



## **Plight of the Poll Worker: Efforts to Improve Training and Support for Poll Workers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida, and Michigan**

### **Introduction**

Poll workers have been called the “champions of democracy.” They are the last defense between a well-run democracy and an unstable, ineffective political system. Unfortunately, poll workers also are sometimes called the weakest link in the nation’s election system. The United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) estimates that two million poll workers are needed to run a national election.<sup>1</sup> Less than six weeks before mid-term elections, election officials across the nation still struggle to recruit sufficient numbers of poll workers and to train them adequately.

The poll worker shortage is not a new phenomenon. Prior to and immediately following the 2004 presidential election, news outlets across the country reported critical shortages of poll workers that threatened to undermine the stability of the election process. In 2004, there was a shortage of at least 500,000 poll workers nationwide.<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times* reported that urban areas were experiencing acute shortages, especially in areas where bilingual poll workers were needed.<sup>3</sup> The City of Philadelphia was recently sued by the U.S. Department of Justice for failing to provide Spanish translators at the polls.

While the shortage of poll workers has received extensive public attention, the training and support for poll workers is rarely scrutinized. Yet, as elections have become technologically and procedurally more complex, the training and support offered to poll workers have not kept pace. A glimpse of the chaos that can result when poll workers are not properly trained and supported can be seen in several 2006 primary elections, in Ohio, Maryland and other states. Serious electoral breakdowns have occurred in primary elections across the country even as turnout was dismally low. With much higher turnout expected in the November 2006 general elections, a meltdown seems likely unless strong interventions are made now.

The security and integrity of our elections depend on poll workers who serve 15 hours or more for little pay, in intense and complex situations. “Your procedures and poll workers

are the backbone of the whole process,” said Hamilton County (Ohio) Board of Elections Director John Williams, as quoted in a 2004 news article. “If they are confused or not quite up to par, it can cause problems.”<sup>4</sup> While it varies from state to state, poll worker responsibilities include: setting up the precinct voting site on Election Day; activating the voting machines after unloading them from storage carts and connecting cables and electrical cords; troubleshooting inoperable machines; checking voters to make sure they're registered; and ensuring that ballots are securely delivered to the officials responsible for counting them.

The sheer magnitude of their vital Election Day responsibilities requires intensive training. Poll workers are the direct links between election officials and voters. Often, poll workers determine whether a voter casts a regular or provisional ballot and, in many instances, whether or not the ballot cast will count.

A recent *USA Today* report confirms that more than half of the counties in the United States have switched to electronic voting machines or optical-scan ballots that are read by a computer.<sup>5</sup> Today's poll workers need to be computer savvy to use sophisticated technical equipment.

Recent federal and state laws have created a slew of new procedures for voting. First-time voters who register by mail must show identification. Those who claim to be registered but cannot be found on the voter rolls must be directed to the correct precinct or given provisional ballots. These new procedures, coupled with the advent of electronic voting machines, leave little room for error. On most jobs, first day mistakes are common; if you make a mistake the first day, you can correct it the next day. With this job, you don't get a second day—a lofty expectation of perfection for poll workers.

The increased complexity of the poll worker role is reflected in the size of poll worker manuals. Franklin County, Ohio, for example, just issued its updated manual, which weighs in at 140 pages! This manual is very informative and useful, but it is not likely that 140 pages of information can be adequately comprehended and retained in the three- or four-hour training sessions that most localities provide for poll workers.

As a result, there is a dire need for intensified poll worker training and support. The current state of affairs, with well-trained poll workers in short supply in many jurisdictions, threatens to create chaos on Election Day.

### **Problems with Poll Worker Training and Support**

Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Michigan are among several states plagued by rampant, recent problems at their polling places stemming from inadequate or inconsistent poll worker training, recruitment, and retention.

