

## **electionlineWeekly — August 28, 2008**

*electionline.org*

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

#### **Note: A Little Boat-Building Music, Please ...**

By [Doug Chapin](#), director  
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Labor Day approaches and with it, the traditional beginning of the fall election season.

This fall promises to be especially eventful given the fierce contest for the White House and the potentially record numbers of Americans who will cast their ballots in November.

As I've noted before, this leaves election officials facing the prospect of preparing for voter demand far beyond anything they've ever experienced – which I've likened (O.K, repeatedly) to the scene in *Jaws* where Roy Scheider gets one look at the shark and says “we're gonna need a bigger boat.”

Now I don't know about you, but if I'm building anything, I like to have some music playing in the background ... so, in that spirit, I polled my friends and colleagues here at electionline and the Pew Center on the States and we came up with the following ideas for an election season soundtrack:

- For the election officials who may have been surprised by turnout during the primaries and are vowing to be ready for the general - *Won't Get Fooled Again* by The Who;
- For those election officials confronting what the Election Technology Council's David Beirne calls the “pass-fail” atmosphere in election administration - *Under Pressure* by Queen and *Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood* by the Animals;
- For those election offices facing huge workloads and tight deadlines resulting from rising voter interest - *Eight Days a Week* by the Beatles and *The Final Countdown* by Europe;
- For all those voters in Oregon and elsewhere who will be casting ballots by mail - *Please Mr. Postman* by the Marvelettes;
- For all those lawyers being recruited by the campaigns in anticipation of Election Day - *Battle Flag* by the Low Fidelity All-Stars;
- For all those officials, vendors and advocates who continue to battle over what constitutes the best and most secure voting technology - *Papercut* by Linkin Park and *Ghosts in the Machine* by the Police;
- For all the young voters who are going to cast their first presidential ballot – *(We're the) Kids in America* by Kim Wilde and *Youth of the Nation* by P.O.D.;
- For those poll workers who will give of their time and talent to help their fellow citizens exercise the right to vote - *My Hero* by Foo Fighters;
- For all the advocates, experts, administrators, candidates and voters, let's hope the popular refrain heard on November 5 is from Green Day's *Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)* and not Morrissey's *November Spawned a Monster*;

- and, finally ... in honor of the traditional Election Day plea of election administrators - *Landslide* by Fleetwood Mac.

Enjoy your Labor Day weekend, everyone – and I'll See You in September.

## II. Election Reform News This Week

- [Florida](#) conducted its first all-paper primary this week and [Mother Nature](#), [technical glitches](#) and [voter turnout](#) did their best to dampen the debut. In [Sarasota County](#), the vote count was hampered by slow scanners and [Hillsborough County](#) also had problems with new ballot scanners. In [Leon County](#), incorrect results were momentarily posted on the county Web site, although the actual results were never in question. In [Miami-Dade County](#), voters complained about a two-page ballot. There was a shooting outside a polling location in [Duval County](#), but no voters or poll workers were harmed. And although the vote itself went fairly smoothly in [Palm Beach County](#), things didn't go so well for Supervisor of Elections Arthur Anderson who lost his bid for re-election. [Alabama](#) and [Alaska](#) also held elections this week.
- *Stars and Stripes* ran a three-part series this week on the difficulty faced by military personnel voting overseas. The first focused on the difficulties service men and women face in understanding the [rules and procedures surrounding overseas voting](#). "I didn't even understand how to do anything with being an overseas voter," Staff Sgt. Missouri Ludlum, stationed in Italy, told the paper. "I kept running into walls where I couldn't get any information. Eventually, I just gave up and said I'd try again next time." The second article focused on the [struggles voting assistance officers](#) often have in convincing members of the service to take the time to vote. "The challenge isn't getting voting materials to our soldiers but getting soldiers to vote," Capt. Nina Cuevas told the paper in a June e-mail. "Many soldiers are not interested in voting. Any soldier who has access to a computer can access voting materials. All bases, even the small ones, have means to deliver mail." Cuevas oversees voting outreach for the entire 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, a unit in the midst of a deployment in. The final installment highlights the [efforts being made by the smaller public and private entities to make voting easier](#) for military voters overseas.
- According to Wisconsin officials, [one in five people who registered to vote in August provided information that does not match driver's license records](#). *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reports that many of those mismatches are likely typos or similar problems because voter records are supposed to match driver records exactly. Mismatches can occur in a host of situations. From Aug. 6 until Tuesday, 4,350 of the voters whose names were checked did not match driver or Social Security records, Barb Hansen, the Statewide Voter Registration System director told the paper. That's 22 percent of the 19,470 voters whose names were checked. Voters whose records don't match get a letter from election clerks telling them to correct the information. But there are no consequences if they don't follow up with the clerks.
- And finally, with just over two months to go until November 4, reports are starting to flow in about counties and cities desperate search for enough poll workers to staff what could be a record-breaking election. In [Cuyahoga County, Ohio](#), the board of elections says that it needs at least 5,000 more poll workers to effectively run the November election. And cities across the state of [Virginia](#) report difficulties in getting enough poll workers to work in what many are considering a crucial swing state. "It's very fluid," she said. "You can have every spot filled today, and tomorrow it's a different story. You need a buffer." Norfolk Registrar Elisa Jong told the *Virginian-Pilot*. Norfolk needs to recruit and train at least 145 more poll workers.

