

## **electionlineWeekly—November 13, 2008**

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

#### **Twelve states we watched on Election Day**

*Minor problems, but no major issues*

By [M. Mindy Moretti](#)

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On Election Day, *electionline.org* paid particular attention to 12 states, identified as ones to watch for potential voting troubles. While some (Colorado, Florida, Missouri and Ohio) were battlegrounds in the race for the White House, others (Georgia and the District of Columbia) had less drama when the results were tallied than they did while officials were counting ballots.

All 12 states shared some similarities regardless of their competitiveness in the national electoral picture. They had issues in election administration that bore watching: whether it was new rules governing voter identification; trouble with voting systems, either because of computer problems, poll worker mistakes or both; anticipated long lines at polls; new voter registration databases; or some combination of problems.

Overall, while there were reports of scattered problems on Election Day in each state – as well as problems tabulating the ballots afterwards – like most of the rest of the nation on Election Day, things went well in the 12 states to watch.

#### **Colorado**

Past problems with vote centers in Denver, large polling places where any voter in the county could cast their precinct ballot, convinced city officials to revert to neighborhood precinct-based voting rather risk a repeat of the equipment failures, long lines and chaos that plagued the 2006 vote. And for the most part, [problems were averted](#), not only in the Mile-High City, but throughout Colorado on Election Day. The biggest hold up was during tabulating, delayed in some jurisdictions because of the [high number of mail-in ballots that were received as well as the number of pages of each ballot](#). In Boulder County, a problem with “[paper dust](#)” caused the optical scanners to clog and considerably slowed the counting process. It took them [69 hours after the polls closed](#), but the county was finally able to complete the count on November 7.

#### **District of Columbia**

Overall, voting on Election Day went smoothly in the Nation’s capital despite scattered reports of people receiving incorrect ballots. Still recovering from problems with the low-turnout September primary, the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics (DCBOEE) [took its time releasing results on election night](#). Final results — which only included Election Day votes — weren’t posted on the Board’s Web site until after 1 a.m. and there was confusion amongst call-takers at the Mayor’s Citywide Call Center as to just when results would be released. Although the [DCBOEE](#) has 10-days to certify the election, a press release indicated absentee ballots would be counted and results posted beginning early this week. As of press time, no absentee or provisional results have been posted on the Board’s Web site.

#### **Florida**

Things did not go perfectly in the Sunshine State on Election Day, but compared to previous elections, [things went pretty well](#) for the voters who waited until November 4 to cast their ballots. Secretary of State Kurt Browning (R) gave the day a 9 (out of 10). “This is a great day for Florida elections,” Browning said at a press conference on election night. “We have moved very far away from 2000.” While there were lines — nearly [8 million Floridians](#) cast ballots — and machine malfunctions during the voting process, the biggest problems occurred after the polls had closed. In particular, it took [Hillsborough County](#) several

days to count its ballots leaving the supervisor of elections race hanging in the balance. The county was finally able to complete the count Thursday night and results showed that incumbent Supervisor of Elections [Buddy Johnson](#) had been defeated. For [Palm Beach County](#), probably the most significant news on Election Day was the lack of news. In [Miami-Dade](#), the county canvassing board only accepted 981 out of 2,791 provisional ballots cast; however, only a few of the discarded ballots involved the state's 'no match no vote' law.

## Georgia

[Few problems](#) were reported with the state's voter ID rule or direct-recording electronic voting machines. In fact, [many voters found shorter lines at the polling places on Election Day](#) than they did during the early-voting process. Some Georgia voters found themselves unable to cast ballots on Election Day because of [voter inactivity](#) in previous elections. In [Fulton County](#), it took 53 hours after the polls closed to complete absentee vote counting. The lengthy delay drew criticism from the Georgia's top election official. Secretary of State Karen Handel (R) threatened to report the county's election operation to the state Election Board for releasing workers before their work was done. Matt Carrothers, Handel's spokesman, said the delay was caused by Fulton County's policies, staffing and procedures. In [Cobb County](#), of the 315,000 ballots cast, only 227 people were asked to provide proof of citizenship with 66 outstanding at week's end. Of course just because Election Day has come and gone now in Georgia doesn't mean the work and the voting is over. The state is expecting a holiday-time [runoff](#) for a U.S. Senate seat.

