

electionlineWeekly — June 26, 2008

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I. In Focus This Week

EAC issues glossaries of election terms in five Asian languages

Additional glossaries, including audio files for non-written languages may be on the horizon

By [M. Mindy Moretti](#)

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The [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#) (EAC) has released five new Asian-language glossaries that cover election terms from abandoned ballot to zoning regulations...and everything in between in [Chinese](#), [Japanese](#), [Korean](#), [Tagalog](#) and [Vietnamese](#).

The Asian-language glossaries come on the heels of a [Spanish](#)-language glossary released in 2006 that was considered highly successful.

“We did the Spanish one first and we wanted to see what people’s reactions were before we moved ahead with other languages,” said Laiza Otero, deputy director of voting system testing and certification for the EAC. “It was unprecedented how well it was received. As soon as we saw that feedback, we decided to go ahead and cover the Asian-languages.”

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 1.6 million U.S. citizens 18 or older speak an Asian or Pacific Island language at home and English less than “very well.” [Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act](#) requires jurisdictions with large minority language populations (including Hispanic and Native Alaskan and American Indian) to provide translated voting materials, such as registration notices and ballots.

Currently seven states — Alaska, California, Hawaii, Illinois, New York, Texas and Washington — have jurisdictions that must provide Asian language materials to voters.

For EAC Chair Rosemary Rodriguez, bilingual access has been one of her top priorities.

“These glossaries have been a real access point for the bilingual voter to participate in the process,” Rodriguez said. “We’re very excited about the quality of the glossaries and the way they have been received not only by election officials, but the community as well. It’s been very enthusiastic.”

Unlike the Spanish-language glossary, the EAC did not have any staff in-house who spoke any of the five languages. So in addition to contracting out for the translations, the agency also worked closely with stakeholders from a variety of organizations.

Participating organizations included the Asian Pacific American Legal Center; Filipino American Service Group (FASGI); King County, Wash.; Korean American Resource and Cultural Center; Korean Resource Center (Los Angeles); Little Tokyo Service Center (Los Angeles); Los Angeles County; National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC); Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA).

“We really relied on the members of the working group to ensure that what we were doing were culturally and linguistically accurate,” Otero said. “I had to handle the proof-reading, which was interesting. I was actually able to pick up a few words.”

Although the topic came up with the working group, Otero said [transliteration](#) — the act of changing letters, words, etc. into corresponding characters of another alphabet or language — was not really an issue for the glossaries.

“Transliteration is largely about proper names,” Otero said. “And the sense that I got from the working group is that it varies from community to community and that it wasn’t really an issue for the glossaries.”

Copies of the glossaries were mailed to elections directors in all 50 states and territories and districts as well as officials in the jurisdictions covered by Section 203. Glossaries were also mailed to more than 100 organizations that work with Asian-language voters.

“These glossaries will support our voter education work tremendously,” says Vida Benavides, interim executive director of the Asian Pacific Islander American Vote, a voter advocacy group. “Language is central to our work of cultivating a culture of civic involvement in the Asian American community, yet organizations like ours don’t have the resources to publish a comprehensive translation of election terms.”

With six languages down, the EAC is now looking ahead to other translation possibilities including Hmong, Russian and French. The Commission is also working on possible ways to address languages that are not traditionally written.

“We’re not done at all,” Otero said. “Someone has already mentioned the Hmong glossary and there are other languages that aren’t in the VRA. Next up we already had a working group meeting regarding native and Alaskan native the glossary wouldn’t quite work for those language maybe doing a pictorial or audio files.

EAC Web site translated as well

In addition to the six glossaries, the EAC’s Web site is now translated into six languages. The EAC homepage links to information for voters — including how to register to vote using the National Voter Registration Form — in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

“The Web site translations are just as valuable as the glossaries,” said Jeannie Layson, director of communication and Congressional affairs. “Quite a bit of material on the site is translated into six languages. I haven’t seen any other comparable agencies doing that. We’ve tried to truly make it voter centric.”

