

## Section B

### U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION



#### 2008 Election Administration & Voting Survey

## Statutory Overview

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

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

Information Supplied By	
Name	Steve Quirk
Title	Planning and Programming
Office/Agency Name	Rhode Island Board of Elections
Address 1	50 Branch Avenue
Address 2	
City	Providence
State	RI
Zip Code	02904
Email Address	squirk@elections.ri.gov
Telephone (area Code and number)	401-222-2345
Fax Number (area code and number)	401-222-3135

## DIRECTIONS AND EXAMPLE

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

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

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

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

### Example:

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

- a. Over-vote

[Begin definition (a) below this line.]

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

*There is no limit to the length of your response.*

[End definition (a) above this line.]

## SECTION A: GENERAL

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

a. Over-vote

[Begin definition (a) below this line.]

State Statute 17-19-24 (c)

- **Overvote:** occurs if the voter connected the head and tail of the arrow beside too many candidates or choices in an office or question. Each office or question has instructions to "Vote for 1" or "Vote for 2" etc. If more candidates or question choices are selected than allowed under the instructions for that office or question, the tabulator will reject the ballot as an overvoted ballot. The voter may request that the Clerk in the polling place void the ballot and issue them a new ballot to mark. Or the voter may instruct the Warden/Moderator to override the error message, however, the office or question in which the error occurred will not be counted since it was marked incorrectly.

[End definition (a) above this line.]

b. Under-vote

[Begin definition (b) below this line.]

When a voter fails to connect the tail and the head of the arrow of the candidate it is considered an under-vote.

[End definition (b) above this line.]

c. Blank ballot

[Begin definition (c) below this line.]

State Statute 17-19-24 (c)

**ballot:** the voter did not connect any heads and tails of any arrows on the ballot, or did not mark the ballot correctly. The voter may request that the Clerk in the polling place void the ballot and issue a new ballot to mark. Or the voter may instruct the Warden/Moderator to override the error message and cast the ballot as it is, however, no offices or questions may be counted because the ballot was not marked, or was not marked correctly under

[End definition (c) above this line.]

d. Void/Spoiled ballot

[Begin definition (d) below this line.]

The optical scan precinct count unit shall be programmed to return a ballot to the voter if the voter has cast votes for more persons than which he or she is entitled to cast. The

warden, by reading the message given on the optical scan precinct count unit, must advise the voter of the fact that the ballot has been over-voted. The voter will be instructed by the warden to remove his or her own ballot from the optical scan precinct count unit ballot slot. The warden will then ask the voter to surrender the ballot as void and receive a new ballot. If the voter agrees, the voter will make additional marks on the ballot so as not to identify the actual votes intended by the voter for the ballot. The ballot will be marked void by the warden and deposited in the receptacle for void ballots provided at the polling place. If the voter insists on casting the over-voted ballot, he or she will be advised that all races, other than the over-voted race, will be counted by the optical scan precinct count unit, and if he or she still insists, the warden will manually override the appropriate control on the unit and allow for the ballot to be entered and counted for all races other than the over-voted race.

(d) In the event a voter incorrectly marks a ballot by indicating his or her choices other than in the spaces provided for them, the ballot will be returned to the voter. The warden, by reading the message given on the optical scan precinct count unit, must advise the voter of the fact that the ballot has been marked incorrectly. The voter will be instructed by the warden to remove his or her own ballot from the optical scan precinct unit ballot slot. The warden will then advise the voter to surrender the ballot as void and receive a new ballot. If the voter agrees, the voter will make additional marks on the ballot so as not to identify the actual votes intended by the voter for the ballot. The ballot will be marked void by the warden and deposited in the receptacle for void ballots provided at the polling place. The warden will then provide for the instruction of the voter on the correct manner of marking his or her vote and the voter will be issued a new ballot. If the voter insists on casting the incorrectly marked ballot, the warden will manually override the appropriate control on the optical scan precinct count unit and allow for the ballot to be accepted.

[End definition (d) above this line.]

e. Provisional/Challenged ballot

[Begin definition (e) below this line.]

State Statute 17-19-24.1 17-19-27

Provisional Voting is a process to insure that all registered voters are allowed to participate in the election process. These qualified voters will be allowed to cast the same ballot as all others however, the disposition (full ballot, federal offices only, or disqualified) of that ballot will be determined by the voter's local board of canvassers. The voter may then determine the disposition of their ballot by clicking on the link below or by calling the Board of Elections at 222-2345.

**Who is allowed to vote a provisional ballot?**

- A voter whose name is not on the precinct voting list or the master voting list for the Polling Place and the voter does not qualify for the "Affirmation" process.

- The voter's identity has been challenged by an election official.
- The voter has not presented identification as required on the precinct voting list.
- The precinct voting list indicates the voter has applied for a mail or emergency ballot.
- IN A PRIMARY ONLY, the voter claims they are unaffiliated of affiliated with a different party than indicated on the precinct voter list.

### Ballot Dispositions

- Full Ballot - All offices and questions on the ballot will be counted.
- Federal Offices Only - Only federal offices on the ballot will be counted. Congressional race will be counted if the ballot was cast in the correct Congressional District.
- Disqualified Ballot - This ballot will not be counted.

A voter can determine if their provisional ballot was counted by visiting this Web site 48 hours after the election. The voter will need to have their Ballot ID number (printed on Provisional Ballot Receipt) and their Last Name in order to access the information. Or, they can contact their local Board of Canvassers.

[End definition (e) above this line.]

#### f. Absentee

[Begin definition (f) below this line.]

