

electionlineWeekly—April 24, 2008

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I. In Focus This Week

Despite relatively smooth day, Pa. primary proves problematic for some voters

Lack of signage and lack of knowledge about provisional ballots causes problems

By [M. Mindy Moretti](#)

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Even with a [near-record turnout](#), things went relatively smoothly throughout Pennsylvania on Tuesday, despite pockets of problems across the Keystone state.

Election morning dawned bright and sunny in the eastern half of the state, at the New Hope (Bucks County) Eagle Fire Company, about 30 people waited in line just before 7 a.m. When the polls opened at 7 a.m. on the dot, those in line quickly moved through the process.

After the initial push of voters, it took people about 7-10 minutes from the time they walked through the polling place door until the time they came back out.

Early on, volunteers and voters alike expressed concerns about what a large turnout could mean.

According to Madeline Rawley, the polling site where she was working four years ago had people waiting in line for two to three hours.

“They split the precincts in to two buildings here now, but I’m still concerned that later in the day, if we get a huge rush of voters, people will be standing in line much longer than they have to,” she said. “No one should have to wait more than 15 minutes to vote.”

In Philadelphia, the length of lines at polling places seemed to ebb and flow throughout the day.

“The line was unusually long for this district [Philadelphia, 5th district],” said Linda Chicchi, after she voted. “I waited 20 minutes to get to the table where I was signed in and then about 5 more minutes to vote. A poll worker told me it had been much more crowded at 8 a.m.”

Tom Lavelle, voting in New Hope, was quick to chime in with his concerns about Pennsylvania becoming a laughingstock in the media.

“The media knows the state is unprepared [not enough voting machines] and they are just waiting for something to go wrong. We’re not Florida,” Lavelle said.

Fortunately for voters, Lavelle’s fears did not come to fruition, although that did not mean everything ran like clockwork on Tuesday.

Problems with provisional ballots

There were scattered reports of problems with provisional ballots throughout the day on Tuesday.

In mid-afternoon, a voter in Montgomery County attempted to vote at a polling location but was not only told she could not vote in the primary election, but was never offered a provisional ballot and was denied one when she requested it.

“They are telling me that I’m an unaffiliated voter, but I know I’m a registered Democrat,” Andrea Goldsby said. “I’ve voted at this location before and have always voted Democrat. I know I’m registered as a Democrat.”

Goldsby was clearly frustrated by the entire process and walked away — without voting — vowing to contact someone at the county.

Erin Krasniewicz and her boyfriend faced a similar situation, although they were ultimately able to vote.

According to Krasniewicz, before moving to their new home in South Philadelphia, both she and her boyfriend submitted voting card address change forms in advance of the March 24 deadline. However, when they arrived at their new polling location, neither of them were listed in the poll book.

Krasniewicz said they were not offered provisional ballots and that she and her boyfriend eventually drove to their old polling place where they were still listed and cast their ballots there — although Krasniewicz could only vote for ballot measures because her registration had not been changed to Democrat.

Lack of signage at polling places

While the candidates and their supporters had done their part to publicize polling locations with political signs, officials in many counties did not.

At most polling places, the only thing to indicate that voters were indeed in the correct location were a proliferation of political signs. There were no officially produced “Vote Here” type of signs and the few signs that did point the way to the polling places seemed to be hand-made by industrious poll workers.

“This is the first time I’ve come to this location to vote and not being a student, I really was a bit confused about where I needed to go to vote,” one voter, who refused to give her name, said outside of the polling location at the Montgomery County Community College.

Only one polling location in Doylestown (Montgomery County) — out of more than a dozen polling places visited — had a sample ballot posted outside of the polling place.

With much confusion over closed vs. open primaries only a small handful of polling locations had green, 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper explaining the closed primary process. However, sign placement varied from polling place to polling place. Some signs were quite visible while, others could easily be missed by a voter passing by.

Paper ballot advocates out in force in Bucks

For some voters in Bucks County, who was on the ballot seemed less important than how they were casting the vote. The county uses [Guardian Voting Systems \(Danaher Controls, Inc.\) 1242](#) DREs which do not produce a voter-verified paper trail.

Paper-ballot advocates were stationed at many polling places throughout the county. Bert Johnson with the [Coalition for Voting Integrity](#) was at the New Hope polling site and chatted with voters as they came and went about the use of DREs in Bucks County.

“We’ve been talking to the county commission for three years about getting paper trails,” Johnson said. “The ideal of course would be precinct-based optical-scan machines.”

And it wasn’t just the advocates who were talking about lines and paper ballots. Many voters also expressed concerns about what the day could bring.

“I have a lot of concerns about the electronic voting machines,” said voter Dawn Parla after casting her ballot at the Doylestown Township Building. “I realize that I think about this probably more than most — I mean I think about it every week — but I do believe this is something that all voters are, or should be concerned about.”