## ***Ohio***

Ohio poll workers are trained, on average, three to four hours. Despite a massive overhaul of election law in 2006 and the purchase of new voting machines in six Ohio counties, training increased by only one hour. A survey of poll workers conducted after the May 2006 primary revealed that 80 percent believed their training on the new electronic voting machines was inadequate. Hundreds of poll workers either dropped out after training or failed to show up on Election Day. Many who failed to show up on Election Day indicated they did not feel competent to operate the e-voting technology.

Additionally, poll workers and voters in Ohio lack understanding of the new Ohio election laws under H.B. 3, specifically, voter identification requirements and the 14 reasons voters are required to vote provisional ballots under Ohio law.

In Cuyahoga County, the largest county in Ohio, problems voters encountered during the 2006 Ohio primary election spiraled into a significant breakdown in the county's election process. Franklin and Hamilton counties experienced similar problems, including:

- Massive difficulties with operating the e-voting technology.
- Failure to complete required paperwork used to validate information guaranteeing the number of ballots cast and the reliability of the new voting machines.
- Inconsistent information in manuals used to train poll workers.
- Voters deprived of the right to vote in the May 2 primary election due to voter machine error and human error.

A report submitted by the Cuyahoga Election Review Panel (CERP) in July 2006 revealed that the breakdown was largely attributable to recruitment, training, and retention of poll workers.<sup>6</sup> Poll workers cited numerous concerns, including: feeling more confused after receiving training than before; frustration over an inability to obtain supplies or receive technical assistance from the board of elections; fear that blame would be placed on them for failures at the polling places that were not their fault; and delays in payment for poll worker service.

## ***Pennsylvania***

Each of the 1,681 polling places in Philadelphia has its own election board, which consists of the judge of elections, the majority inspector, the minority inspector, machine inspector(s), a clerk, and, in some polls, a bilingual translator.<sup>7</sup> The judge of elections and both inspectors are elected to serve four-year terms. Machine inspectors and bilingual translator are appointed by the city commissioners, while the clerk is appointed by the minority inspector.

On Election Day, if one of the election board members does not report for work, everyone in the line moves up one slot.<sup>8</sup> Any remaining open slots are filled through a process called "curbside" recruitment, in which the election judge selects a member of the public to fill the empty slot. Curbside recruitment makes no provision for training the last-minute substitute.

For Philadelphia's elected poll workers, training is optional. The city commissioners have concluded that they do not have the power to require poll worker training, although the \$20 paid for attending training may act as an incentive. When asked why poll workers are not required to undergo training, City Commission Member Edgar A. Howard responded: "So we make it mandatory and they don't show up. Then what? Remember, these people are elected. We can't just replace them."<sup>9</sup>

Even when poll workers choose to participate, the training fails to cover the basics. Recently, Advancement Project's Voter Protection Advocate took the training, which lasted only 17 minutes. The short-lived session covered polling place procedures in ten minutes, during which the instructor inappropriately joked about intoxicated election officials and dead people on the voter rolls. Seven minutes were spent on how to set up and operate the machines. The city does have a 30-minute video on using the voting machines that poll workers may watch, if they so choose.

This system of electing and training poll workers has led to severe electoral break downs. On primary election day, May 16, 2006, our Voter Protection Advocate served as a hotline volunteer, answering questions from voters, election judges, and others. Although Philadelphia is required by the Voting Rights Act to provide Spanish language assistance to voters, the city suffered a severe lack of Spanish-speaking poll workers. Poll workers did not know how to operate the machines, which broke down frequently. Workers waited for hours for the election board to respond to their calls for help. The scene inside many polling places was chaotic. Callers frequently complained that partisan observers and other unidentified persons were allowed to enter the booth to "help" voters.

### ***Maryland***

In Maryland, each precinct has a Democratic and Republican chief judge. They are the lead officials whose responsibilities include checking the polling place prior to Election Day, supervising the opening and closing of the polls, and maintaining peace and order at the polling site. Each precinct also has poll book judges, voting unit/machine judges, and provisional ballot judges.

