

## **electionlineWeekly—May 8, 2008**

electionline.org

**NOTE:** Beginning in June, electionlineWeekly will shift to a new delivery format which will allow us to offer a cleaner design and new features. Because we value our readers' privacy, we will not be automatically moving existing subscriptions to the new system but rather asking for current and new subscribers to sign up [here](http://www.patronmail.com/pmailweb/PatronSetup?oid=1675) (<http://www.patronmail.com/pmailweb/PatronSetup?oid=1675> for those of you reading us in plain text).

Later this month, we will commence emailing electionlineWeekly using both the new system and the legacy system – and while we will make every effort to remove early adopters' emails from the legacy system, readers may experience some duplication until we switch over entirely to the new system in June. As of June, however, the newsletter will be delivered exclusively through the new system so [sign up](#) soon!

Thanks again to all of you for your interest in our work; we are excited about this opportunity to (finally) enhance the weekly newsletter after almost five years and we look forward to seeing all of you at the “new place” in June. – [Doug Chapin](#), director

**CORRECTION:** The email version of the newsletter incorrectly stated that Premier Election Solutions (Diebold) is the manufacturer of Tippecanoe County's electronic poll books. They are not – the software used by the county was developed by [DelMar Information Technologies](#).

### **I. In Focus This Week**

#### **Vote Centers Receive Mostly High Marks in Tippecanoe County, Ind.**

*State photo ID requirement brings attention as well*

By [Sean Greene](#)  
electionline.org

**Lafayette, Ind.** – The Hoosier State offered plenty of fodder for both pundits and election experts alike during Tuesday's primary. The latest battleground for the Democratic presidential nomination, it featured one of the closest finishes to-date and one of the toughest-to-read electorates in the country.

It also presented the first large turnout election since the state adopted its controversial photo-only voter ID law, little more than a week after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the law.

And it saw the first use of vote centers – a method of consolidating neighborhood precincts into super-precincts – in a presidential election in three Indiana counties.

Tippecanoe County, home to Lafayette and Purdue University, used [20 vote centers](#).

The centers debuted in the county [last fall during municipal elections](#) but were put to the test Tuesday with a high-turnout primary election. The [vote center concept](#), which originated in Larimer County, Colo. in 2003, replaces precinct-based polling places with fewer but generally larger centers and allows voters to cast their ballots anywhere across the county, not at an assigned location.

The advantages, according to election officials and [Secretary of State Todd Rokita](#) (R), include savings for taxpayers and a more top-down approach in which fewer, better trained poll workers can serve voters in locations convenient to working and shopping.

There were those, though, who voiced concerns about the centers.

County commissioner candidate Bill Easterbrook worried about poor and elderly voters and those who live in smaller towns further away. Of the county's 20 vote centers, 18 were in the main population centers of Lafayette and West Lafayette.

"I think it disenfranchises people," he said.

John Coward, a Lafayette voter, said he liked the centers but thought they might pose problems for some.

"It might be inconvenient for some people who live further away from the centers and were used to going to the old firehouse," he said.

Other Tippecanoe voters, though, praised the new approach.

"I'm on my way to work. This is very convenient," said Katie Duffey, a voter at the Tippecanoe County Library-Klondike Branch vote center.

"Vote centers are a great idea. The easier it is to vote, the better," added Tim Glick at The Outpost catering hall.

Linda Phillips, the county's clerk, said she also heard positive reviews.

"I thought they worked extremely well with the [high turnout](#) we had. It was a much more efficient way to get the unprecedented turnout through," she said.

Phillips said prior to the election they had sorted the 20 centers into three categories of predicted turnout: tier one centers where they expected 1,800 or more voters; tier two centers where they expected 1,200 – 1,800 voters; and tier three centers where the expected fewer than 1,200 voters.

She said the only challenges they faced were two of the tier three centers ended up having enough voters to be tier one centers. They learned this early in the day and were able to address the issue in two ways: First by getting more voting equipment to the two sites and second by using the media to alert people to go to other centers that weren't receiving as many voters.

The photo ID requirement mostly drew praise as well.

"It should have always been required," said voter Tom Mills at the 4-H Center.

"I'm glad they introduced photo ID. It should be everywhere," said Glick.

At the Jenks Rest Senior Center in Lafayette, a voter who appeared to know several of the poll workers personally did not have her ID with her and cast a provisional ballot. She was told she would need to provide ID at the county clerk's office within 10 days and she said she did not have a problem with that.

The same was not the case statewide, however, including a well-publicized [incident](#) involving elderly nuns trying to vote in South Bend.

Michael Smith, the poll supervisor at the St. Lawrence Catholic Church Social Hall reported one voter having to cast a provisional ballot as well for not having a photo ID.

Phillips added that most people in the county are used to the requirement.

"Even before we had the law 99 percent of voters thought they had to show ID," she said.