Experiences vary on electronic machines and with ballot design

Although most polling places in the Philadelphia area opened on time, a few were delayed by problems with electronic voting machines.

Ron La Bau arrived at the fire station in Morrisville (Bucks County) only to find the site not open because of trouble with the electronic voting machines. "After it got going, it went fairly smoothly, but there was a line probably 30-50 people long by then," La Bau said.

For Emily Cheramie, there was definitely something different about her experience on Tuesday, which ultimately she chalks up to ballot design, though she had voted previously on electronic machines.

"For some reason I was confused by the voting machine, but that could have just been because I didn't have my morning coffee yet," Cheramie said. "But in the past, I think it was more clear which candidate [for delegate] was supported by which presidential candidate."

Cheramie's confusion was echoed by Philadelphia voter Nicole Trentacoste who was voting for the first time in Ardmore (Montgomery County).

"It was pretty straightforward except for the choosing delegates part," Trentacoste said. "Not a big deal, but I could imagine the way the list was laid out and the small print instructions slightly confused many people."

Christine McCormick was a first-time voter in Bucks County, which also meant this was her first experience with electronic voting machines.

"I had never used the electronic machines before," McCormick said. "So that was a little weird but they seemed to work okay."

Despite the pockets of problems — some of which, like the lack of signage and confusion over provisional ballots were troubling — voters for the most part, like first-time Philadelphia voter Melanija Borlja, seemed pleased with the process.

"I was done in less than 10 minutes and am headed home," Borlja said. "I had such a great experience as opposed to the horror stories I have read about and seen publicized."

Some voting experiences included in this report are first-hand accounts from Pew staff working and living in the Philadelphia area.

Pittsburgh, Allegheny County hosts a (mostly) smooth and busy vote

Privacy, student registration issues crop up during otherwise uneventful primary

By [Dan Seligson](#)
Electionline.org

A wide margin of victory for Sen. Hillary Clinton in Pittsburgh and points west in Pennsylvania will probably mean that problems revealed during Tuesday's primary will end up getting scant attention. In fact, by most accounts it was a fairly routine election considering the extraordinary amount of interest around the state and the country.

But minor machine glitches in some precincts, registration list problems, ballot design concerns and what could be a more widespread problem with voter privacy around the city might return in a more hotly contested general election next November.

Clinton beat Sen. Barack Obama by about 10 percent statewide and a similar margin in Allegheny County, home to Pittsburgh, according to [unofficial tallies](#).

While lines in the city were generally short and most voters interviewed experienced few problems with either registration check-in procedures or the electronic voting machines employed in the county, the issue of privacy came up in at least three precincts.

(The state does not allow reporters inside polling places without permission from political party officials. The polling places visited were in public areas – hallways in municipal or academic buildings – or were viewed from the outside through windows.)

Video screens displaying ballots were [plainly visible](#) from hallways, polling place entrances and registration lines. In a county that used lever machines and privacy booths until only a two years ago, voters had surprisingly little to keep their votes secret in polling places in Pittsburgh.

The machines themselves, however, appear to have performed up to expectations with no reports of significant malfunctions or widespread freeze-ups.

While concerns persist about the security, reliability accuracy and even [storage](#) of Allegheny County's [ES&S voting machines](#), there were only scattered reports of machine troubles.

Recently purchased optical-scan machines produced by [Hart InterCivic](#) received [high marks](#) from election officials in Fayette County.

Elsewhere in the state, a few voters who arrived at the polls shortly after they opened said they tried to use one machine and were sent to another after it would not pull up the correct ballot. Other freeze ups were reported to campaign workers throughout the day, but none that led to significant lines at the polls.

Similarly, the disbursement of voting systems and precincts seems to have kept lines at a minimum, even at crowded polling places, including the Jewish Community Center in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood in Pittsburgh, a location so lively that former President Bill Clinton came to greet a large crowd of voters around 10:30 a.m.

Not all voters had an easy time of it. As predicted before the vote, large numbers of new registrants were casting ballots for the first time. Some, however, were relegated to casting provisional votes after their names were not found on voter rolls.

At three precincts at the University of Pittsburgh, students could be seen casting paper provisional ballots around mid-day, their names not on rolls. According to a representative of the College Democrats, at least a dozen students said they registered but were not on the rolls in one of the precincts at the university's political science building.

He said he had heard reports of similar numbers of students not being on the rolls at three other polling locations.

Signage also seemed to be an issue around Pittsburgh. Most polling places were evident only by temporary reserved parking signs. There were few, if any, overt signs directing voters to precincts other than campaign volunteers holding signs. At one downtown polling place, one campaign volunteer had taped an Obama sign to the door of the precinct before it opened and, by, 9 a.m., no one had removed it.

