



Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections

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Background

- HAVA 241(b)(2) and 302(b) mandate that EAC study ballot designs for elections for Federal Office.
 - Based on research from May 2006-January 2007, EAC released "*Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections*" in July 2007.
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Background

- Study based on 10 research events
 - Observed 4 rural and urban primary elections in Nebraska and New Jersey
 - Conducted field interviews with voters, poll workers and administrators
 - Consulted with experts
 - LEOs, 20 literacy instructors, manufacturers
 - Conducted 54 usability evaluations in 7 states, with more than 44 representative voters
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Planning Election Design Changes

- Election Official needs to:
 - Establish a baseline for future improvements by evaluating current election & getting voter feedback before & after election
 - Establish an approval process for election design changes
 - Estimate the value & impact of design changes
 - Emphasize voter needs over administrative & vendor requirements
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Planning Election Design Changes

- Election Official needs to consult with:
 - A Simple Language Expert – someone who can edit language content for low-literacy voters
 - A Designer – someone familiar with poll worker practices who will oversee ballot design process
 - A Usability Expert – someone who will ensure that the voting process is clear and easy to understand
 - A Translator – someone to translate content for non-English speakers
 - A Cultural Expert – someone who will check ballot materials for cultural relevance
 - A Policy Advisor – someone who can help jurisdiction navigate legal & PR issues pertaining to ballot design changes
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Critical Design Elements

- Language and Content:
 - Use clear, simple language
 - Use one (maximum two) languages per ballot
 - Provide summaries for long ballot measures
 - When transliterating names, consultation with a language expert is recommended in order to avoid overtly positive or negative meanings in sound-based characters

 - Text Use and Size:
 - Use a minimum of 12 point san-serif font, with 2 point line spacing, left-aligned, upper and lower case letters
 - The Univers type font is common, consistent, and readable
 - Use only 40-60 characters per line
 - All candidates in a contest should be given the same amount of vertical space. If a candidate's name must break onto a second line, the vertical space for all candidates should be changed to match
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Critical Design Elements

- Color:
 - Use just one color for instructions on optical scan ballots
 - Cyan is recommended
 - Titles in white against colored background are easiest to read
 - Use colors to emphasize important info
 - If color can not be used, change all colored areas to 10% black

 - Icons and Graphics:
 - Using instructive symbols like  or , , or  can be helpful to less literate voters
 - Political party icons are often confusing to voters
 - Illustrative diagrams should accurately reflect the ballot type & voting equipment
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Printing HAVA-Mandated Signs

- ❑ HAVA mandates several items be posted at polling place
 - ❑ Fabrication time varies
 - 7-14 days: Voter's Bill of Rights; Sample Ballots (for doors, walls, and tabletops); Voting Instructions (for booths); Precinct Identification & Polling Place Information
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Printing HAVA-Mandated Signs

- 5-6 days: Special Voting Rules; Voting Instructions
 - 2-3 days: 'Vote Here' Banner; Vote by Touchscreen; Return Ballot
 - Immediate: 'Vote Here' Door Sign; Election Official Stickers; Accessible Entrance Door Signs
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Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

□ Optical Scan Ballots

- Include page number out of total pages in multipage ballots, ie page '2 of 5'
 - Selections should be marked into an oval to the left of candidate names
 - When ballots are in more than one language, print English name of language, ie 'Cantonese' or 'Mandarin'
 - Ballots should have 40-60 characters per line and use at least 12 point font
 - Embedding ballot instructions in ballots supports greater focus and autonomy for users
 - Ballot instructions should be self-contained and separated from contest data
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Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

- ❑ Principles for both Full Face DRE & Rolling DRE machines:
 - Ensure that screen settings for language choices, text size, contrast & audio support are readily available and easy to change
 - Ensure that voters can easily review and change their votes at any point in the ballot
 - Use upper and lowercase sans serif type at a minimum size of 25 points
 - Avoid using center alignment, all capital letters, or multiple fonts
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Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

□ Full Face DRE

- Consideration should be given to candidate name order being rotated from precinct to precinct, so that all candidates will be listed first in roughly an equal number of precincts
 - Information about the specific election (ie, date, county) should be placed above the left column of every ballot page.
 - Including instructive phrases like 'Vote for 1 pair' or 'Vote for up to 5' at the top of ballot sections is a recommended best practice
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Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

Rolling DRE Ballot

- First, present voters with the choice of their preferred language before they begin voting
 - Direct voters next to a welcome screen which allows them to: a) begin voting, b) learn how to use the ballot, c) see a list of the questions, d) change screen settings
 - Allow voters to use a “skip” button if they wish to first vote in a different contest
 - When a voter makes a choice, their choice should be highlighted and a checkmark should appear.
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Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

Rolling DRE Ballot

- 'Vote counters' should be located on the left hand side which alert the voter to the number of votes remaining in a given contest. Ex) Voter has 5 votes for city council, he/she selects one, vote counter should read '4'
 - For lengthy candidate lists, a brightly colored bar should appear at the bottom of the screen which reads 'touch here to see additional candidates'
 - Before submitting their ballot, voters should be able to visit a 'review screen' from which they can print their selections
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