Recommendations from the Presidential Commission on Election Administration: Voter Registration Modernization, Voting Technology and the Human Element

National Conference of State Legislators
Santa Fe, NM
June 4th, 2015
The Executive Order

The Executive Order focused the Commission’s work on several areas of concern:

i. the number, location, management, operation, and design of polling places;
ii. the training, recruitment, and number of poll workers;
iii. voting accessibility for uniformed and overseas voters;
iv. the efficient management of voter rolls and poll books;
v. voting machine capacity and technology;
vi. ballot simplicity and voter education;
vii. voting accessibility for individuals with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and other special needs;
viii. management of issuing and processing provisional ballots in the polling place on Election Day;
ix. the issues presented by the administration of absentee ballot programs;
xi. the adequacy of contingency plans for natural disasters and other emergencies that may disrupt elections; and

xi. other issues related to the efficient administration of elections that the Co-Chairs agree are necessary and appropriate to the Commission's work.
Meetings In:
- Alaska
- Washington
- California
- **Colorado**
- Kentucky
- Georgia
- **Ohio**
- **Florida**
- **Pennsylvania**
- New York
- DC
But we heard from officials in all of these states*:

*according to my notes
Improving the election experience for all voters

Get email updates from the commission:

Guiding Principles

Making Voting Work for Voters
All eligible voters should have the opportunity to cast their ballots without undue delay, and obstacles should be removed that prevent other voters, such as members of the military, overseas voters, voters with disabilities, and voters with limited English proficiency, from casting their ballots.

Common Sense Non-Partisan Solutions
Problems voters encounter in casting their ballots can be addressed with non-partisan solutions that local and state officials around the country can implement to improve the voting experience.

Election Administration as Customer Service
Much can be learned from business community leaders and professional election administrators about how effective election administration can serve the voter in the way that our finest companies and professional firms serve their customers.

The Website
www.supportthevoter.gov
Public Hearing Format:
1) State & Local Election Officials
Public Hearing Format:
2) Academics & Topical Expert Testimony

2. Four Significant Innovations

1. Statewide Voter Registration Lists
   • 1 state in 2000.
   • HAVA: all states by 2006
2. National Voter Registration Lists
   • Maintained by Private Firms
   • Lessons for Management of Official Lists
3. Technology advances
   • Managing extremely large databases
   • Merging data
4. State Laws Opening Lists
   • On-Line Registration (17 states)
   • Same Day Registration (11 + 3 states)
   • Self Management
In Ohio we had our only 2-day hearing with the first day being solely devoted to voting technology:

State and Local Election Officials
Scientists from NIST
Certification Leaders
Testing Laboratory Representatives
Usability Experts
Manufacturers
Academics
Public Hearing Format:
3) Public Testimony
Survey of Local Election Officials

Charles Stewart III
MIT
December 3, 2013

Full presentation is available on the website.
What Caused the Lines?

Q27. Which factors do you believe contributed most to those lines? [Please check all that apply]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Smaller Jurisdictions</th>
<th>Larger Jurisdictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Too many people showed up at the same time</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overly long/complicated ballots</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. People in wrong precinct</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inadequate space @ polling place</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Registration problems</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Insufficient # of poll books</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Not enough early voting days</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q16. Looking forward, over the next 5 to 10 years what areas of election administration are in significant need of improvement or an upgrade? (Choose 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Smaller Jurisdictions</th>
<th>Larger Jurisdictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Voting tech. &amp; voting machine capacity</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Availability of poll workers</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Voter education</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Training/management of poll workers</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Postal service issues</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Availability of polling places</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What did we hear?

- Jurisdictions are frustrated and do not feel that their voices are heard:
  - In legislation (the “least powerful lobby”).
  - In appropriations (“elections tend toward the lower end of the scale of priorities, behind education, public safety, and health care, to name just a few resource competitors”).
  - Elections are awash with data, but many administrators don’t know what to collect to tell their story most effectively.
What did we hear?