Like their counterparts in the eastern section of the state, some Allegheny County voters complained of confusing ballot displays when it came time to select delegates. Some said they did not initially see all of the choices for delegate, learning only on review pages that they missed races.

II. Election Reform News This Week

Although the polls are now closed in Pennsylvania, voters three other states — Indiana, North Carolina, and West Virginia — are casting ballots in advance of their upcoming primaries. Early voting has been brisk throughout [Indiana](#) since early voting began. According to the secretary of state's office, more than 43,000 ballots had been cast by Tuesday. In [North Carolina](#), which holds its primary on May 6 along with Indiana, "one-stop" voting, which allows voters to register and cast ballots up to four days before the election, has been hit and miss throughout the state with some jurisdictions seeing large turnout and others [not as much](#). And on Wednesday, Democrats in [West Virginia](#) began casting early ballots ahead of the state's May 13 primary.

County officials throughout Colorado will conduct a [simulated election](#) over the next few weeks in order to test the state's new \$13 million voter registration database. "We don't expect this mock election to be completely smooth. It's not intended for that," Secretary of State Mike Coffman (R) said during a press conference Monday. "If you hear issues, don't be alarmed. This is a spring training of sorts." According to the *Rocky Mountain News*, even with the mock election work and computerized testing, the unfinished system won't be used statewide in a real election until the primary. That means the state won't know for sure how the system will handle hundreds of election workers across the state using it simultaneously.

Voting-rights activists filed a federal lawsuit in Missouri this week claiming that public aid officials and election authorities in St. Louis and Kansas city have [failed to help poor people stay active on the voter rolls](#). According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the suit focuses on compliance with the National Voter Registration Act, a federal law passed in 1993 requiring states to offer citizens opportunities to register to vote when applying for driver's licenses and during other interactions with state and local government. The activists claim that while registering at drivers license offices is now commonplace, the Missouri Department of Social Services has shirked its obligations. Deborah Scott, director of the state's social services and the top official named in the suit, maintains that the state's public aid offices were in compliance with federal rules.

Legislation allowing [17-year olds to vote in the primary](#) if they will be 18 by the general election took one step closer to becoming law this week in Connecticut. The state House of Representatives voted 135-12 this week to place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot that would allow 17-year-olds to take part in a primary. The state Senate must approve the measure by a three-quarters vote before the legislative session ends May 7 for it to be on the ballot.

III. Opinion This Week

National: [Voting technology](#); [Paper trails](#); [Holt bill](#); [Election day](#)

Arizona: [Election records](#)

Colorado: [Vote-by-mail](#)

Maryland: [Poll workers](#)

North Carolina: [Voting process](#)

Ohio: [Fair elections](#)

Oklahoma: [Voter ID](#)

Pennsylvania: [Bucks County](#)

South Dakota: [Accessible voting](#)

Tennessee: [Instant run-off voting](#)

Texas: [Instant run-off voting](#)

West Virginia: [Elderly voters](#)

***some sites require registration*

IV. Available Grants

- Election Data Collection Grant Program.** *U.S. Election Assistance Commission* will provide \$2 million each to five eligible states to improve the collection of precinct-level data relating to the November 2008 federal elections. **Who May Apply:** States, through their Chief State Election Officials, are the sole eligible applicants for this grant. **How and When to Apply:** Applicants may view the grant announcement at www.submitgrant.net or [click here](#). For detailed information on the application procedures, please log onto www.submitgrant.net. Applications can be submitted electronically or in hard copy. Electronic submissions must be submitted through www.submitgrant.net. Hard copy applications must be sent to EAC Operations Center, 1515 Wilson Blvd., Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22209. For additional information concerning submissions, contact the EAC Support Center by phone at (888) 203-6161, or via email at EAC@lcgnet.com. Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on April 28, 2008. The deadline applies to both electronic and paper submissions. **Contact Information:** For additional information concerning submissions, contact the EAC Support Center by phone at (888) 203-6161, or via email at EAC@lcgnet.com.
- Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) to Assist Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As) to Establish or Improve Voting Access for Individuals with Disabilities.** *Department of Health and Human Services* announces funds to provide T/TA to P & As in their promotion of full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote, and accessing polling places; developing proficiency in the use of voting systems and technologies as they affect individuals with disabilities; demonstrating and evaluating the use of such systems and technologies by individuals with disabilities (including blindness) in order to assess the availability and use of such systems and technologies for such individuals; and providing T/TA for non-visual access. **Eligibility:** Public and state controlled institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and private institutions of higher education. **Deadline:** June 2, 2008. **Funds:** Approximately \$367,920 is available to fund 4 awards, ranging from \$91,980-\$367,920. **Information:** Melvenia Wright at melvenia.wright@acf.hhs.gov; or go to: www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2008-ACF-ADD-DH-0034.html. **GrantID:** GD2765.