Investigations, news coverage, and a report by the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Maryland (ACLU) exposed flaws in election judge recruitment, training, and attendance that caused countless problems during the Maryland primary election on September 12, 2006. These problems prompted the Democratic Party and the Baltimore chapter of NAACP to successfully sue in court to extend the polling hours in Baltimore City. They also delayed the canvass to determine the winner of the Democratic primary for the U.S. House of Representatives 4<sup>th</sup> District for 12 days and caused Marylanders to question the adequacy of elections in their state.

In Baltimore City, poll workers showed up late, or not at all, and did not understand how to use the electronic voting machines and the new e-poll book. The ACLU reports that four polling sites in Baltimore City opened as late as noon, more than five hours late. The voters who came to these sites, many of whom were not able to return later in the day, were not offered provisional ballots.

Some Montgomery County poll workers used provisional ballots for voters unable to cast ballots when electronic voting machines were inoperable countywide for several hours in the morning. (Technically, provisional ballots are for voters whose eligibility needs to be further verified; the correct procedure when voting machines do not work is to use paper ballots. Paper ballots are cast by voters whose eligibility is not in question and all paper ballots should be counted without further inquiry.) However, poll workers were not adequately trained to provide provisional or paper ballots when the machines were down. Not surprisingly, many Montgomery County precincts ran out of provisional ballots and there are reports of persons attempting to vote on scraps of paper.

According to ACLU reports, a polling place in Prince George's County ran out of provisional ballots at 9:30 a.m. and did not receive additional provisional ballots until 5:00 p.m., even though a poll worker from the precinct called the county election board every hour requesting additional ballots.

News reports noted that the electronic poll books malfunctioned. Poll workers did not have a standard protocol for what should happen in such circumstances. In most instances, the poll workers did not affirmatively offer the option of casting a paper ballot. Reports from Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Baltimore County, and Baltimore City revealed that poll workers did not fully understand how to use the electronic voting machines and the new electronic poll book, causing polling sites to open late and/or to temporarily suspend voting. In Prince George's County, poorly trained poll workers left voter cards inside of electronic voting machines, which disrupted vote counting procedures as well as posed a security risk.

At a poll site in Baltimore City, poll workers required photo identification to vote, in violation of the law. The Baltimore City Board of Elections did not notify most of its poll workers that their sites were to stay open for an extra hour. There were numerous reports of voter confusion due to late opening polling sites, non-operational electronic voting machines, changed polling locations, or extended hours of operation that could have been avoided by better communication between the county boards and poll workers at polling places.

### ***Florida***

Recent reports of poll worker errors include:

- In four Florida counties—Duval, Miami-Dade, Orange, and Palm Beach—approximately 25 percent of the provisional ballots that were not counted in the September 2006 primary were rejected because the voter was not in the correct precinct.<sup>10</sup> Most of these “lost” voters probably resulted from poll worker error. Although a voter can insist on voting with a provisional ballot in the wrong precinct, it is unlikely that numerous voters would request to vote in the wrong precinct if they had been given accurate information that the ballot is counted only if cast in the correct precinct. In Florida, poll workers

should check the voter's address to ensure that she is in the correct precinct before offering a provisional ballot.

- Poll workers frequently did not know how to handle voters who had moved since the previous election, including voters who had updated their addresses with the supervisor's office.
- Poll workers lacked bilingual language skills to effectively communicate with all voters, even though many Florida counties are required to provide Spanish language assistance.
- Poll workers mishandled voters who requested an absentee ballots but did not receive the ballot, or who received the ballot but had not voted with it. If a poll worker can confirm that the supervisor did not receive a voted absentee ballot from that voter, the voter is entitled to vote a regular ballot. If the poll worker cannot confirm whether the voter has voted the requested absentee ballot, the voter is entitled to vote with a provisional ballot.
- Poll workers lacked training to handle voter intimidation complaints. Many voters have faced both blatant and subtle intimidation on Election Day. In 2004, numerous voters reported intimidation, although Florida now prohibits solicitation within 100 feet of the polls.

