, it is listed as having no system in place. We learned from the Rhode Island Board of Elections that the state had previously permitted potential voters to sign an affidavit if they did not appear on a precinct's list of registered voters, but felt they were registered to vote. Based on the signed affidavit, the election official would then contact a county official to see if the voter was on a more complete registration list. If the voter's name was on the complete list, that voter was permitted to cast a regular ballot. As this process did not grant the voter a provisional ballot, but served as a different type of administrative failsafe, we concluded that Rhode Island's first use of provisional voting was in 2004 and, therefore, classified the state as "new" to the system of provisional balloting.

Table 1		
CATEGORIZATION OF STATES -- Old and New		
Old States	New States	HAVA Exempt or NA
Alaska	Connecticut	Idaho
Alabama	Delaware	Maine
Arkansas	Georgia	Minnesota
California	Hawaii	New Hampshire
Colorado	Illinois	North Dakota
DC	Indiana	Wisconsin
Florida	Louisiana	Wyoming
Iowa	Massachusetts	
Kansas	Missouri	
Kentucky	Montana	
Maryland	Nevada	
Michigan	Oklahoma	
Mississippi	Pennsylvania	
Nebraska	Rhode Island	
New Jersey	South Dakota	
New Mexico	Tennessee	
New York	Utah	
North Carolina	Vermont	
Ohio		
Oregon		
South Carolina		
Texas		
Virginia		
Washington		
West Virginia		
26	18	7

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Statewide List of Registered Voters

The Electionline preview of the 2004 Election⁴⁶ was the starting point for compiling a list of states that had a statewide database of registered voters. That study listed 34 States that did not have their statewide database systems complete, and 16 that did, including the District of Columbia. North Dakota does not register voters, so does not need to compile such a database. Electionline's criterion for concluding that a state had a statewide list was that the state have participation from all jurisdictions in a statewide system. We added Oklahoma to the list of states with statewide databases because we found it had met the Electionline criteria by the 2004 election, albeit too late for inclusion in the Electionline survey.

Out-of-Precinct Ballots

We based our classification of states that allow the counting of ballots cast outside the correct precinct on the data in the 2004 Electionline preview of the 2004 election². States that evaluated ballots cast in a precinct where the voter was not registered were categorized as "out-of-precinct." States that invalidated such ballots were categorized as "In-precinct only."

Out-of-Precinct	In-Precinct Only	HAVA EXEMPT OR NA
Alaska	Alabama	Idaho
Arkansas	Arizona	Maine
California	Colorado	Mississippi
Delaware	Connecticut	New Hampshire
Georgia	District of Columbia	North Dakota
Illinois ⁴⁷	Florida	Wisconsin
Kansas	Hawaii	Wyoming
Louisiana	Indiana	
Maryland	Iowa	
New Mexico	Kentucky	
North Carolina	Massachusetts	
Oregon	Michigan	
Pennsylvania	Missouri	
Rhode Island	Montana	
Utah	Nebraska	
Vermont	Nevada	
Washington	New Jersey	
	New York	
	Ohio	
	Oklahoma	
	South Carolina	
	South Dakota	
	Tennessee	
	Texas	
	Virginia	
	West Virginia	
17	26	7

⁴⁶ "Election Preview 2004: What's changed, What Hasn't and Why". This study can be found at: <http://electionline.org/Portals/1/Publications/Election.preview.2004.report.final.update.pdf>

⁴⁷ In Illinois, it is not clear that all counties followed this procedure. Some counties may not have counted out-of-precinct ballots.

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Verification Method

We identified four different ways states assessed provisional ballots to determine if they should be counted: signature match, match voter data, signed affidavits, and bringing back identification later. We gathered information about these verification techniques by checking state websites and consulting journalistic accounts. We consulted state legislation to provide further information where needed.

Table 3
CATEGORIZATION OF STATES -- Ballot Evaluation Methods

Signature Match	Data Match	Affidavit	Return with ID	NA
Alaska	Alabama	Connecticut	Indiana	Idaho
California	Arizona	Delaware	Iowa	Maine
Florida	Arkansas	Georgia	Kansas	Mississippi
Oregon	Colorado	Hawaii	Maryland	Minnesota
	DC	Illinois	Michigan	New Hampshire
	Louisiana	Kentucky	Montana	N. Carolina*
	Missouri	Massachusetts	New Jersey	N. Dakota
	Ohio	Nebraska	New Mexico	Wisconsin
	Oklahoma	Nevada	Texas	Wyoming
	Pennsylvania	New York	Utah	
	Rhode Island	South Dakota		
	S. Carolina	Tennessee		
	Washington	Vermont		
	West Virginia	Virginia		
4	14	14	10	9

* North Carolina lacked clear standards to evaluate provisional ballots and is excluded from this analysis.