Lack of photo ID was not the only reason provisional ballots were issued. A poll worker at the McAllister Center stated that they had issued five or six provisional ballots to voters who said they had registered at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles but were not listed on the voter rolls.

Provisional ballots were seen by some poll workers as a way to not disenfranchise voters.

“We’re not going to turn any voter away here. When needed, voters will get provisional ballots and we will let the clerk’s office properly process these voters after the election,” said Paul Roales, the lead Democratic poll judge at the Purdue Memorial Union on the Purdue campus and a graduate student at the university.

The one election administration issue that usually garners the most attention in many jurisdictions went under the radar in Tippecanoe County – the use of [paperless Premier Election Solutions \(formerly Diebold\) touch-screen voting machines](#). Several voters commented how they liked the option of making the print larger on their ballot and being able to review their ballot on a final screen before casting it.

Overall Phillips gave the primary high marks. She said a few tweaks may be made for the general election including a possible change of location of at least one of the vote centers to a larger space.

“It was a satisfying day. It was a very good day,” she said.

## II. Election Reform News This Week

There was mixed news this week for citizens for whom English is a second language. In Iowa, Secretary of State Michael Mauro [chose not to appeal a court ruling](#) that prevented voter information to be provided in languages other than English. Mauro told the *Des Moines Register* that a legal appeal could take years and cost taxpayers thousands of dollars. Instead, his office will work with the state’s attorney general’s office to offer some sort of help for non-English speaking voters. For Native speakers in Alaska, [a new language assistance plan could soon be a reality](#). In June of 2007 the ACLU and Native American Rights Fund filed a lawsuit accusing election officials with violating the Federal Voting Rights Act. On Monday they filed a motion to speed up the process ahead of the August primary. The state’s Division of Elections say a new minority language assistance program has already been sent to the Department of Justice for approval. Division of Elections officials also say they’re working on a glossary of election related terms in Yupik and other Native languages and for the first time it will be providing separate training for its bilingual poll workers. ACLU officials say they’re eager to take a look at the plan.

The fallout from the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on voter ID continued to be felt in state legislatures around the country with a flurry of activity. In [Kansas](#), lawmakers approved a voter ID measure similar to that upheld in Indiana. Under the legislation, poll workers would begin asking voters at the polls for their photo IDs during this year’s primary and general elections. Those without such cards would be given information about the requirement and how to obtain a free ID. However, no one would risk seeing their vote thrown out until the 2010 elections if they didn’t show their photo IDs. Under the bill, those casting a ballot could show a state-issued ID such as a driver’s licenses but could also provide a passport, employee badge, debit or credit card or student ID. If the card didn’t have the voter’s signature on it, he or she would have to produce another form of ID that did. The bill is now with Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (D), who has vetoed similar legislation in the past. In [Missouri](#), the House gave first-round approval to a constitutional amendment that would require voters to show an ID. The legislation, which would put voter ID on the ballot — either in November or a special election — was approved along party lines. The House must still vote on it one more time before sending it to the Senate. There is only one week remaining in the legislative session. In [Oklahoma](#), a bill before the Senate requiring voters to show ID at the polls failed along party lines. While the legislature did not require a photo ID, opponents feared that approving this legislation would lead to that. And finally in [Texas](#), the debate over photo ID continues to intensify with Republicans vowing to bring the issue back up next legislative session.

Although Easter was almost two months ago, it’s a good thing for Boones Mill, Va. Town Council incumbent Richard Miller that the Franklin County Board of Elections still had some [plastic eggs lying about — purple ones in fact](#). The race for council ended in a three way tie and after consulting the state board of elections, Elections Supervisor Bill Cooper had to break the tie by drawing lots. Miller’s name was inside the purple Easter egg.

### III. Opinion This Week

National: [Voting rights](#)

Supreme Court: [I](#), [II](#), [III](#), [IV](#), [V](#), [VI](#), [VII](#), [VIII](#), [IX](#), [X](#), [XI](#), [XII](#), [XIII](#), [XIV](#), [XV](#)

California: [Polling places](#); [Poll workers](#)

Colorado: [Voter ID](#)

Florida: [Absentee voting](#)

Georgia: [Voter ID](#)

Indiana: [Lawrence County](#)

Maryland: [Election reform](#)

Minnesota: [Election reform](#); [Voter ID](#)

Mississippi: [Voter ID](#)

Oklahoma: [Voter ID](#)

Oregon: [Vote-by-mail](#), [II](#)

South Carolina: [Overseas voters](#)

Texas: [Voter ID](#), [II](#), [III](#), [IV](#), [V](#); [Vote fraud](#)

Washington: [Voter ID](#)

West Virginia: [Voter registration](#)

*\*\*some sites require registration*

### IV. Available Grants

- **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](mailto:melvenia.wright@acf.hhs.gov); or go to: [www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2008-ACF-ADD-DH-0034.html](http://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](mailto:mmoretti@electionline.org)*