### ***Michigan***

During the November 2004 elections, Michigan voters reported more than 1,600 incidents in which their attempts to vote were frustrated or completely denied.<sup>11</sup> Polling place issues stand out as being particularly problematic in several Michigan counties. According to an analysis of 2004 Election Day data in Michigan, there was a general sense of disorganization at polling places, a lack of familiarity with procedures, and occasional hostility on the part of election officials. There was little consistency across counties and polling places with respect to the availability and use of provisional ballots, accommodation of voters with disabilities, and procedures used when machines malfunctioned.

In Wayne County, which includes the City of Detroit and has a population of more than two million persons, many voters were sent to more than one polling place and were still not allowed to vote, or were asked to cast provisional ballots. In several instances, voters reported that challengers and poll watchers intimidated voters, stood behind and "hovered" over them, and "aggressively approached" voters at polling places. Voters also reported the distribution of literature within 100 feet of the polls.

Many voters reported voting machine problems and were concerned that their ballots were marked incorrectly because of problems with machinery, confusion about how to mark ballots, or use of pencils instead of pens to mark ballots. Another frequent complaint reported by voters in Wayne County was the mismanagement of paper ballots when machine malfunctions occurred, specifically that the ballot box clogged and ballots

collected by hand were “piling up” or not counted, and used and unused ballots were mixed together. In one instance, a voter reported that a ballot box was left unlocked and unattended. There was also confusion among election officials about whether voters should “tear off the top part” of ballots before placing them in the box. Many voters complained that election officials did not allow them to vote by provisional ballot.

Overall, there seemed to be a lack of established procedures for accommodating disabled individuals at polling places, and the treatment of disabled voters seemed to depend upon the whims of individual poll workers. In two cases, voters had to be carried up stairs to the polling place.

In Genesee County, the polling place incidents reported also reflected confusion at the polls. Incidents include: an election official announcing “polls closed” when a ballot box jammed; attempts to send voters to an incorrect polling place; and two incidents in which election officials expressed hostility to non-partisan poll monitors. In addition, an “election official told people waiting in line that if they voted straight party tickets the line would go faster,” and “an elderly lady made a mistake on her ballot and was told to continue on the same ballot instead of getting a new one.”

## **Recommendations**

Advancement Project and our partner organizations are working to arm voters with knowledge to protect them at the polls. We also are finding ways to hold election boards accountable for how they manage their respective polling places. Time is short to make improvements for the upcoming November election. We have developed a set of general recommendations that can be implemented quickly, and we request that state and local election boards in affected areas adopt the following practices immediately:

1. Share with members of the community and Advancement Project details of a comprehensive plan for recruiting and training poll workers, including: the number of poll workers currently scheduled to work on Election Day and how many are assigned to each position in each precinct; the length of training poll workers will have prior to the election and the lengths of training for different positions; the number of poll workers still needed for each position in each precinct; and plans to recruit additional workers, increase diversity, and train poll workers in a manner that addresses recurring issues and remedies past defects.
2. Open poll worker trainings to the general public. Announcing the dates and times of poll worker training sessions creates awareness in the community and allows a system in which civic groups can participate and gain a greater understanding of the election process.
3. Target minority ethnic media outlets as vehicles for recruiting poll workers. Increase the number of public service announcements airing on minority networks, especially radio stations.

4. Expand poll worker recruitment efforts to include schools—high schools and colleges. Explore ways to offer students academic credit for serving as a poll worker.
5. Actively solicit input from the community—the people who can most readily identify the weak links in polling place operations—and from Advancement Project as to how best to improve poll worker training and how plans would best be implemented in a particular region.
6. Create attractive posters and place them in visible locations in all polling places on Election Day to provide poll workers with answers to common questions regarding state voting guidelines. The posters should: use a minimum font of 72 pt. (ideally 150 pt.); be written in a concise, easy-to-read manner, in all languages required on the ballot; set out accurate information on recurring issues; and cover issues and concerns that are most frequently encountered in the area.
7. Increase “hands on” poll worker training to permit poll workers greater opportunities to practice operating voting machines in preparation for the November 2006 election.
8. Create a palm-sized card that will serve as a reference tool for the more common or complicated situations poll workers will encounter on Election Day.
9. Build into poll worker trainings a mechanism by which an assessment can be made of trainees’ understanding of the information and, where necessary, require trainees to attend subsequent trainings.