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Data Collection

To assemble our data for analysis, we began by using the data on provisional votes cast and counted reported by Electionline. To increase the accuracy of this data, we surveyed each state's election websites for updated data, and for reported numbers on the county level. We then sent emails to 49 (we excluded Alaska, see below) states and the District of Columbia, requesting updated data on the number of provisional votes cast and counted by county. We received information from 25 states by our cut-off date of August 25, 2005.

Received Updated Data	Did Not Receive Updated Data
California	Alabama
District of Columbia	Alaska ⁴⁸
Florida	Arizona
Hawaii	Arkansas
Indiana	Colorado
Iowa	Connecticut
Kansas	Delaware
Louisiana	Georgia
Maryland ⁴⁹	Idaho
Missouri	Illinois
Montana	Kentucky
Nebraska ⁵⁰	Maine
Nevada	Massachusetts
New Jersey	Michigan
New Mexico	Minnesota
Ohio	Mississippi
Oklahoma	New Hampshire
Oregon	New York
Pennsylvania	North Carolina
Rhode Island	North Dakota
South Dakota	South Carolina
Tennessee	Utah
Texas	Vermont
Virginia	Wisconsin
Washington	Wyoming
West Virginia	
26 States	25 States

⁴⁸ Alaska was not contacted via email, as the state does not have voting districts comparable to counties in other states and could not be matched with comparable census data.

⁴⁹ Maryland reported provisional ballots that were counted per county, but not number cast.

⁵⁰ Nebraska reported an incomplete list of provisional ballots cast and counted by county, but designated counties by number, rather than by name.

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For Review by the Standards Board and Board of Advisors

Data Differences

The data used in this study differ from the data reported in the Election Day Study for 19 states. The Election Day Study was not completed until well after our statistical analysis of provisional voting was finished. Where there are differences, they are typically very small, usually fewer than 100 votes either cast or counted. Of the 9 states that have differences of more than 100 votes cast or counted, 7 have reported their numbers directly to us and can be considered updated data that EDS had not obtained. For one of those states, New Mexico, EDS had incomplete data, and for another, Pennsylvania, EDS had no data at all. The data that we have collected reflects updated numbers from the states that have changed following recounts and litigation that altered how ballots were evaluated.

State	EDS Numbers Cast/Counted	Our Numbers Cast/Counted	Differences	Updated Info from State? ⁵¹
Alabama	6,478/1,865	6560/1836	82/29	No
Alaska	23,285/22,498	23,275/22,498	10/0	No
Colorado	51,529/39,086	51,477/39,163	52/77	No
Georgia	12,893/4,489	12,893/3,839	0/650	No
Hawaii	346/25	348/25	2/0	Yes
Iowa	15,406/8,038	15,454/8,048	48/10	Yes
Kansas	45,535/32,079	45,563/31,805	28/274	Yes
Montana	688/378	653/357	35/21	Yes
Nebraska	17,421/13,788	17,003/13,298	418/490	Yes
Nevada	6,153/2,446	6,154/2,447	1/1	Yes
New Mexico	6,410/2,914	15,360/8,767	8,950/5,853	Yes
N. Carolina	77,469/50,370	77,469/42,348	0/8,022	No
Ohio	157,714/123,902	158,642/123,548	928/354	Yes
Pennsylvania	No data	53,698/26,092	53,698/26,092	Yes
Texas	35,282/7,156	36,193/7,770	911/614	Yes
Vermont	121/30	101/37	20/7	No
Virginia	4,608/728	4,609/728	1/0	Yes
Washington	92,402/73,806	86,239/69,273	6,163/4,533	Yes
Wisconsin	374/119	373/120	1/1	No

⁵¹ Data not provided by the state itself is taken from Electionline figures.

>>> <pdegregorio@eac.gov> 10/08/06 4:06 PM >>>
Eric,

Good to see you in Boston. Sorry I couldn't say for your session, but I did read what you submitted.