- Jurisdictions sometimes struggle with data collection and analysis:
  - Getting buy-in from staff on the value of data collection
  - Most efficient ways to capture information
  - Identifying what is most helpful/instructive
  - Time

- Catch-22 of constant changes in legislation & wanting enabling legislation for administrative progress
What did we hear?

- Jurisdictions are struggling with resources:
  - lack of,
  - quality of,
  - distribution of,
  - & options available to them in the current market.

- Concern with the stymied standard setting process and potential impact on voting equipment certification for new innovations.
What did we hear?

- After the passage of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) there was an influx of federal dollars to upgrade voting equipment.
- That equipment has been aging at a consistent rate across the country and is now 10 years old and counting.
- Replacement is necessary, and soon.
- Jurisdictions need a nimble process at “election-speed”
What did we hear?

- Jurisdictions are having more equipment fail testing.
- Equipment is requiring increased (and costly) maintenance.
- Parts are getting harder to obtain.
What did we hear?

- Jurisdictions want to utilize new technology to provide services to their voters.
- The voters are increasingly expecting their voting experience to be familiar—to be able to vote on a machine or devise that is as easy to use, and may actually be, their tablet or smartphone.
What did we hear?

- Security vs. Access
- One size does not fit all...more on that in a minute
Last year we met in the White House on January 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2014 for a little more than half an hour. It was obvious from the questions that they had both read the report. The Vice President took notes.
I. **Definition of the Charge**

The guiding principle for these recommendations, however, is to improve the voter experience. By improving the voter experience, we mean that:

- Voters at all points of contact with the electoral process should find that it is accessible and dependable.
- Voters should not need to wait more than half an hour to vote.
- Ballots should be well-designed and simple to understand.
- The registration process should be efficient and reliable.
- Voter rolls at the polling place should be accurate.
- Voting information provided by officials should be clear and comprehensive.
- Ballots delivered by mail should arrive in a timely fashion and should be tracked from delivery to return.
- Military and overseas voters should receive their ballots on time and be confident that the election authority has received them in time to be counted.
- Polling places should be well-organized, well-equipped, and accessible.
- Well-trained and informed poll workers should supply useful guidance, answer questions, and resolve issues as they arise.
- Accommodations should be made for populations requiring specialized support, such as voters with disabilities or limited English proficiency.
Even amidst the diversity of local jurisdictions, similar types of jurisdictions... often share similar problems and can learn from each other about the best solutions to common problems.
It is about the common functions of conducting an election that can be scaled to fit the jurisdictions needs.
Commission on Political Reform chaired by:
- Former Senator Olympia Snowe,
- Former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle,
- Former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott,
- Former US Secretary of Agriculture and Representative Dan Glickman,
- Former Governor of Idaho and US Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne.
It is important to note that the Report received bipartisan support for many of the PCEA Recommendations.
Audiences:

- Legislature
  - Ballot length & usability
  - Funding for voting equipment & EPBs
  - OVR & Data sharing
  - Schools as PPs

- Local Administrator
  - Administrative efficiencies
  - Data collection
  - Resource allocations
  - EPB best practices

- State Election Official
  - Training
  - Resource allocations
  - Data collection
  - EPB & Vote Center best practices
  - Technology
The Recommendations in the Report

Many of the recommendations have technology ties:

- Voting equipment standards, testing, & certification
- Voter registration
- Data sharing
- Electronic pollbooks
- Vote Centers/Early Voting
- Auditing
Implementing online registration would address a range of problems the Commission was charged with examining.
The PCEA’s Recommendations

David Becker
Director, Election Initiatives
Upgrade Voter Registration
Why Voter Registration Upgrades?

• Voter Registration problems create problems throughout the process
  – Voters not getting important information
  – Mail sent to wrong addresses
  – Voters going to wrong polling place
  – Voters casting provisional ballots
  – Campaigns don’t have tools to drive turnout

• Improvements in voter registration can have positive repercussions throughout elections
Challenges In Voter Registration
Mobility
1 out of 8 AMERICANS MOVED IN 2012

1 out of 5 YOUNG AMERICANS MOVED IN 2012
Confusion
Voters think their records update automatically with each move.

