

## **electionlineWeekly—June 12, 2008**

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

#### **Local election officials are taking it to the streets in spite of increasing gas prices**

*Officials say need for early voting and accessibility outweigh costs of ever increasing prices*

By [M. Mindy Moretti](#)

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Even with gas prices breaking the \$4 per gallon ceiling — and inching higher each day — a handful of counties throughout the country are still relying heavily on their mobile polling places, otherwise known as votemobiles.

“Of course we’re carefully managing the use of it but we have to balance that with the need to have the votemobile doing what it was designed to do,” said Brett Rowley, community outreach coordinator for [Orange County, Calif.](#) “We’re definitely watching the prices, but we need to be out there.”

Rowley said that the one way the county maximizes the use of the votemobile is to use it for a variety of election-related programs. From serving as an early voting site to participating in registration drives, to filling in when as a back-up poll site on election day, the Orange County votemobile has been extremely popular.

“It’s worked very well,” Rowley said. “It’s been extremely popular with our colleges — there is great demand for it there. This summer we’ve got a whole host of things we’re doing with the trailer from going to A’s games to a Juneteenth celebration and just a multitude of events.”

[Kitsap County, Wash.](#) is another county with a votemobile that has had to refocus the use of the votemobile and although the rising cost of gas is of a concern, Delores Gilmore, county elections manager said Kitsap’s change really stemmed more from learning from experience.

The all vote-by-mail county, set out with the idea that the votemobile could be used as an accessibility tool for disabled voters. Gilmore said her office worked with an accessibility advisory group and pinpointed locations all over the county to take the votemobile to provide easily accessible voting. Problem is, disabled voters still weren’t voting.

“We’ve had to actually change our way of thinking as well and that’s where our voter access group has really helped us,” Gilmore said. “What actually happens can be way far apart from what you had planned so you have to be willing to change. A lot of them simply cannot get on a bus. It was just too hard for them.”

Even with additional money right now for fuel, Gilmore said that the multi-functionality of the votemobile far outweighs the prices or the hassle of having to rent some sort of vehicle.

“Budget-wise because this van is really multi-functioning — we can use it to haul things for set up and also use it on election day as a voting location, registration drives — we can’t be too overly concerned about the fuel prices — yet,” Gilmore said cautiously. “We have it all set up and you can’t rent one that is set up the way this one is. The thing that is so good about this is we can modify it up to suit our needs.”

[Kane County, Ill.](#) Clerk John Cunningham attributes the increased popularity of early voting in his county directly to the votemobile.

“Percentage-wise, our county is right up there in voter turnout and a lot of that I attribute to the votemobile because it has made early voting so easy,” Cunningham said. “We advertised its location in the paper

and did robo-calls and on the days after the ads and the calls, turnout at the votemobile increased significantly.”

And with such an increase in turnout, Cunningham and his staff are already preparing for what he and many others expect could be a record turnout in November.

“The votemobile is going to be more important than ever this year,” Cunningham said. “We expect a much higher turnout so it’s important that we push early voting so we’re going to be very proactive and staff is working now to define locations and we’ll be checking back 10 years through voter turnout records and then we can allocate the votemobile to those locations.”

For Cunningham, the added costs for gas aren’t really a concern.

“We drive it where we need to take it and then it sits there all day being run by a generator,” he said. “We are spending some additional money on gas, but the numbers of people voting prove that the added expense is worth it.”

And in Riverside County, Calif., [ROVER](#), which is an acronym for Registration Outreach, Voting and Education Resource is gearing up to face its first presidential election since its debut in November 2005.

[Unlike the vote mobiles in other counties](#), ROVER is a specially-fitted RV-type vehicle that the county can use for voter outreach and education as well as a mobile polling site. The unit is outfitted with four of the county’s Sequoia AVC Edge touch-screen machines equipped with a voter-verified paper audit trail as well as all the tools necessary to run a polling site. Two county staff members man ROVER at all times usually with additional staff members following behind in a county vehicle.