In addition to these general recommendations, Advancement Project and our partners developed a list of requests tailored to specific cities and counties identified as needing improvement in recruitment, training, and retention of poll workers.

***Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit Counties, OH***

Advancement Project and an array of civic, labor, and civil rights groups have called on election administrators in Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit Counties to:

- Adopt a procedure that will permit voters to determine whether their absentee ballots are counted and, if not, why not, including a toll-free hotline and opportunity to access absentee ballot information in a secure manner on county websites.
- Utilize as many forms of identification as are available, such as signature and/or voter’s date of birth, to determine a voter’s eligibility to vote a provisional ballot.



- Provide specific procedures, in writing, for validating provisional ballots that include the last four digits of a voter's social security number. Include these procedures on county websites and in any documents pertaining to casting and/or counting provisional ballots.

Several other recommendations, which we support and encourage Cuyahoga and other Ohio counties to implement, emerged from the Cuyahoga County report. These recommendations, which would further improve and expand the methods used to recruit, train, and retain poll workers in Ohio, include:

- Partnering with businesses, civic, and charitable organizations.
- Conducting ad campaigns depicting poll workers of all ages.
- Increasing Election Day pay rates and the amount paid for training.
- Recruiting poll workers on the basis of their ability to handle duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Overhauling the poll worker training program to include different levels of poll workers that are elevated to positions of increasing responsibility.
- Giving year round gestures of appreciation to poll workers.
- Expediting payroll processing.

### ***Philadelphia, PA***

Advancement Project requests that election administrators in Philadelphia:

- Adopt proposed "Voter Rights" language that addresses the most common voting barriers and distribute it directly to the Judges of Election by way of individual mailings in advance of the upcoming November 2006 election. (This language was submitted previously by Barbara Burgos DiTullio, project manager for WomenVote PA at the Women's Law Project.)
- Undertake immediate and aggressive outreach to Election Board members to explain to them the importance of proper training.
- Make public the names of election board members who, to date, have and have not participated in training related to the upcoming November 2006 election. Also, immediately make the names of all members of every election board, organized by ward and division, available to the public.

Additionally, community-based organizations in Philadelphia County are implementing their own grassroots-level approaches to combating the problems caused by untrained poll workers, which include:

- **Creating a pool of translators.** Community groups serving Spanish-speaking communities are interested in creating a pool of would-be translators who can be assigned to polling places. Their goal is to meet with the city commissioners to express their concerns with poll workers' unfamiliarity with the voters' right to receive assistance and the lack of available on-site translators. Then, they plan to present a list of polling places, which they have

identified as being most in need of onsite translators, asking the commissioners to assign translators to each site. Advancement Project is supporting this effort and we have submitted a public records request to identify translators already assigned to polling places, the location of the polling place to which they have been assigned, and the location of any polling places the commissioners have already identified as being in need of translators.

- **Creating a pool of trained “assistance providers.”** Trained community members will be present at polling places to provide assistance to individuals in need.<sup>12</sup> The individuals will be equipped with a special indicator/designation letting voters know they are available to provide assistance should s/he need it. Additionally, community education efforts will raise awareness about the availability of these volunteers and how to identify them at the polling place. On Election Day, these volunteers will be dispatched to polling places the coalition has identified as most in need of protection for its constituents. Advancement Project will assist with training and mobilizing these volunteers.
- **Creating a succinct informational poster to be distributed to all polling places and/or Judges of Elections.** A coalition of community groups collaborated to create the content (English and Spanish) for “The Top 3 Poster,” which they requested that the city commissioners post in every polling place.<sup>13</sup> On October 4, 2006, the proposed content was refused, citing reliance upon a newly provided and similarly worded poster provided by the Pennsylvania Department of State (PA DOS). While the groups believe PA DOS posters are useful, they remain concerned because they do not address the issue of voter assistance, including the fact that a voter is entitled to assistance inside the polling place, the opportunity to select the person who will provide assistance, and the option of refusing assistance should someone impose upon them in the polling place. For this reason, the coalition is considering using their poster as a grassroots outreach tool to enable Philadelphia voters to protect themselves inside the polling place.
- **Creating election board accountability.** Community groups seek a dialogue with members of their election boards regarding what steps the officials are taking to prevent a repeat of the same problems, concerns, and barriers experienced year after year. A first step has been identifying the judges, whose names are not widely available. Advancement Project has obtained a list of election judges for use by communities in identifying the judges responsible for their poll sites.