## 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).

[The Myth of Widespread Non-Citizen Voting: A Response to the Heritage Foundation](#) – Prepared by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), August 20, 2008

MALDEF criticizes a July 2008 [report](#) by the Heritage Foundation stating that non-citizen voting is an enduring problem. They state the author of the report, Hans Von Spakovsky, incorrectly interpreted other studies, used unsubstantiated examples of illegitimate election results and that many of the allegations can be explained due to administrative error. According to the authors strong deterrents to non-citizen voting are in place and there are other more serious threats to the voting process including voter caging and voter intimidation. Proof of citizenship laws are also cited as overly burdensome to voters.

[Uniformity in Election Administration: A 2008 Survey of Swing State County Clerks Missouri Edition](#) - By Allison McNeely and Adam Fogel, FairVote, August 28, 2008

In surveying 110 Missouri county clerks, FairVote found inconsistencies and lack of standard methods for allocating poll booths. The researchers cite this as a potential cause for long lines on Election Day. No clerks surveyed referred to a specific formula they will use to calculate the number of booths needed. Only 17 surveyed said they will produce a written allocation plan. Both minimal funding and insufficient state and federal guidelines, not local election officials, are cited as the reason for the lack of uniformity in election administration.

#### IV. Opinion This Week

National: [Voting system](#); [Voter ID](#); [Ballot design](#); [Voter turnout](#)

Alabama: [Ex-felon voting rights](#)

Arizona: [Citizenship requirement](#)

Colorado: [Voting system](#)

Connecticut: [Election preparations](#); [Veteran voting](#)

Florida: [Ballots](#); [Elected election officials](#)

Hawaii: [Primary ballots](#); [Overseas voting](#)

Illinois: [Internet voting](#)

Kansas: [Paper ballots](#)

Michigan: [Absentee voting](#)

Mississippi: [Wilkinson County](#)

New Jersey: [Vote-by-mail](#)

New York: [Same-day registration](#)

Ohio: [Vote caging](#); [Premier Systems](#); [Absentee voting](#); [Poll workers](#); [Voting machines](#); [Ballot security](#)

Virginia: [Ex-felon voting rights](#); [Chesterfield County](#)

Washington: [Top-two primary](#); [Instant runoff voting](#)

West Virginia: [Voting machines](#)

Wisconsin: [Voter registration database](#)

Wyoming: [Voting technology](#)

*\*\*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 Law Experts** — Open Voting Consortium (OVC) is seeking election law expert(s) to sign on to a proposal for which funding is anticipated. Part of this work will involve drafting language to be included in a bill to be introduced in the CA state legislature next January. OVC is best known as the developer of free open source software for public voting systems. See OVC's [Web site](#) for more information. For more details contact Alan Dechert at [alan@openvoting.org](mailto:alan@openvoting.org).

**Poll Workers** — American University's Center for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM) is recruiting Washington, D.C. area college students to serve as poll workers in Washington, D.C. on November 4th, 2008. For more info and to apply, please visit the [Web site](#). You can contact CDEM at [cdem@american.edu](mailto:cdem@american.edu).