## II. Research Summaries

*electionline provides brief summaries of recent research in the field of election administration. Note some articles require a subscription. Please email research links to [sgreene@electionline.org](mailto:sgreene@electionline.org).*

[Convenience Voting](#) – by **Paul Gronke, Eva Galanes-Rosenbaum, Peter A. Miller, and Daniel Toffey**, *Annual Review of Political Science*, June 2008

This article provides a history and description of different forms of convenience voting (early in-person voting, voting by mail, absentee voting, etc.). It reviews the current literature in a number of areas including: convenience voting’s effect on turnout; the demographic profile of convenience voters; the partisan impact of convenience voting and its impact on campaigns; the effect on election administration and the costs; concerns about fraud and coercion; and normative concerns such as the potential harm to civic culture and voters casting ballots with different sets of political information by voting at different times. Gronke *et al* conclude by discussing a future of convenience voting research that will center on an interdisciplinary approach. (*Subscription required.*)

[The Congressional Record Underlying the 2006 Reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act](#) – by **Kristen Clarke**, *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, Summer 2008

Clarke argues that the recently reauthorized provisions of the Voting Rights Act, including Section 5 which requires certain jurisdictions to get federal approval of voting changes prior to implementing them, will withstand constitutional scrutiny. She argues that this is greatly due to the extensive legislative record created during the reauthorization process, including evidence and testimony demonstrating ongoing voting discrimination.

[Assessing the impact of voting technologies on multi-party electoral outcomes: The case of Buenos Aires’ 2005 Congressional Election](#) – **Gabriel Katz, R. Michael Alvarez, Ernesto Calvo, Marcelo Escolar and Julia Pomares**, *Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project Working Paper #64*, April 2008

Using evidence from a pilot project conducted during the 2005 congressional election in Buenos Aires, Argentina which tested four different electronic voting machine prototypes, the authors analyze how voting technology influences the outcomes of elections in multi-party races. The paper finds that different

voting devices can affect the relative support for different parties across races and that the amount of and how information is presented might sway voters to choose some parties over other.

[Election Reform after HAVA: Voter Verification in Congress and the States](#) - Daniel Palazzolo, Vincent G. Moscardelli, Meredith Patrick, and Doug Rubin, *Publius: The Journal of Federalism Advance Access*, April 30, 2008

While the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 HAVA emerged from a bipartisan process with some cooperation from state and local government officials, voter-verifiable paper record (VVPR) legislation at the state level has been more divisive and has provoked more opposition from state and local officials. The authors argue VVPR laws were more likely to pass in states with moralistic political cultures, election reform activists and professionalized legislatures controlled by Democratic majorities. (*Subscription required.*)

### III. Election Reform News This Week

- The state of Alaska was in federal court this week, fighting against demands that it provide [voting ballots and other election materials in Yup'ik as well as English](#). According to the *Anchorage Daily News*, lawyers for the elders and the tribal groups say the state is violating the federal Voting Rights Act of 1975 by failing to provide ballots and other materials in Yup'ik to residents who don't speak English well or at all. Voters struggle especially to understand complicated ballot measures. The state responded that Yup'ik is historically an unwritten language and therefore exempt from requirements that written translations be provided of voting materials. Lawyers for Bethel say that city already is doing a good job of providing translators and other help and that the case against it should be thrown out. U.S. District Judge Tim Burgess in Anchorage, who said he'll issue a ruling later.
- Problems continued in the wake of last week's Alabama primary election. This week, the state's Attorney General [subpoenaed the voting records in Bullock County](#) after complaints were filed. In Baldwin County, a school board candidate is requesting a new election saying that voters throughout the county received the [wrong ballots](#) during the primary. In [Randolph County](#), the District Attorney has requested an investigation into the absentee ballots in that county. "I have asked the AG's office to look at it. They have the knowledge, resources and expertise to investigate and are investigating an incident in [Perry County](#)," E. Paul Jones told *the Randolph Leader*. "The allegations I heard were related to the commission races. I don't know if they spilled over in other races," he said. A review of election results by the *Press-Register*, found that in at least four [Mobile County](#) precincts may have received the wrong ballots during the primary. The problems all occurred in split precincts, where voters who live in different districts cast ballots at the same polling location. There were seven split precincts in Mobile County for the June 3 primaries. In four, nearly all of the voters cast ballots in races for which only a portion of registered voters were eligible.
- In more primary news, several other states held local primary elections this week including South Carolina and North Dakota. In South Carolina, fears that [the intensive heat](#) would impact voting machines proved unfounded, with [few problems and even fewer voters](#) throughout the state. Despite the relatively smooth primary, there were some [sporadic problems](#) including a [power outage](#). Stark and Stutsman counties in North Dakota tested out [vote centers](#) to relatively positive reviews. The vote count in Cass County was a [bit slow](#) because of flood waters, new precinct configurations and hand counting some ballots. On the same day Virginia was holding primary with a [historically low turnout](#); state election officials announced that they were anticipating a [record turnout](#) for the November 4 election.
- A 97-year-old Surprise, Ariz. woman who has voted in the past 19 presidential elections said she finds herself a casualty in the [voter ID battle](#). Shirley Preiss cannot register in Arizona for the November elections without proof of citizenship. "I'm a legal American," Preiss told a local