I looked over your topics. I also did a quick glance of your post-2004 survey. While you list your topics and make reference to your 2004 survey, I could not tell from your topics whether you are going to ask most of the same questions from your previous survey. Some of them would certainly be worth repeating to detect trends.

Since only 17% indicated in your last survey that they had replaced equipment (while 40% said they had planned to), I wonder if that question needs to be further defined since all jurisdictions have to have devices that allow HAVA 301a compliance (disability privacy and independence). Perhaps you can ask if they replaced equipment or if they kept their equipment and added a voting device for people with disabilities at each polling place.

Also, it may be helpful to know if the LEO receives adequate funding from local, state and the federal government for their operations (on some kind of 1-5 scale). I don't know how deeply you want to get into poll worker pay or training but finding out the mean pay of poll workers and the mean number of hours they are trained could be helpful.

While 81% of LEOs reported in your last survey that they were adequately trained as an election official, I wonder how many feel mandatory state LEO training or certification should be required. Should it be tied to pay increases for LEOs?

What about questions on how they are served by the media? Does the media do an adequate job in providing correct information to the voters?

Do they believe the federal government should set higher standards for voting equipment or are the present standards adequate?

Do you plan to ask a question again this year on the adequacy of the service they are provided by vendors?

There was very little mention of fraud in your last survey and I don't see it listed as a topic, which I know has been a concern to many members of Congress (especially in the passage by the House of the ID law). Do you plan to ask any questions on that topic? It would be interesting to know

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if LEOs uncovered any fraud in their jurisdiction, what type of fraud (registration, petition, absentee, voting, vote-buying), whether they referred it to local or federal prosecutors and whether the prosecutors did anything about it. When it comes to fraud, many LEOs complain to me that they see (especially with bogus registrations and on petitions) it but local prosecutors do not prosecute it.

I know I have made quite a few suggestions and that this survey is probably more limited than what you did in 2004.

Hope this helps.

Paul DeGregorio
Chairman
US Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York Ave, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
1-866-747-1471 toll-free
202-566-3100
202-566-3127 (FAX)
pdegregorio@eac.gov
www.eac.gov

"Eric Fischer" <[REDACTED]>
10/02/2006 12:33 PM

To
pdegregorio@eac.gov
cc

Subject
Request for input on new CRS survey

Dear Paul:

I am writing to ask for your help in preparing a list of survey questions.

The purpose of the survey is to help the 110th Congress as it considers further action in election reform, especially, for what issues is it most important that Congress know the perspectives of local election officials?

Below is a draft list of topics that we are considering. It would be very helpful if you could let me know if there are any additional topics

we should consider for the survey, or if any of those on the current list do not seem relevant to you. Please keep in mind that we are interested

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in the perspectives of election officials, not details about how they administer elections (other surveys cover those matters). Also, the survey focuses on election administration, not other election issues such as redistricting or campaign finance.

I will greatly appreciate any feedback you can give us, and it will be most helpful if you can respond by Monday, October 9.

Here are the topics:

Background Information

- General Information on Respondent
- Training and Experience of Respondent
- Voting Systems Used in Jurisdiction

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

- Voting Accessibility
- Voter Registration Database
- Voter ID
- Provisional Ballots
- Funding
- Election Assistance Commission
- Other Major Provisions
- Implementation and Compliance Issues

Computer-Assisted Voting

- DREs versus Optical Scan
- Security Issues
- Usability Issues
- Paper Trail and Audits

Conducting Elections

- Effects of HAVA on Voters, Poll Workers, and

Administrators

- Poll Worker Recruitment and Training
- Back-up and Contingency Plans
- Partisanship and Election Administration

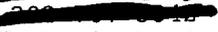
In case you have not seen it, I have attached a copy of our CRS report from the 2004 survey. This year, we are once again working with the Bush School at Texas A&M University to do the survey. Here is link to a paper by them that includes details on the questions and responses from 2004:

/academics/mpsa/capstone/projects/VotingSystemsReport.pdf

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Fischer, PhD
Senior Specialist, Science and Technology
Congressional Research Service
Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20540-7450

ph: 
f: 
 deleted by Paul

026502

DeGregorio/EAC/GOV]

026503



"Cameron Quinn"
<cquinn@sprintmail.com>
05/15/2004 03:42 PM

To "Craig Burkhardt" [REDACTED], "Mike
McSherry" [REDACTED], "Michael Thielen"
<thielen@[REDACTED]>, "Paul DeGregorio - EAC"
cc

bcc Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV

Subject Fw: votingtech Voting Fraud Expose about to Explode

History: This message has been forwarded

fyi - had saved this - might come up this fall. cpq

----- Original Message -----

Sent: Thursday, July 03, 2003 12:13 AM

Subject: FW: votingtech Voting Fraud Expose about to Explode

> FYI, the message below was posted today to the Votingtech list. I refrain
> from comment.