1 out of 3 voters are unaware they can update their info at the DMV.

+50% of voters are unaware they can update their info at the DMV.
Pace of Activity
Three Recommendations

1. Online Voter Registration

2. Interstate Data Sharing

3. Interagency Data Integration
Online Voter Registration
MORE ACCURATE

- Voters directly input their information
  - Less data entry means fewer data entry errors
- Eliminate the paper “middle-man”
- Most records can be pre-checked against the motor vehicles database
  - Less need for human review
Modest initial investment, almost immediately recouped

- On average, only ~ $240k

AZ: 3¢ per registration, compared to 83¢ per paper form

- Maricopa County alone saved $1.4 million from 2008-2012

CA: Savings of $2.34 per online transaction

- State saved over $2 million in just over one month
- Electronic records do not need to be manually entered into a database
- Can be optimized for mobile devices
- Transfers paper activity to electronic activity
Secure information required to update or initiate a voter record

- Date of birth
- Drivers license or state ID number
- Last 4 digits of Social Security number
- Issue date or audit number

Run through secure networks

- Encryption
- Audit logs
GREATER INTEGRITY

– States can ensure that too much activity isn’t being generated from a single IP address
– Checks against motor vehicles records
  • Can be done in real time
– Duplicates can be identified
  • Confirm with voter in real time
– Not one reported incident of voter registration fraud originating from online systems
Voters prefer it

- As many as 3 out of 4 registrations in states with online registration conducted electronically
- 65% of registered voters nationally support online voter registration
Election Officials Prefer It Too

- Cost savings
- More accurate records
- Voter satisfaction
- Voter confidence
- Reduced opportunities for fraud
- Reduced perception of fraud
- Reduce election officials' burdens
- Fewer polling station problems
- Fewer provisional ballots
- None
- Other

None of these options were selected.
2014

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION
“Election officials can process online registrations in a matter of seconds, saving taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars each election cycle, while reducing errors and cleaning up the voter registration database. Having an online voter registration system is a no-brainer—users love it, election officials love it, and taxpayers love it.”

—Mark J. Thomas, *Utah chief deputy and director of elections*
“It fits with the expectations of the modern voting public, especially young voters, that they should be able to conduct government transactions online.”

—Brad Bryant, *Kansas state election director*
“Online voter registration has been a terrific improvement for Washington state voters. It improves access to and accuracy of the voter rolls, saves precious time for our elections administrators, and saves money.”

—Lori Augino, Washington state director of elections
“Online voter registration has saved Colorado counties millions of dollars since April 2010, and has provided our citizens with a level of customer services they would expect from a for-profit provider. As an added bonus, Coloradans don’t have to give their confidential information to strangers on street corners.”

—Judd Choate, director of Elections Division, Colorado State Department
Online voter registration is rapidly establishing itself in the states as an invaluable tool for managing the accuracy of voter rolls and reducing the costs of list maintenance.

... The Commission received consistently affirmative assessments of the benefits that online registration can provide to the overall objectives of election administration.

... With the enhanced accuracy and efficiency that online registration systems provide, election administrators are able to respond more effectively to a number of recurring challenges....
Online Voter Registration
Trends in development and implementation
Interstate Data Sharing
Electronic Registration Information Center

ERIC
THE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
THE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
MORE ACCURATE AND COMPLETE LISTS

• More of the eligible electorate on the rolls
  – Directed to electronic registration managed by the state, rather than paper registration driven by third party groups

• Keep up with mobile electorate

• Better identify voters who have died
• Less printing costs
• Reduction in returned mail
  – MN and WA confirm a ~40% reduction in returned mail
• Fewer provisional ballots to process
• Reduced costs for less-sophisticated data matching
• Records are more up-to-date when changes occur, not just right before a presidential election
  – Flatten the curve
• Less paper to process
• Fewer problems at the polls on Election Day
  – Fewer voters with out-of-date information
  – Fewer provisional ballots
  – Shorter lines
Cross-State Moves

428,026
In-State Moves

2,200,606
ERIC data as of 1/13/15

In-State Duplicates

39,877
Deceased

103,388
The interstate data that ERIC provides to participating states allows those states to account for ongoing changes in voters’ names, addresses, and registration statuses and to prepare for upcoming elections.

