

# Election Data Services

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Testimony to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission  
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Members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to report to you about Election Data Services contract to tabulate and analyze three studies that the Election Assistance Commission have undertaken. These studies are the Election Day Survey, the Military and Overseas Absentee Ballot Survey (UOCAVA), and the National Voter Registration Act Survey (NVRA). Each of these surveys were designed to provide the EAC with important information on the status of Election Administration in this country so that you could identify and prioritize issues affecting voter enfranchisement and participation in the electoral process. Two of the surveys (Election Day and UOCAVA) are brand new and contain questions that have never been asked before.

In each instance, the surveys have been sent to the 50 states of the nation, as well as the 5 territories that are also covered by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). But these are not just 55 surveys, because in nearly every instance the states had to gather information from their counties and towns. In total we hope to have information from 8,014 counties and townships that have a role in administering elections in this nation. Some of the data that has been asked for was not collected, tallied or generated before. As a result, many election administrators had to attempt to retrieve and compile the data, sometimes after the election took place.

I'm here to report to you our efforts to pull together the information from the first two of these surveys, the Election Day Survey and the Military and Overseas Absentee Ballot Survey (UOCAVA). As part of our initial effort we had to deal with a wide variety of responses that came in from the states. Some sent in data in spreadsheets, and some sent data in Word documents. Even the spreadsheets came in different forms, despite the EAC's efforts to send out a blank, but fillable, sample spreadsheet document with the questionnaire. Some states had individual question responses on individual tabs in the spreadsheet, while others had individual counties on different tabs. Some sent in pdf documents and others faxed in their answers. Needless to say, it took us a while to get all these differently formatted responses from all these different jurisdictions into a uniform database.

## **Election Day Survey**

The Election Day Survey requested county and township-level information on a variety of topics for the November 2, 2004, general election from 50 states, four territories and the District of Columbia. The topics included voter registration and turnout, absentee and provisional ballots, overvotes and undervotes for federal offices (president, U.S. Senator, and U.S. Representative), precincts and polling places, poll workers, and voting equipment. State responses were standardized and imported to a special database created for this project. Several data integrity and quality

assurance reports were created, and I am here today to report to you about the completeness of the survey responses.

### *Overall Completeness*

The Election Day Survey requested some 50 data items for each county and township-level election jurisdiction. We are missing surveys from three states and territories and have received only statewide information for another. The rates of completeness of the survey responses received so far vary widely, from 91.5 percent to less than 20 percent. This is calculated on the basis of both having answers to specific questions and having data for all the jurisdictions in the state. In some instances individual counties had individual data items missing, in others all responses from a county were missing. We also found that entire questions were not answered from anywhere in a state. In total, the overall completeness rates for state responses are as follows:

<b>Survey Completeness</b>	<b>No. of States/Territories</b>
Over 80 percent	5
60 to 80 percent	23
40 to 60 percent	16
20 to 40 percent	6
Less than 20 percent	2
No response	3
	55

As I have already indicated, we had a wide variety of responses on individual questions and that fact alone may cause us problems in attempting to analyze the information. In my prepared testimony, I have included a table that reviews each question asked, and provides data on what percent of the jurisdictions in the nation provided data for that question. It also shows what percent of the registered voters are included in those jurisdictions, so that one has additional context in which to review the information.

Concerning individual subjects, registration data has been spotty in what was provided. We have data on active registrations from two-thirds of the nation's jurisdictions, but for in-active registration less than half have reported data. We have been able to determine that 16 states combine active and inactive registrations in their counts of over all registrations in the state. On the other hand, the other 34 states report only "active" registration when they say how many people are registered.

We have nearly 90% of the jurisdictions reporting how many total ballots were cast in last fall's election. But as I indicated to you last May in my earlier testimony, not all states collect this information. Some states just use the votes cast for the highest office as an indication of turnout, even though we know from the other states that not everyone votes for that highest office. More states reported total turn-out than in earlier years, but there are still at least a half dozen states that don't provide that number.

Roughly two thirds of the jurisdictions provided information on absentee ballots, but less than 45 percent told us how many people cast provisional ballots, and just one-third said how many were actually counted. We got information on the number of poll workers from nearly 70 percent of the jurisdictions, but only one third said whether they had fewer poll workers than what was required. We still don't know the total number of precincts or polling places in the nation, and we were getting very slim information on whether these locations were handicapped accessible.

