

## **electionlineWeekly—July 17, 2008**

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

#### **New D.C. Election Leaders Face Big Stage in September, November Votes** *Fixes in place to address primary woes, but inexperience still has some nervous*

By [Dan Seligson](#)  
*electionline.org*

Election officials around the country have been bracing for record turnout in the presidential election. In the Nation's Capital, however, departures and replacements in the upper echelons of election administration – and lingering concern over voting troubles during [last February's primary](#) – has activists and residents fearing more problems at the polls.

In May, Alice Miller, executive director of the [Board of Elections and Ethics](#) (BOEE) for the District of Columbia for over a decade, took a [new position](#) as chief operating officer for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

That same month, William O'Field, the board's spokesman and poll worker coordinator, trainer and recruiter also announced his retirement from the division. O'Field had been with the board for more than a decade. The city's registrar job is open, [advertised](#) since April.

Past chairman of the BOEE Charles R. Lowery Jr. no longer holds his position. He has been replaced in the position by Errol R. Arthur, a newcomer to the board. Lowery continues to serve as a board member.

The District continues a [nationwide search](#) to fill the position of registrar of voters, now being held by an acting registrar.

With all of the comings and goings, Dorothy Brizill, executive director of [DCWatch](#), a group that covers D.C. politics and public affairs, said she was bracing for trouble in coming months.

"I'm not even looking toward November. We have a September primary and I'm very concerned about that. I think that the February presidential primary was not handled well – whether you look at not [having] enough ballots to the polling sites, not having the right security sleeves, inadequate staffing, machines breaking down, not having backups... and that was just a primary," Brizill said. "I think we're going to see a record turnout in both September local and November general."

"It would be bad enough if it were just the top spot," she added. "But it's two other critical positions – the registrar and the person responsible for recruiting and retaining poll workers."

District Councilwoman Carol Schwartz, R-At large, said that she shared some of those concerns, especially for November.

"I must tell you I'm a little nervous," Schwartz said at a July hearing. "Not only do I see the biggest election in our history, I also see what's going on in your shop....The timing is not great."

It appears, however, that the department has started to make a number of changes to address the problems revealed in February.

Speaking at the July hearing, Sylvia Goldsberry-Adams, the BOEE's acting executive director and former operations manager, said her department had undertaken an "extensive review of our activities and

procedures...and has been engaged in a comprehensive process of reforming our procedures to further modify and strengthen our processes.”

The changes range from the basic – reordering the alphabet breaks in registration lists to make lines move more effectively – to the more complex such as a new rule calling for trisected poll worker shifts on election day.

Paper ballot shortages, perhaps the most pressing issue in the city that arose last February, has been examined as well, Goldsberry-Adams said.

“The percentage of paper ballots ordered will be increased,” she said. “Less emphasis will be placed on the anticipated use of the touch-screen machines. An analysis of historical trends and registration numbers, precinct by precinct was conducted to enable us to accurately increase the initial ballot distribution.”

The District faces some other challenges though. A [report released](#) this month by an advocacy group charged with ensuring Help America Vote Act compliance with disability access found that nearly 10 percent of polling places were structurally inaccessible. In one case, wheelchair lifts were inoperable. In another, a series of sharp turns and narrow pathways made access difficult, while an elevator necessary to get to a polling place lacked controls that a person in a wheelchair could reach and audible floor indicators and Braille characters for voters with visual disabilities.

## II. Election Reform News This Week

[Massachusetts could become the third state in New England to offer election-day registration](#) after Maine and New Hampshire if lawmakers approve a measure allowing its introduction this year, *Metro International* reported. The bill would require every jurisdiction in the state to have at least one polling place allowing same-day voter registration in time for this year’s general election and expand to all precincts after 2010.

[Back-up paper ballots will not be a federal requirement](#) in November after the House defeated [H.R. 5803](#) that would have authorized \$75 million for localities to offer printed paper ballots, *Congressional Quarterly* reported.

This week’s Republican primary run-off election in Lee County, Alabama [cost the jurisdiction an estimated \(but reimbursable\) \\$60 per vote](#), *Oanow.com* reported. Turnout at the county’s 23 polling places hovered around 1.4 percent on Tuesday. Higher turnout elections, such as the Super Tuesday primary and November’s general election, cost the county between \$1.50 and \$3 per vote. [That and a bag of crack cocaine is enough to purchase a vote](#) in Perry County, said Secretary of State Beth Chapman, who earlier this week stated that a voter fraud investigation in the county found that voters were paid for votes in cash and narcotics.

It’s early, but one Virginia city facing an election machine shortage is [already predicting problems in November](#). The registrar from Charlottesville told *NBC29* that there won’t be enough electronic voting machines on hand at the election after a state law prevented them from purchasing any more. She said the city’s population has grown by more than 5,000 in the past four years.

[Predictions of election troubles are more commonplace in Florida](#). With the switch to paper-based voting systems statewide, 15 counties will use optical-scan machines for the first time when voters cast ballots in an August primary, *The Ledger* reported. And with no auditing rules in place, Secretary of State Kurt Browning (R) said he fears what could happen in the event of a close race and recount. “What good is giving a voter a piece of this paper if no one has access to it?” Browning said. “And under current law, no one has access to it. No one.”