... The Commission endorses state programs [like ERIC] to share data and to collaborate in the synchronization of voter lists so that the states, on their own initiative, come as close as possible to creating an accurate database of the eligible electorate.
www.ERICstates.org
Interagency
Data
Integration
Presidential Commission Endorsement

States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through Departments of Motor Vehicles with their statewide voter registration lists....

Delaware and Michigan have designed systems that seamlessly integrate the Motor Voter transaction into the DMV driver’s license application program in such a manner as to keep a large number of voter records current and to save the DMV money in reduced staff time committed to this program.
The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), 1993

• “...each State shall establish procedures to register to vote in elections for Federal office by application made simultaneously with an application for a motor vehicle driver's license pursuant to section 1973gg-3 of this title”
“Each State motor vehicle driver's license application (including any renewal application) submitted to the appropriate State motor vehicle authority under State law shall serve as an application for voter registration with respect to elections for Federal office unless the applicant fails to sign the voter registration application.”
• (2) The voter registration application portion of an application for a State motor vehicle driver's license -

• (A) *may not require* any information that *duplicates information* required in the driver's license portion of the form (other than a second signature or other information necessary under subparagraph (C));
“In addition, any change of address form submitted for State driver’s license purposes must also serve as notification of change of address for voter registration purposes unless the registrant states on the form that the change of address is not for voter registration purposes. This means that all changes of address submitted to State motor vehicle offices must be forwarded to election authorities unless the registrant affirmatively requests otherwise by opting out on the form.”
Cost savings and Efficiencies

- Reducing of handling paper and processing time from agency staff
- Reducing training time for agency staff
- Reducing wait times and lines
- Reducing costs
David Becker

Director, Election Initiatives

dbecker@pewtrusts.org

www.pewtrusts.org/elections
An improperly functioning DMV can naturally lead to Election Day confusion.
Across America ...

DMVs already share data with other agencies

- Selective Service
- State Veteran Administrations
- State Public Assistance Agencies
- State Revenue Agencies
- State Natural Resources Agencies

Collecting voter data is no different and it’s the law!
Voter Registrations Through DMVs (2012)
Public Assistance Recipients
Still rely on DMVs for voter registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Registration (MI Public Assistance Recipients)</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOS Branch Offices (DMV)</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk’s Offices</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Assistance Agencies</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail-in Voter Registration Program</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keys to Success

- Buy-in from leadership
- Make voter registration a core transaction and key performance metric
- Partnership between Elections and DMV
- Convenient, transparent, and seamless
- One Driver Record/One Residence Address/One Voter Record
The most dire warning the Commission heard in its investigation of the topics in the Executive Order concerned the impending crisis in voting technology ... [which] arises from the widespread wearing out of voting machines purchased a decade ago.
Issues to be considered about a New Voting System

1. The true cost of ownership is the cost to purchase.

2. The request for proposal (RFP) is your first, last and best chance to get the system requirements right.

3. Changing a voting system is like changing tires on the bus ... without stopping.

4. Either you manage vendors or they manage you. Pick.

Merle King, Kennesaw State University, Georgia
Different types of audits perform different functions. The Commission endorses both risk-limiting audits that ensure the correct winner has been determined according to a sample of votes cast, and performance audits that evaluate whether the voting technology performs as promised and expected.
Expansion of Voting Opportunities & Vote Centers

E-pollbooks can make a singular contribution in resolving registration problems at check-in stations.

Election officials from both parties testified to the importance of early voting in alleviating the congestion and other potential problems of a single Election Day.
Proceed to the indicated window when your number appears.

Proceda a la ventanilla indicada cuando aparece su número.
In every respect possible, the responsible department or agency in every state should have on staff individuals who are chosen and serve solely on the basis of their experience and expertise.