television station. "I'm born here. Born and raised in America." Preiss was born in 1910 in Clinton, Ky., before birth certificates were issued. She said she no longer has a driver's license and never had a passport. Her son has vowed to take the fight to get Preiss registered to the governor's office.

#### IV. Opinion This Week

National: [Sensible elections](#); [Electoral College](#); [Election reform](#); [Vote fraud, II](#); [Voting Rights Act](#)

Arizona: [Secretary of State](#)

California: [Primary election, II](#); [Vote-by-mail](#); [Instant-runoff voting](#)

Colorado: [Poll workers](#); [Voting system](#)

Florida: [Voting system](#)

Iowa: [Same-day registration](#)

Kansas: [Poll workers](#)

Mississippi: [Voter ID](#); [Felon voting rights](#); [Closed primaries](#); [Voting Rights Act](#)

New Jersey: [Polling places](#)

North Carolina: [Instant runoff voting](#)

Pennsylvania: [Mail-in ballots](#)

Virginia: [Felon voting rights](#); [Voting rights](#)

West Virginia: [Early voting](#)

*\*\*some sites require registration*

#### 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)*

- **Database Specialist, Maryland Board of Elections, Annapolis, Md.**— Responsible for (1) detailed oversight of management and maintenance of the statewide voter registration system (MDVOTERS) database; and (2) the extraction of data and formatted reports from that database. **Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Computer Information Technology, Management Information Systems, Computer Science or other information technology-related field to include course work in data management systems. Experience with MDVoters database software and Crystal report generator. Experience developing databases with Microsoft SQL Server including writing queries, using SQL and SQL Plus for Oracle. Application: Applications will be evaluated based on the materials submitted in relation to the above position responsibilities and requirements. Therefore, it is important to provide complete and accurate information. Please include the title of the position for which you are applying, as well as the announcement number, on your State application (MS 100). All applications must be received or mailed by the closing date to the address shown above. For applications, call 410-767-1277 or download from [www.dbm.maryland.gov](http://www.dbm.maryland.gov). Salary: \$41,074-\$65,568. **Deadline:** June 16, 2008.
- **Election Administrative Assistant, Talbot County, Md.**-- An Election Administrative Assistant I is the full performance level of administrative support work related to a variety of technical or secretarial services in a local election office. Employees working in the technical areas perform administrative functions not involving policy decisions but requiring a thorough knowledge of the specific functions performed. Employees perform a variety of complex secretarial duties requiring a thorough knowledge of election laws, rules and procedures. Employees in this classification do not supervise but may provide training and guidance to Election Clerks and other support staff. Employees receive general supervision from an Election Director, Election Deputy Director or other designated administrative staff and are expected to exercise considerable tact, discretion and judgment in all areas of work. Matters of confidentiality are given close attention by the supervisor. The work may require travel to schools, nursing homes or other facilities to register

voters or provide related services. Employees may be required to work evenings and weekends, particularly prior to and following an election. **Qualifications:** Graduation from an accredited high school or possession of a high school equivalency certificate; one year of experience applying election laws, rules and procedures in a local board of elections office. **Salary:** \$26,257 to \$40,996. **Application:** May be obtained by visiting our [Web site](#); 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:** June 16, 2008.