



Getting Ready for Election Day – Or Not...

State Survey of Election Day
Preparations Shows Need for
Policies to Increase Transparency
and Accountability



FairVote – Who We are

- FairVote (www.fairvote.org) researches, develops and promotes innovative electoral reform policies designed to respect every vote and every voice.
- Our Board includes John Anderson and chair Krist Novoselic. Staff led by Rob Richie & David Moon.
- Plan for Democracy Innovation conference Dec. 11
- FairVote's signature policy proposals include:
 - National Popular Vote (nationalpopularvote.com)
 - FixThePrimaries.com / The American Plan
 - Instant Runoff Voting / Proportional Voting
 - Universal Voter Registration/Advance Registration



FairVote' Reports

- Voting and Democracy Research Center
 - *Monopoly Politics and Dubious Democracy* on roots of non-competition in U.S. House races
 - *Presidential Election Inequality*
 - Timely reports on elections here and abroad
- Reports discussed today available at <http://www.fairvote.org/sosresearch>



Right to Vote Initiative

- Led by Adam Fogel (afogel@fairvote.org)
- 100% Youth Voter Registration Project
 - Advance-Registration for 16- and 17-year-olds
 - Automatic Registration (Opt-Out)
- Supporting a Constitutional Right to Vote through our Municipal Right to Vote Project
- Learning Democracy
 - Field Research
 - Voting Curriculum



Democracy SoS Project

- 2008 Election Preparation for Election Day
 - Survey of Election Officials in counties with more than 500,000 residents in 10 swing states
 - Survey of nearly all election officials in Missouri, New Mexico, Virginia & Colorado
- SoS Spotlight: Illuminating Democracy
 - Highlighting actions by secretaries of state from around the country
- SoS Information
 - Find contact info for all secretaries of state & election updates



Election Day Preparation

Area 1: Type of Voting Equipment

- Asked officials what type of equipment they use; compared their answers to verifiedvoting.org
- Most officials could identify their voting equipment. Some use several types of equipment because of shortages.



Election Day Preparation

Area 2: Poll Booth Allocation

- Most counties use “voter registration and previous turnout” to determine allocation, but few could identify HOW they use those metrics
- A clerk in Missouri said they had “no rhyme or reason”
- A number of counties in New Mexico said they would send the same number of booths as they have sent in previous elections



Election Day Preparation

Area 3: Written Allocation Plan

- Written plans are important to provide transparency and help plan for future elections
- National report: Sixteen of the 26 large population counties responding to survey were preparing written allocation plans
- In contrast, the state-by-state numbers of all counties were more troubling:
 - Missouri – 17 of 110
 - New Mexico – 5 of 29
 - Colorado – 11 of 44



Election Day Preparation- Area 4: Readiness of Ballots & Ballot Design

- Purpose: To encourage transparency in the ballot design process and to see if voters would be able to view the ballot before Election Day
 - Nationally, clerks said the ballot would be ready between 6-weeks and 30 days before the election
 - Most counties do not see a draft before the final printing



Election Day Preparation

Area 5: On-Campus Polling Locations

- Most large universities have on-campus precincts, but there is no pattern to placement at community colleges and smaller campuses
 - National: 15 of 24 counties reported on-campus polling places
 - Missouri: 9 of 39 counties with post-secondary institutions reported on-campus polling locations
 - Colorado: 17 of 45 institutions with on-campus polling places
 - New Mexico: 16 of 28 institutions with on-campus polling places



Election Day Preparation Summary of Findings

- Lack of uniformity from state to state and within states
- Lack of machine standardization in states could cause confusion on Election Day
- Lack of uniformity in machine/booth allocation may cause lines in some precincts
- No draft ballot and lack of ballot design transparency could lead to voter error
- Many college students could have problems voting because of accessibility issues



Recommendations: Pre-Election Transparency, Post-Election Accountability

- State legislatures must standardize procedures and promote transparency that includes opportunity for public comment and review
- Counties should provide data on impact of their decisions on accessibility for voters
- State chief election officials should use administrative powers to provide guidelines to county officials
- EAC should release management guidelines on machine/booth allocation & preparedness
- Congress should give EAC rule-making authority and adequate resources