<b>Question #</b>	<b>Question Language</b>	<b>Nationwide % of Jurisdictions Answering Questionnaire</b>	<b>% of Registered Voters</b>
1A	Active Registration -- Number	68.2%	88.1%
1B	Inactive Registration -- Number	48.3%	80.8%
2A	Ballots Counted -- Number	89.6%	87.2%
3A	Number of Ballots Cast in Polling Places	76.7%	58.6%
4A	Number of Persons Requesting Absentee Ballots	68.8%	81.6%
5A	Number of Absentee Ballots Returned	69.4%	81.1%
6A	Number of Absentee Ballots Counted	63.5%	73.7%
6C	Number of Absentee Ballots Not Counted	22.1%	46.1%
7B	Number of Early Ballots Counted	81.2%	86.7%
8A	Number of Provisional Ballots Cast	43.6%	79.2%
9A	Number of Provisional Ballots Counted	34.6%	76.2%
12A	Number of Votes Cast for President	88.9%	75.5%
10A	Number of Presidential Undervotes	64.6%	68.6%
11A	Number of Presidential Overvotes	18.7%	47.4%
12B	Number of Votes Cast for US Senate	94.3%	84.6%
10B	Number of Senatorial Undervotes	74.9%	65.9%
11B	Number of Senatorial Overvotes	17.3%	49.9%
12C	Number of Votes Cast for US Representative	83.1%	61.0%
10C	Number of Congressional Undervotes	64.4%	56.1%
11C	Number of Congressional Overvotes	11.9%	35.9%
15A	Number of Poll Workers that Served on Election Day	67.3%	77.6%
17A	Number of Precincts with less than required Poll Workers	32.1%	68.5%
19	Total Number of Precincts	81.7%	87.4%
20	Total Number of Polling Places	68.3%	78.9%
21A	Number of Wheel Chair Accessible Polling Places	48.5%	41.6%
21B	Number of Visually Impaired Accessible Polling Places	3.9%	13.0%
21C	Number of Physically Disabled Accessible Polling Places	13.0%	30.8%

*Subjects for Analysis*

Despite the problem of missing data, we have assembled a list of subjects and column calculations for the Election Day Survey Report. These subjects are as follows:

Percent registered of Voting Age Population and of Citizenship Voting age Population

Percent total turn-out of Registered voters, of Voting Age Population, and of Citizenship Voting Age Population

Registration (This cannot be a uniform combination of Active and Inactive registration in all instances. It will be different for each state.)

For States where Inactive is included in Total Registration

What Percent of Total Registration is Inactive?

For States without Inactive in their total registration:

What percent increase will Inactives add to the total size of a voter file

Where are Ballots coming from? For Total Ballots Counted, what percent came from polling places, vs what percent from Absentees, from Early voting, and from Provisional Ballots

Concerning Absentee Activity, what was the percent of requested ballots returned, compared to what percent of returned ballots were counted and not counted.

For Provisional Ballots, what percent of the Cast Provisional ballots were counted and what percent of overall ballots that were Provisional

Concerning Drop-off Analysis, we'll look at Presidential, US Senate, and US Congressional contests to see how many people fall off down the ballot. We'll look at rates of Undervotes and overvotes for each of these contests, and we'll compare this information by type of voting equipment used.

For Poll workers, we hope to have an overall number of poll workers, but also look at the average number of poll workers per precinct and per polling place

Concerning Polling Places, we're looking for the total number of Precincts and of Polling Places and then we're hoping to see what percent of polling places are accessible.

All of this so far has referred to the Election Day Survey. Now I'd like to turn attention to the second survey we are reviewing.

## UOCAVA Survey

The Military and Overseas Absentee Ballot Survey (UOCAVA) requested county and township-level information for the November 2, 2004, general election from 50 states, four territories and the District of Columbia. The topics included the following:

- 1) The number of absentee ballots *transmitted to* (a) domestic military citizens, (b) overseas military citizens, and overseas citizens collectively.
- 2) The number of advanced ballots transmitted to military and overseas military citizens.
- 3) The number of absentee ballots *returned by* (a) domestic military citizens, (b) overseas military citizens, and overseas citizens collectively.
- 4) The manner in which absentee ballots were distributed to or returned by military and overseas citizens by (a) mail, (b) facsimile, and (c) e-mail.
- 5) The number of absentee ballots returned by military and overseas that were actually counted.
- 6) What were the reasons why absentee ballots returned by military and overseas were *not* counted: (a) no postmark, (b) no voter's signature, (c) no verifiable signature, (d) no date of signature, (e) no notary or witness signature, (f) no date of notary or witness signature, (g) received after state deadline, (h) return as undeliverable, and (i) other reason.
- 7) The number of Federal Write-in Absentee Ballots (FWAB) received from uniformed services and overseas voters

Responses to the UOCAVA survey have been received from 44 states. The most complete responses overall were to questions 2 and 7, dealing with the number of advanced and Federal Write-in Absentee Ballots sent and returned by the military and overseas voters. In about 15 states, the responses to all questions are complete or nearly complete for all local jurisdictions. Many states did not respond to certain questions. One reason for the low response rate might be that many states do not regularly track this data and are unable to retrieve this information after an election. A better response might be expected in the future when systems can be set up in advance to identify items for this survey.

In sum, I hope to be reporting to you soon on a wide range of activities. With that, I'll be happy to answer any questions.