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Dennis Paull [REDACTED]

> Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2003 3:53 PM

> To: votingtech@hss.caltech.edu

> Subject: votingtech Voting Fraud Expose about to Explode

>

>

> Hi all,

>

> Please excuse if this is old hat to you.

>

> I assume that you have been following the Bev Harris investigation.

> Now, it seems, she has found the smoking gun. Interestingly, she

> claims that code hacking affects not just DREs but optical scan

> equipment from years back.

>

> Bev has been investigating the possibilities of vote counting fraud

> since after the Nov 2000 election. She and her friends have been

> searching for evidence that massive fraud existed and that the current

> Republican control of Congress, as well as Bush's election, was cooked.

>

> Bev is saying that she has now discovered such evidence and is about to

> make it public. As you might imagine, this has a few folks riled up.

>

> If she follows through as she states, this would be the biggest story

> since WaterGate and maybe since 1776. It is definitely worth following.

>

> As a start, you might scan the thread of messages on this topic on the

> DemocraticUnderground forum. It is not easy to follow, but you will

> get a sense of how others are reacting to these events.

>

> [REDACTED]

>

> The bomb, and the spinmeisters' responses, could come within a week,

> even by tomorrow. The final strategy as to how to get the maximum effect

> is not yet disclosed. There are some high powered people ready to make

> as much of this as can be imagined, so stay tuned.

>

> Bev's web site is:

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>

>

>

> and was not up to date as of a day or so ago. I expect it will become
> the focal point as soon as she goes fully public. If you can't find it,
> suspect that someone has gotten to her ISP. The information is being
> spread widely around the internet including outside the country, so it
> will be VERY hard to keep it off of your screen and out of the papers.

>

> Dennis Paull

026505



DeForest Soaries
Jr./EAC/GOV
05/17/2004 11:51 AM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
bcc
Subject Re: e-mail from July 03

I agree completely.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
Paul DeGregorio

From: Paul DeGregorio
Sent: 05/17/2004 09:21 AM
To: DeForest Soaries Jr.
Subject: e-mail from July 03

Buster,

I don't know if you ever saw the e-mail that follows below. It was sent around last summer, and, because I am on so many lists, I got a copy. I think it will show you some of the partisan push that is driving some of this debate on DRE's and security. These people actually believe that it was massive fraud that put Bush and the GOP congress in place. This is utter nonsense and we have to be careful not to be a party to promoting the cause of those who continue to promote this train of thought. I know the EAC has taken great steps and you have shown great leadership to deal with this issue in a responsible manner. Getting Drs. Rubin and Williams together was that kind of leadership. Having the May 5 hearing was another. I know that we are likely to see an increase in conspiracy theories in the coming months. It will be a challenge for all of us.

Paul

>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Dennis Paull [mailto:]
> Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2003 3:53 PM
> To: votingtech@hss.caltech.edu
> Subject: votingtech Voting Fraud Expose about to Explode
>
>
> Hi all,
>
> Please excuse if this is old hat to you.
>
> I assume that you have been following the Bev Harris investigation.
> Now, it seems, she has found the smoking gun. Interestingly, she
> claims that code hacking affects not just DREs but optical scan
> equipment from years back.
>
> Bev has been investigating the possibilities of vote counting fraud
> since after the Nov 2000 election. She and her friends have been
> searching for evidence that massive fraud existed and that the current
> Republican control of Congress, as well as Bush's election, was cooked.
>
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> make it public. As you might imagine, this has a few folks riled up.