**17-20-1 Voting by mail ballot.** – The electors of this state who, for any of the reasons set forth in § 17-20-2, being otherwise qualified to vote, are unable to vote in person, shall have the right to vote, in the manner and time provided by this chapter, in all general and special elections and primaries, including presidential primaries in this state for electors of president and vice-president of the United States, United States senators in congress, representatives in congress, general officers of the state, senators and representatives in the general assembly for the respective districts in which the elector is duly qualified to vote, and for any other officers whose names appear on the state ballot and for any city, town, ward, or district officers whose names appear on the respective city or town ballots in the ward or district of the city or town in which the elector is duly qualified to vote, and also to approve or reject any proposition of amendment to the Constitution or other propositions appearing on the state, city, or town ballot.

[End definition (f) above this line.]

#### g. Early voting

[Begin definition (g) below this line.]

N/A

[End definition (g) above this line.]

h. Active Voter

[Begin definition (h) below this line.]

Anyone who has voted in the past two federal elections and has not changed their address.

[End definition (h) above this line.]

i. Inactive Voter

[Begin definition (i) below this line.]

(e) If a confirmation notice is mailed to a voter and returned as undeliverable, or if delivered and the voter has not responded within fourteen (14) days from the date of the mailing, the voter shall remain on or be placed on the inactive list and shall not be permitted to vote until the voter has signed an affirmation form at either the approved polling place or at the local board of canvassers as provided in this chapter. If the voter fails to vote by the second general election following the date of the confirmation mailing, then the voter shall be removed from the voting list. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, if the confirmation mailing was based upon the change of address information provided by or through the United States Postal Service National Change of Address Program, and the voter has failed to respond to the confirmation mailing, the voter shall remain on the active list of voters and shall not be required to sign the affirmation form. In these cases, the voter's residence address for voting purposes will be changed by the local board to the new address as indicated by the National Change of Address Program.

(f) Local boards shall be required to maintain for a period of at least two (2) years a record of all outgoing confirmation mailings, including the reasons for the mailing of the confirmations. Records shall be kept in a fashion that may be determined by the state board.

[End definition (i) above this line.]

j. Other terms (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

A2. Please provide the legal citation for any **significant** changes to election laws or procedures that have been enacted or adopted since the previous Federal election. By “significant,” we do not mean routine or technical changes (such as changes to election district boundaries or polling place changes). However, we would like to learn about any new identification requirements for voters or registrants; changes in eligibility for voting

or registering; adoption of alternative voting methods; and other changes that you believe represent a significant change in the way your state runs its elections.

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

N/A

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

## SECTION B: VOTER REGISTRATION

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

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

Bottom-up

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

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

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

Daily

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

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

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

Automated

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

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

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

See (i) above

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



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

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

Central Voter Registrations System is linked to the Rhode Island DMV

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

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

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

NCOA requirements are fully integrated with the CVRS.

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

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

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

Once the person is released they are eligible to register to vote.

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

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

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

Voters can download a voter registration form from several web sites throughout the state

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

## SECTION C: ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

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

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

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

Precincts

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mail ballots are reported separately.

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

d. How are UOCAVA ballots counted and reported?

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

After they are received by fax they are remade on original ballots.

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

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

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

**§ 17-20-2 Eligibility for mail ballots.** – Any otherwise qualified elector may vote by mail ballot in the following circumstances:

(1) An elector who will be absent from the state on the day of election during the entire period of time when the polls are to be open;

(2) An elector who will be absent from the city or town of his or her voting residence on the day of election during the entire period of time when the polls are to be open due to the elector's status as a student or the spouse of a student at an institution of higher learning located within this state;

(3) An elector who is incapacitated to the extent that it would be an undue hardship to vote at the polls because of illness, or mental or physical disability, blindness, or serious impairment of mobility;

(4) An elector who is forbidden by the tenets of his or her religious faith from engaging in secular activity, including voting, on the day of election;

(5) An elector who is confined in any hospital, convalescent home, nursing home, rest home, or similar institution, public or private;

(6) An elector who is being detained while awaiting trial or is being imprisoned for any cause, other than final conviction of a felony, and by reason of that detention or imprisonment is unable to vote at the polls;

(7) An elector who will be temporarily absent from the state because of employment or service intimately connected with military operations or who is a spouse or legal dependent residing with that person;

(8) An elector who is employed by the state board of elections, elections division of the secretary of state, a member of the staff of a local canvassing authority, or a poll worker assigned to work on Election Day outside of their voting district.

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

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

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

No

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

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

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

N/A

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

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

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

See above

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

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

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

If the voter is registered in a city or town in Rhode Island but votes in the wrong precinct, only federal offices are counted.

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

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

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

None

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

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

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

All poll workers are required by law to attend a poll worker training session run by the State Board of Elections.

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

## SECTION D: ELECTION DAY ACTIVITIES

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

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

Over-votes and under-votes are recorded on the tape printed by the optical scan voting machine, "Eagle", used by the State of Rhode Island.

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

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

a. registering to vote;

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

When registering to vote by mail or third party

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

b. casting an in-person ballot;

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

None

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

c. casting a mail-in or absentee vote;

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

None Unless they are "ID required" under HAVA

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

d. casting a ballot under UOCAVA;

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

None

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

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

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

No. Affirmation Card with no ID when required.

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

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

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

Anyone is allowed to observe the process inside the polling place as long as they are not electioneering. They must not enter beyond where voters only are allowed.

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

## SECTION E: OTHER

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

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

Not since they have been implemented.

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

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

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

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

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