II. Election Reform News This Week

- After more than 10 months of back-and-forth, the [Wilkinson County, Miss.](#) primary election “do-over” was held this week and, on Wednesday, the county’s Democratic Executive Committee [certified the vote](#). The initial vote counting for the election lasted well into the morning hours Wednesday. In the original August 2007 vote, the three incumbents were the declared winners until a then one-person majority of the committee voted to toss out all absentee, affidavit and curbside ballots from the election because of allegations of voter buying and fraud. In late February, Judge Jim Persons, appointed by the Mississippi Supreme Court to hear a contest filed by the candidates, called for the new election. Persons called the new election after the court could not determine who had access to the paper ballots in the time between the initial election and the time the contest went to court in November. Persons ordered that, when the general election (July 22) votes are certified, the winner should immediately be sworn into office. This time around, incumbents Reginald Jackson (sheriff) and Richard Hollins (supervisor) won again, but incumbent Mon Cree Allen (circuit clerk) did not.
- For the first time since the era of the infamous butterfly ballot, voters in part of Palm Beach County returned to [paper ballots at the polls](#) following a state law outlawing the use of the electronic, ATM-style machines that had been in use since 2002. Although the one-race contest only drew 7.3 percent of registered voters, Elections Supervisor Arthur Anderson told the *Sun-Sentinel* that the city race gave his office a chance to test out new equipment that will surely be put under the microscope in November. According to the paper, while voters seemed pleased overall with the new system, some found the expense — \$8 million for the scanners and

thousands for the paper ballots — annoying. "I can't believe they spent millions of dollars on this," Joann Mann told the paper. "It's pathetic."

- The Chesterfield County, Va. chapter of the NAACP has [filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice](#) asking that proposed changes in polling places be rejected. According to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the complaint says hundreds of residents were deprived of the right to vote in the presidential primary, primarily in precincts with the largest black populations, and claims changes approved by the county's Board of Supervisors last month could cause a repeat of problems in November. When voting officials ran out of Democratic primary ballots, nearly 300 voters were allowed to cast votes on blank pieces of paper, but the State Board of Elections later decided they would not count. A plan developed by the county's Electoral Board and registrar, largely in response to the problems, would create three new polling places by splitting three precincts, and move four others to larger facilities. "We hope these changes will not take place, due to the confusion it would cause," Jerome Seldon, NAACP chapter president told the paper. Seldon said voters affected by the changes, many of whom are minorities, could be confused by the late changes and could miss their opportunity to vote in a crucial election.
- Ninety New Mexico residents will have to re-register to vote after their [completed voter registration forms were stolen](#) from a lock-box in ACORN offices in Las Cruces. According to the Las Cruces Sun-News, Mark Gerring, ACORN board member, said ACORN tracks all voters it registers, and will send a letter to inform those whose registration applications were stolen. "While we're outraged that someone would take new voters' applications, we can at least be sure that all of these future voters can have the opportunity to complete an application and mail it directly to the county clerk," Gerring said.

III. Research and Report 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.

[Contextual priming: Where people vote affects how they vote](#) – By Jonah Berger, Marc Meredith, and S. Christian Wheeler, Proceedings of the National Academies of Science Online, June 23, 2008

The authors examine how polling place location can influence how people vote. For example even when controlling for other factors, people voting in schools were found to be more likely to support school-funding initiatives. The findings describe how situational context can subtly influence decisions. (Subscription required)

[Broken: The Regulatory Process for the Voting Industry](#) – prepared by David Beirne, executive director of the Election Technology Council, 2008

A report from the trade association representing the manufacturers of the vast majority of voting systems in the U.S. first provides a brief history of the role of the private sector in U.S. elections since the late 19th century. It then describes how voting system standards have evolved and how the current regulatory framework administered by the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is flawed for a number of reasons: the industry itself is not involved in developing the standards and the industry is shut out from EAC activities which can lead to an adversarial relationship. A potential for market failure is cited due to the spiraling costs of the certification process. The report ends by recommending representation from the voting machine industry on the Technical Guidelines Development Committee. EAC Chair Rosemary Rodriguez [responded](#).

[Quick Start Management Guide: Central Count Optical Scan Ballots](#) – by the Election Assistance Commission, May 2008

The federal agency charged with among other tasks developing guidance to meet Help America Vote Act requirements continues its series of quick start election management guidelines to assist local election officials' management of elections. The most recent brochure focuses on central-count optical scan ballots, a system where paper ballots are tabulated at a central location using a high-speed scanner.

