Evaluating Elections and the Elections Performance Index

Zachary Markovits
Manager, Election Initiatives
Pew Election Initiatives

Works with state and local election officials to improve the nation’s system of election administration by examining options for building a system that is more efficient and accurate, while reducing costs and administrative burdens.

www.pewstates.org/elections
Election officials receive countless Election Day challenges

- Out of context anecdotes
- Misleading measurements and grading
- Unreliable data

Unfair Criticism and Reactive Policies
The Elections Performance Index (EPI) is the first-ever comprehensive assessment of election administration in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Using data from 17 key indicators, the EPI makes it possible to compare election administration policy and performance across the states and from one election cycle to the next.
Why an Index?

- Better accountability
- Better advocates
- More context
- More reliable information
### Election Administration Data

- **State Election Offices**
- **Voting and Registration Supplement of the Current Population Survey (Census Bureau)**
- **Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAC)**
- **MIT Survey of the Performance of American Elections**
- **Pew’s *Being Online is Not Enough***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Registered Voters</th>
<th>Voting Age Population</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1,029,320</td>
<td>406,275</td>
<td>1,029,320</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>622,500</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>622,500</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2,351,25</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>2,351,25</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>6,646,20</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>6,646,20</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4,277,10</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>4,277,10</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8,333,35</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>8,333,35</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1,586,00</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1,586,00</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1,875,00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1,875,00</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1,497,60</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1,497,60</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>2,750,00</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,750,00</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Election Administration by the Numbers

An Analysis of Available Datasets and How to Use Them
Selection and Testing

• **2 years with Advisory Group**
  - 25 members made up of academics and local and state election officials from 12 states

• **2.5 years testing the data**
  - Identifying anomalies and finding missing data

• **Edited volume – Cambridge Press**
  - 10 papers exploring the measurements written by 14 authors
State or local officials in the EPI Advisory Group

[Map showing states in blue and white, highlighting select states like WA, OR, CA, AZ, CO, TX, WI, MI, IL, IN, OH, VA, VT, ME, NH, MA, CT, RI, NJ, DE, MD, etc.]
## Measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absentee Ballots Rejected</th>
<th>Provisional Ballots Rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absentee Ballots Unreturned</td>
<td>Registration or Absentee Ballot Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Completeness</td>
<td>Registrations Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability- or Illness-Related Voting Problems</td>
<td>Turnout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military and Overseas Ballots Rejected</td>
<td>Voter Registration Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military and Overseas Ballots Unreturned</td>
<td>Voting Information Look-up Tools Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Registration Available</td>
<td>Voting Technology Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Election Audit Required</td>
<td>Voting Wait Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Ballots Cast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings 2008 - 2010

High Performers
- Colorado
- Delaware
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- North Dakota
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Low Performers
- Alabama
- California
- Mississippi
- New York
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina
- West Virginia

During both the 2008 and 2010 election cycles.
Key Findings 2008 - 2010

• Availability of voter information lookup tools
• Voting wait time
• Disability- or illness-related voting problems
• Availability of online registration