V. Job Postings This Week

All job listings must be received by 12 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday for publication in our Thursday newsletter. Job listings are free but may be edited for length. Whenever possible, include Internet information. Please email job postings to mmoretti@electionline.org

Associate, Make Voting Work, Washington, D.C. An initiative of the Pew Center on the States, MVW seeks to develop and pursue an ambitious agenda to modernize the means by which we administer our elections. The associate will help design and implement research and analysis for MVW, coordinate convenings, manage special projects, maintain internal and external communications and support other programmatic investments and budget activities. **Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred; One to three years of relevant professional experience, including demonstrated research, analytical and writing skills. Experience in public policy in general and election administration in particular preferred; Ability to write clearly and cogently for internal audiences, policy makers, the media and public; Ability to synthesize and summarize large amounts of information and to focus quickly on the essence of an issue, as well as to identify, understand and synthesize different policy perspectives; Experience working with academics, nonprofits and other entities conducting research and policy analysis, helping ensure the results are rigorous, policy relevant and timely and are communicated clearly and persuasively to target audiences. **Salary:** Pew offers a competitive salary and an excellent benefits package including four weeks of vacation annually, a generous 401(k) plan and flexible benefit options. **Application:** Cover letter (indicating where you learned of the opening), résumé and salary expectations to: Monica Chavous Hall, Senior Specialist, Human Resources, The Pew Charitable Trusts, One Commerce Square, 2005 Market Street, Suite 1700, Philadelphia, PA 19103-7077; or faxed to (215) 575-4910 or e-mailed to recruiter@pewtrusts.org. For the complete job listing, click [here](#).

DP Technical Support Specialist, Maryland State Board of Elections, Annapolis, Md. Intermediate level of work maintaining and modifying operating systems for multipurpose, multi-tasking computers. Employees in this classification do not supervise. Employees in this classification receive moderate supervision from a DP Technical Support Specialist Supervisor or other data processing administrator. Employees may be required to work on evenings, weekends and holidays and may be subject to call-in. The candidate will be responsible for supporting election reform IT initiatives. Experience as a Microsoft Certified Professional and experience in Microsoft Windows Professional and Windows Server products, computer networking and technician functions, understanding of security procedures, the elections industry and technical writing skills are desirable. **Qualifications:** 30 credit hours from an accredited college or university in Computer Information Technology, Computer Science, Management Information Systems or other information technology-related field to include course work in machine or assembler computer languages, and operating system and data communication technology for multipurpose, multi-tasking computers may be substituted for the required education; One year of experience maintaining and modifying operating systems for multipurpose, multi-tasking computers may be substituted for the required education; Experience operating multipurpose, multi-tasking computer systems; or scheduling, controlling input and output or maintaining a tape library to process data on multipurpose, multi-tasking computer systems; or converting data from project specifications by developing program code using third generation computer programming languages; or designing, developing and maintaining communications networks may be substituted for high school on a year-for-year basis. **Salary:** \$40,268 - \$64,282. **Application:** Applications may be obtained by visiting our website at: www.dbm.maryland.gov; by writing to DBM, OPSB, Recruitment & Examination Division, 301 W. Preston Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201; or by calling 410-767-4850, toll-free: 800-705-3493; TTY users call Maryland Relay Service, 800-735-2258. **Deadline:** May 6, 2008.

Project Coordinator, The Women & Politics Institute at the School of Public Affairs, American University, Washington, D.C. Coordinate the Middle East Partnership Project sponsored by US State Department being conducted at AU partnering with Meridian International. The person will be the point person with the State Department and responsible for daily administrative activities related to this one year project. Duties include: serving as point of contact for internal AU communications regarding MEPI grant and coordinate information flow to/from Meridian and State Department; drafting project reports to DOS and maintaining communications with program participants from the Middle East; providing weekly updates of program activities to AU units and soliciting informational updates from Meridian; serving as the primary point of contact for inquiries about the program and making referrals as necessary; preparing budget memos and communicating with the Office of Sponsored Programs of the University to monitor expenses; overseeing program logistics; coordinating travel arrangements and accommodations for program participants, interpreters, and speakers; organizing the internal and external project meetings and provide general office support for the project. **Qualifications:** Bachelors Degree required; advanced degree with background Middle East elections, politics and culture preferred. Must have at least three years of prior administrative and budget experience, preferably in support of a government funded project or program. Proficiency in the use of word processing software (Microsoft Word), relational data base software (especially Excel and Access) and Internet research required. Must be able to communicate clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing. This position requires strong intercultural and interpersonal skills, especially an ability to work with foreign dignitaries; attention to detail; flexibility in adjusting to changing priorities; ability to manage multiple simultaneous projects. Arabic speaker preferred. This is a grant-funded position and will be reviewed by the University at the end of the grant period. Continuation of the program/position will be contingent upon future grant awards. [Application.](#)