The guidelines describe what should be considered if a jurisdiction decides to use a central count system, how this will affect polling place management and where to locate the central-count facilities.

IV. Opinion This Week

National: [Popular vote](#); [Ex-felon voting rights, II](#); [Overseas voters](#)
Alabama: [Election abuse](#); [Election season](#); [Fair elections](#); [Absentee ballots](#); [Vote fraud](#); [Attorney General](#)
Arizona: [Vote counting](#); [Election integrity](#)
California: [Instant-runoff voting](#)
Iowa: [Voter turnout](#)
Indiana: [Voter ID](#)
Massachusetts: [Election-day registration](#)
Minnesota: [Instant-runoff voting](#)
Mississippi: [Wilkinson County](#)
Missouri: [Poll workers](#)
Nevada: [Polling places](#)
New Jersey: [Voting plan](#)
North Carolina: [Instant-runoff voting, II](#)
Ohio: [Jennifer Brunner](#); [Voting system](#)
Tennessee: [Paper ballots](#)
Virginia: [Ex-felon voting rights](#)
Washington: [Voter registration](#)
West Virginia: [Mercer County](#)

***some sites require registration*

V. Request for Proposals

- The Colorado Secretary of State's office issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) on June 6, 2008 to procure a new Campaign Finance software system to replace their legacy system. The RFP is posted on the Secretary of State's Elections Web site at <http://www.elections.colorado.gov/DDefault.aspx?tid=1039>. The deadline for submission of proposals is July 10, 2008.

VI. 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

- **Director of Campaign Finance Reform**, Common Cause, Washington D.C. — lead Common Cause team to design and implement campaign finance reform strategy and campaigns, with primary focus on public financing of elections, as part of a broader pro-democracy agenda. Build and manage relationships with key coalition partners and allies. Serve as spokesperson and resource to the media and the public on Common Cause campaign finance reform efforts. Assist in the development of public education materials, policy briefings, and online and offline grassroots engagement strategies. Assist development staff in writing of grant proposals and reports. Work closely with other Common Cause staff to ensure overall success of campaign finance reform campaigns at the national, state, and local level. Manage program budget. Other duties as needed. **Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree required, JD preferred; extensive knowledge of campaign finance law and policy; demonstrated political judgment and advocacy skills; minimum ten years advocacy, legal or political campaign experience; minimum five years coordinating or supervising the work of others; commitment to Common Cause issues and agenda; ability to analyze complex public policy issues and communicate them effectively to a broader audience; demonstrated ability to be flexible and work well under pressure; strong

organizational and interpersonal skills; and a good sense of humor. **Application:** Please submit resume, cover letter and salary requirements to Director of Human Resources at hr@commoncause.org and include "Director of Campaign Finance Reform" in the subject line; or fax to 202.355.7546. No phone calls please.

- **Election Data Application Specialist**, Baltimore City Board of Elections — the full performance level of specialized data processing work in a local election office. Employees produce and verify data output. Employees in this classification do not supervise but may provide advice and guidance to Election Data Application Specialist I's and other support staff. Employees receive general supervision from an Election Director, Election Deputy Director or other designated administrative staff. The work may require travel to data processing locations to attend meetings or to perform other assignments such as voter registration. Employees may be required to work evenings and weekends, particularly prior to and following an election. **Qualifications:** graduation from accredited high school or possession of a high school equivalency certificate; one year of experience in the operation of data entry devices. **Application:** 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. **Salary:** \$28,434 - \$44,520. **Deadline:** July 11, 2008.
- **Election Director**, Baltimore County, Md.— is the supervisory or managerial level of work directing elections in local jurisdictions within the state. Employees supervise office support staff, which may include subordinate supervisors. Employees receive managerial supervision from the State Administrator or Deputy State Administrator of Election Laws. Employees may be required to work evenings and weekends. The work may require travel throughout the State to exchange information regarding the election process and promote voter registration. **Qualifications:** graduation from an accredited high school or possession of a high school equivalency certificate; and five years experience applying federal, state and local election laws and regulations applicable to conducting elections, which much have included at least one presidential or gubernatorial election. **Application:** 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. **Salary:** \$52,950-\$90,706. **Deadline:** July 15, 2008.