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>
> If she follows through as she states, this would be the biggest story
> since WaterGate and maybe since 1776. It is definitely worth following.
>
> As a start, you might scan the thread of messages on this topic on the
> DemocraticUnderground forum. It is not easy to follow, but you will
> get a sense of how others are reacting to these events.
>
> [REDACTED]
>
> The bomb, and the spinmeisters' responses, could come within a week,
> even by tomorrow. The final strategy as to how to get the maximum effect
> is not yet disclosed. There are some high powered people ready to make
> as much of this as can be imagined, so stay tuned.
>
> Bev's web site is:
>
> [REDACTED]
>
> and was not up to date as of a day or so ago. I expect it will become
> the focal point as soon as she goes fully public. If you can't find it,
> suspect that someone has gotten to her ISP. The information is being
> spread widely around the internet including outside the country, so it
> will be VERY hard to keep it off of your screen and out of the papers.
>
> Dennis Paull



Gracia Hillman /EAC/GOV
07/13/2004 08:21 AM

To Diane Savoy/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc DeForest Soaries Jr./EAC/GOV@EAC, "Paul DeGregorio"
<pdegregorio@eac.gov>, "Ray Martinez"
<rmartinez@eac.gov>
bcc

Subject Re: Public Meeting Agenda

History: This message has been replied to.

I know we aren't prepared to give a report of our June hearing but I think it has to be mentioned at some point during the meeting. Having a report of the May hearing but not the June hearing seems to beg the question.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
Diane Savoy

From: Diane Savoy
Sent: 07/13/2004 08:06 AM
To: DeForest Soaries Jr.; Gracia Hillman; Raymundo Martinez; Paul DeGregorio
Subject: Public Meeting Agenda

Below is the current agenda. Any comments?

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Adoption of Agenda

Remarks by Commissioners

Updates and Reports

- EAC Administration
- Title 2 Requirements Payments
- Report on May 5, 2004 Public Hearing
- Standards Board and Board of Advisors
- Technical Guidelines Development Committee
- College Program

Recommendations

- Grant to Student Mock Organization
- Best Practices
- Public Hearing on Poll Workers/September 13, 2004
- November Election Research Project

- Electronic Voting Security Policy
- Public Meeting Schedule

Presentations

- Approach to Election Fraud - Department of Justice, Election Crimes Branch
- National Software Reference Library - National Institute of Standards and Technology

Adjournment

L. Diane Savoy
Consulting Chief of Staff
U.S. Election Assistance Commission

e-mail: dsavoy@eac.gov
phone: 202-566-3100
fax: 202-566-3127



DeForest Soaries
Jr./EAC/GOV

07/22/2004 09:27 AM

To Raymundo Martinez/EAC/GOV, "Gracia Hillman"
<ghillman@eac.gov>, "Paul DeGregorio"
<pdegregorio@eac.gov>
cc John C. Vergelli/EAC/GOV, "Diane Savoy"
<Dsavoy@eac.gov>

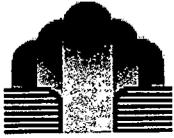
bcc

Subject DOJ

I spoke to the Ass't US attorneys Tuesday at their training conference. I was asked to describe EAC mission and address the areas of mutual interest between DOJ and EAC. I talked for 25 minutes about voting rights, voter fraud, voter intimidation and voting systems security. If the speech was recorded, I will provide a transcript.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

026510



DeForest Soaries
Jr./EAC/GOV
09/17/2004 04:46 PM

To Paul DeGregorio/EAC/GOV@EAC
cc
bcc
Subject Re: John Fund article

Interesting.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
Paul DeGregorio

From: Paul DeGregorio
Sent: 09/17/2004 04:31 PM
To: DeForest Soaries Jr.
Subject: John Fund article

I'm going to buy his book this weekend.

September 13, 2004, 6:33 a.m.

Democracy Imperiled

America's election problems.

By John Fund

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the introduction of John Fund's new book, *Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy*, released today from Encounter Books.

Our nation may be on the brink of repeating the 2000 Florida election debacle, but this time in several states, with allegations of voter fraud, intimidation and manipulation of voting machines added to the generalized chaos that sent our last presidential contest into overtime. There is still time to reduce the chance of another electoral meltdown, both this year and in future years. But this will not happen unless we acknowledge that the United States has a haphazard, fraud-prone election system befitting an emerging Third World country rather than the world's leading democracy.

With its hanging chads, butterfly ballots and Supreme Court intervention, the Florida fiasco compelled this country to confront an ugly reality: that we have been making do with what noted political scientist Walter Dean Burnham has called "the modern world's sloppiest electoral systems." How sloppy? Lethally so. At least eight of the nineteen hijackers who attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were actually able to register to

026511