## Indiana

Although long lines formed throughout the Hoosier State on Election Day, [few problems were reported](#) with balloting or the state's mandatory photo ID law and even Lake County, which had been plagued with counting problems during the primary, was able to report results sooner than expected. Some problems did arise with the state's voter ID law including reports of many [college-aged voters who were unaware](#) of the law and therefore unable to cast a ballot. In [Delaware County](#), where the last ballot was finally cast three hours after the polls closed, officials believe an early voting center would have helped ease the lines. In [Marion County](#), about 2,100 absentee ballots went astray, but were all ultimately accounted for and counted. In [Allen County](#), data cards from several machines could not be read at the precinct level on election night so they had to be transferred to the county headquarters.

## Missouri

The Show-Me State was another [hotly contested battleground state](#) with a history of voting problems, but like much of the country saw few problems materialize on Election Day. There were [polling issues in parts of St. Louis](#) where some voters waited up to five hours to cast a ballot. In [Kansas City](#), the poll books were sent to the wrong polling places, tying up voting in the early part of the day. With nearly [3 million voters](#) casting ballots on Election Day, newly re-elected Secretary of State Robin Carnahan (D) said she would begin pushing the state legislature for [early voting](#).

## Nevada

Despite turnout that hit [80 percent](#) of registered voters, problems were few and far between in the state. The biggest problem for some voters on Election Day seemed to come from confusion over polling place locations in [Washoe County](#). Also in Washoe County, [results were held up for several hours](#) on election night after blank cartridges were removed from voting machines. It turns out the cartridges were in machines that were never used. In [Clark County](#), some polling locations remained open for 30 additional minutes to allow those in line to cast ballots. Officials in [Churchill and Fallon counties](#) attributed the smooth Election Day to the fact that half of their registered voters cast early ballots.

## New Mexico

Despite past problems with its optical-scan system, New Mexico's Election Day was [relatively smooth](#). Non-Election Day [problems with absentee ballots](#) seemed to generate the most complaints to the Secretary of State's office. The problems of no-show ballots forced some voters to make their way to the polls in Dona Ana County and cast provisional ballots. With 500 provisional ballots and a 53-vote margin in one race, [Sandoval County](#) started its canvass on Friday, just as officials in [Quay County](#) were completing their canvass.

## Ohio

Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner (D) lauded a mostly problem-free Election Day in the closely watched Buckeye State. "I think that the process worked for the voters...I resigned my job as a judge (to run for Secretary of State) to have a night like we had last night. I wanted the voters of the state of Ohio to have confidence in the voting system," Brunner [said](#). Yet problems with provisional ballots, flagged by some advocacy groups and election experts as a potential trouble spot for the state, did emerge. Thousands of provisional ballots might have been wrongly [issued in Franklin County](#) due to voters being incorrectly flagged on the voter rolls. The county is unclear on the scope of the problem and plans to investigate. Additionally some counties complained of delays in tallying paper ballots and early [reports](#) also from Franklin County indicate that paper ballots were two-and-a-half times more likely to not be recorded than those cast on touch-screen voting systems. However the state's largest jurisdiction, Cuyahoga County which has had several troubled elections since 2004, saw a generally [smooth Election Day](#).

## Pennsylvania

Electionline [predicted](#) long lines at polling places since the state offers [neither early nor no-excuse absentee voting](#) as well as the possibility of problems with voting systems. But a wide [margin of victory](#) in the presidential race and turnout figures that fell short of some projections led to a mostly smooth day with little controversy in the Keystone State. A few precincts in Pittsburgh experienced exceptionally long lines, particularly at the University of Pittsburgh campus and a number of polling places visited throughout the day had a smattering of machine issues that were resolved quickly enough to have no discernible impact on voting. Reports from a few locations in the state indicated that a few voters received emergency paper ballots when more than half of the electronic voting machines in polling places did not function. But fears of widespread machine failures that led a judge to [order](#) counties to have stocks of emergency ballots on hand never materialized.