### ***Baltimore, MD***

Advancement Project endorses recommendations submitted by the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Maryland (ACLU) based on its monitoring of the

September 2006 primary. Those recommendations include a uniform protocol for polling sites that open late and improved training of election judges.

Specifically, we call on election administrators in Baltimore City and Prince George's County to:

- Conduct refresher training for chief judges and other election judges that:
  - Reviews their duties and responsibilities.
  - Develops “hands on” skills for using electronic poll books.
  - Sets forth the correct procedures for issuing provisional ballots.
  - Develops “hands-on” skills to open and operate touch-screen voting units.
  - Explains poll closing procedures, including correct steps for safeguarding the votes and shutting down the touch-screen voting units.
- Telephone precinct judges to remind them of their assignments and to let them know how to report to the election board if they cannot perform their duties on Election Day.
- Establish emergency procedures to ensure that voting is not delayed if:
  - Election judges do not report to their precincts on Election Day.
  - Electronic poll books are not ready to check in voters by 7:00 a.m. or are not working during voting hours.
  - Touch-screen voting units cannot be used in the precincts.
- Direct chief judges to visit their polling places on the night before the election to remind the building authorities that the polling place should be open by 5:30 a.m., to ensure that the polling place room is setup properly and to verify the delivery of the machines and supplies.

***Duval, Miami-Dade, and Broward Counties, FL***

The need to reform the poll worker training and recruitment process is particularly urgent in these three Florida counties, where reports cite unusually high numbers of poll worker errors on Election Day. Election administrators in Duval, Miami-Dade, and Broward Counties should implement the following measures to combat specific problems:

- **Provisional ballots.** Election supervisors should stress to poll workers during pre-Election Day training that they must be vigilant about giving provisional ballots to voters only after they have looked up the voter in the statewide database (or called the supervisor's office to determine if the voter is registered in another precinct) to determine the correct precinct for the voter. If the voter is in the wrong precinct, the poll worker should give that voter a provisional ballot only after explaining to the voter the consequence of their casting a ballot in the incorrect precinct. Supervisors' offices should frequently repeat and stress this in poll worker trainings.
- **New state verification rules.** Poll workers should have access to information about why each voter placed on “hold” has that status. Poll workers should be

specifically given guidance on handling a voter who is on “hold” because her identifying information has not matched exactly with another database. Advancement Project, along with a broad coalition of voter protection groups, has asked the secretary of state to issue a directive allowing individuals to verify that information at the polls and then vote by provisional ballot. In this event, supervisors would need to immediately provide supplemental instructions to all poll workers.

- **Bilingual poll workers.** To address the lack of bilingual poll workers, supervisors should conduct significant outreach to ensure that poll workers represent the population in the precinct.
- **Absentee ballots.** Supervisors should emphasize in poll worker trainings that only individuals who have already cast absentee ballots should leave the polls not casting any type of ballot—and if the voter claims not to have cast an absentee ballot, the voter should be permitted to vote with a provisional ballot.
- **Voter intimidation.** Supervisors should develop clear protocols for poll workers to report and address issues of voter intimidation. Further, although poll workers can enforce the 100-foot rule, the Supervisor’s office should check areas that are outside that periphery but still close to the polls to ensure that intimidation does not occur.