### 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 e-mail research links to [sgreene@electionline.org](mailto:sgreene@electionline.org).*

[A Year of Five Elections for the City/County of San Francisco](#) – Prepared by the 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury for the City/County of San Francisco, July 3, 2008

When the last ballots are counted for the November 2008 general election, the city/county of San Francisco will have administered five elections in one year. A new report lauds the department of elections (DOE) for the work it has done under challenging circumstances and makes several recommendations including:

- Finding adequate and permanent space for the DOE's day-to-day operations;
- Creating a plan for counting ranked-choice ballots if the Sequoia voting system in use does not receive certification from the secretary of state;
- Conducting additional voter outreach about voter registration requirements, the ranked-choice voting process and the absentee voting process.

[America Goes to the Polls 2008](#) – Prepared by the Non-Profit Voter Engagement Network, July 2008

A report on voter turnout in the 2008 presidential primaries and caucuses finds that nearly 59 million voters cast ballots. Youth participation surged as did Latino participation in a number of states including California and Texas.

### IV. Opinion This Week

National: [Veteran registration, II](#); [new voters](#); [voting systems](#); [noncitizen voters](#)

Arizona: [Poll workers](#)

California: [Voter registration](#); [ballots](#); [primary turnout](#)

Florida: [Voting systems](#)

Hawai'i: [Absentee ballots](#)

Indiana: [Voter ID](#)

Maine: [Absentee voting](#)

Michigan: [Voter fraud](#)

Missouri: [Poll workers](#); [election preparation](#)

New York: [Voting systems](#)

North Carolina: [Voting systems](#)

Ohio: [Lucas County elections](#)

Tennessee: [Hamilton County election problems](#); [absentee ballots](#)

Utah: [Voter education](#)

Washington: [Primary rules, II](#)

West Virginia: [Voting systems](#)

*\*\*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)*

**Election Information Specialist**, Wicomico County, Md. — is the full performance level of work providing information technology support to staff members of a local election board. Employees in this classification coordinate maintenance and troubleshooting of election information systems and work in conjunction with State Board of Elections information technology staff, local government information

technology staff, software vendors and contractors to resolve microcomputer hardware and software problems. Employees in this classification do not supervise. Employees receive general supervision from an Election Director or Election Deputy Director of a local election board. Employees may receive assignments and technical direction from the Chief Information Officer of the State Board of Elections. Employees may be required to work evenings, weekends and holidays and to travel to polling sites during Election Day. Employees in this classification are assigned to work in one or more local election board offices. Employees assigned to work in more than one local election board office will be required to travel between offices. **Qualifications:** Graduation from an accredited high school or possession of a high school equivalency certificate; two years of experience in computer programming; implementing, troubleshooting or supporting local or wide area networks; installing and troubleshooting personal computers or evaluating, implementing or maintaining microcomputer hardware and software. **Salary:** \$36,280- \$57,567. **Application:** May be obtained by visiting our website at: [www.dbm.maryland.gov](http://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:** July 24, 2008.

**Executive Director, Midwest Democracy Network**— MDN is a non-partisan alliance of political reform advocates committed to improving democratic institutions in Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Partners include state-based and national advocacy groups, as well as prominent academic and policy institutions. Network members share the belief that our fundamental democratic values and principles – especially those that speak to honesty, fairness, transparency, accountability, citizen participation, competition, respect for constitutional rights and the rule of law, and the public’s need for reliable information – must be continuously reinforced and fiercely protected against those who see politics as a means to promote narrow interests rather than the common good. Toward these ends, participating organizations seek to reduce the influence of money in politics, keep our courts fair and impartial, promote open and transparent government, create fair processes for drawing congressional and legislative districts, guarantee the integrity of our election systems, promote ethical government and lobbying practices, and democratize the media. **Responsibilities:** Maintaining the MDN [Web site](#); fundraising; organizing meetings; project development; maintain and diversify network partnerships; assist with capacity building and strategic planning; media outreach and communications; general management and financial oversight. **Qualifications:** College degree and at least five years of progressively responsible work experience. Advanced degree preferred. The position requires a detail-oriented, flexible, self-starter with a professional presentation. A qualified candidate for the position would have the following attributes: Previous non profit or management experience; strong interest in and commitment to the mission of the Network and familiarity with the Great Lakes region; proven research and written skills, particularly in grant writing; administrative experience and the ability to juggle multiple assignments; organizational and meeting planning skills; familiarity with Web sites and solid computer skills; strong communications and interpersonal skills. This is a permanent, part-time position that will require approximately 27 hours per week. We offer a competitive salary and flexible benefits package. Some travel and evening hours will be required. The MDN Executive Director will be housed with one of the MDN partner groups. That group will serve as the MDN fiscal agent; provide basic accounting and administrative support, to ensure communication, efficiency and the ability to establish an office economically. The Executive Director will regularly consult with, report to, and be accountable to the MDN steering committee or board of directors. **Application:** candidates should send or fax their resume and a cover letter stating qualifications and salary requirements to Cynthia Canary, Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, 325 W. Huron, Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 335-1067 fax; [cprcanary@aol.com](mailto:cprcanary@aol.com). No calls please. **Deadline:** August 8, 2008.