### ***Wayne County, MI***

Advancement Project urges Wayne County to make the following revisions to poll worker training and Election Day procedures:

- Require poll workers affirmatively to inform voters that their provisional ballots will not be counted if cast in the wrong precinct, and direct voters to the correct precinct before issuing a provisional ballot.
- Issue a specific list of rules for challengers which, if violated more than once, will result in the immediate ejection of any challenger from the polling place.
- Emphasize the importance of removing the voting machine memory card from the voting tabulator and keeping the memory card in custody until it is returned to the city clerk.

## Conclusion

Poll worker experiences in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida, and Michigan demonstrate the urgent need for changes in the recruitment, training, support, and retention of poll workers nationwide. Had an Election Review Panel been initiated in other states and counties, it is likely that problems similar to those identified in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, would have been uncovered. New voting equipment and the overhaul of election laws add stress to major fault lines that, if not repaired, will collapse under the weight of high turnout elections.

Advancement Project is calling for immediate steps that can ameliorate the problems in this year's general election. But beyond November, a major restructuring of the poll worker system is needed. Poll workers truly are the champions of a fair and just democracy. It is the responsibility of all states and counties to make sure that poll workers are adequately trained and have the necessary tools to effectively serve on Election Day.

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*Advancement Project, founded in 1998 by veteran civil rights lawyers, is one of the nation's leading democracy and justice action groups. Its core purpose is to mobilize a broad, national racial justice movement by pioneering, implementing, and widely disseminating innovative ideas and models. At the heart of Advancement Project's work is the belief that a just democracy will benefit all Americans and that multi-racial collective action is central to achieving it.*

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<sup>1</sup> Drinkard, Jim, "Scarcity of Poll Workers Persists," *USA TODAY*, October 26, 2004, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/politicselections/nation/president/2004-10-26-poll-workers\\_x.htm?csp=19\\_wxia](http://www.usatoday.com/news/politicselections/nation/president/2004-10-26-poll-workers_x.htm?csp=19_wxia).

<sup>2</sup> "Poll Worker Shortage: Problems Likely," *Associated Press*, November 1, 2004, <http://www.kron4.com/Global/story.asp?S=2509678>.

<sup>3</sup> "Campaign Briefing: Voting Booths, Severe Shortage of Poll Workers," *The New York Times*, November 1, 2004, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9900E2DB1E3DF932A35752C1A9629C8B63>.

<sup>4</sup> Cindi Andrews, "Poll Workers Preparing for Additional Scrutiny," *The (Cincinnati) Enquirer*, October 28, 2004, [http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2004/10/28/loc\\_pollworkers28.html](http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2004/10/28/loc_pollworkers28.html).

<sup>5</sup> Richard Wolf, "Election Glitches 'Could Get Ugly,'" *USA TODAY*, September 14, 2006, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-09-13-election-glitches\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-09-13-election-glitches_x.htm).

<sup>6</sup> Cuyahoga Election Review Panel (CERP), *Final Report*, July 20, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> 25 P.S. § 2671(2005).

<sup>8</sup> As reported to Advancement Project by Commissioner Edgar A. Howard on August 23, 2006; See also: *Guide for Election Officers in Philadelphia County*, page 2.

<sup>9</sup> As reported to Advancement Project by Commissioner Howard on August 23, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Advancement Project has requested this information from other Florida counties, but only these four have responded to date.

<sup>11</sup> *Unfinished Business, 2004 Voter Complaints in Michigan* (Advancement Project 2006), available at [http://www.advancementproject.org/vp/States/MI\\_04\\_DA.pdf](http://www.advancementproject.org/vp/States/MI_04_DA.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> This "assistance" goes beyond language access to include assistance to help overcome reading barriers, barriers due to disabilities, etc.

<sup>13</sup> During the August 23, 2006 meeting with Commissioner Howard groups expressed concern over poll workers' lack of familiarity with some of the voters most basic rights, suggesting an oversized poster addressing the most commonly abridged rights might be a way to help both the poll workers and the voters. The Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner agreed.