## Virginia

Some Virginia voters faced lines at the polls on Election Day but generally problems were few and far between. More than 3.7 million voters participated. Some would-be voters who came to the polls on Election Day believing that they had properly registered through voter registration drives found that they were not on precinct rosters, *The Washington Post* [reported](#). In Blacksburg, many student voters at Virginia Tech were forced to trek more than five miles away from campus to vote at a small church on an unmarked road where lines persisted all day and the last voter left at about 8:30 p.m., 90 minutes after the polls closed. Also in the Blacksburg area, Rep. Tom Perriello (D) surprised observers by collecting 745 more votes than incumbent Republican Rep. Virgil Goode (R). However, Goode has not yet conceded and official results will be not released by the state board of elections until November 24, according to the [Martinsville Bulletin](#). A week before the election, a flier began to circulate saying that Republicans vote on November 4 while Democrats vote on November 5, complete with the Virginia state seal and board of elections logo. While Democrats acted quickly to ensure that voters weren't misled, state officials found that the flier was an office joke gone awry. After a worker made the mock flier and showed it to colleagues, another worker forwarded it to the Obama campaign. From there, the flier began circulating in the online community where bloggers responded with outrage. The flier was never physically distributed, Corinne Geller, state police spokesman said, and since there was no criminal intent, charges were never filed, the [The Virginian Pilot](#) reported.

## Wisconsin

Despite pre-election concerns that a [voter registration lawsuit](#) filed by the attorney general would impact voters, [things went well](#) in the Badger State. In fact, state officials called the election nearly problem-free. "Wisconsin election officials were prepared for Election Day and did great work," said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the Government Accountability Board. "While various polling places had to deal with normal Election-Day glitches, our poll workers and chief election inspectors responded with patience and experience." There were [scattered reports of minor glitches](#), but all of those were deemed typical Election Day problems. A Milwaukee woman admitted that she [voted twice](#) (absentee and on Election Day) but authorities have said she will not be prosecuted.

(Sean Greene, Dan Seligson and Kat Zambon also contributed to this story.)

## II. Election Reform News This Week

[Minnesota](#) isn't the only jurisdiction preparing for a recount. A county attorney's race in [Crawford County, Kan.](#), separated by 14 votes, will see a hand recount of nearly 16,000 ballots. In [Black Hawk County, Iowa](#), the auditor's office recounted two precincts in a state senate race — where the margin is 14 votes as well. On Wednesday, a state Supreme Court justice approved a recount in a tightly contested Congressional race in [New York](#). Although the losing candidates have yet to request one, the outcomes of five legislative races in [South Dakota](#) are within the margin for a recount. A losing candidate in a county commissioner race in [Palo Pinto County, Texas](#) called into question the reliability of voting machines in electronic voting machines and has asked for a recount. A recount was ordered in one [Vermont](#) legislative race after additional absentee ballots were discovered. Republicans in [Kalispell, Mont.](#) requested a recount in a tight state legislative race. In [Oregon](#), counties throughout the state will be conducting their first-ever partial hand recount of randomly chosen races to audit the accuracy of voting machines. And the statewide senatorial recount isn't the only recount in Minnesota either. With a margin of just 12 votes, a recount was requested in a city council race in [Carver City, Minn.](#) Officials there said they would use the recount as practice for the still pending statewide recount.

With the [overwhelming popularity of early voting](#) in this year's presidential election, several states are looking into instituting the practice for the first time and others are reviewing their procedures. In [Michigan](#), Democratic lawmakers are pushing through reforms that they say would make it more convenient to vote, including early voting and no-excuse absentee voting. In [Georgia](#), where some waited in line up to eight hours to cast ballots during early voting, some GOP lawmakers are considering shortening the period of time voters have to cast an early ballot. After being swamped by absentee ballots, election officials in [Wisconsin](#) are considering moving to an early voting system in addition to absentee ballots. Election officials in [Maine](#) plan to ask the state legislature during its next session to amend the state constitution to allow for early voting. Recently re-elected [Missouri](#) secretary of state Robin Carnahan has said that she will ask the state legislature to approve early voting in the coming year.

A story in the *New York Times* this week noted that in addition to increased early voting opportunities, in the wake of the 2008 election, there is increasing support for [expanding the voter registration rolls](#). "The single most important thing that Congress can do right now is create universal voter registration, which would mean that all eligible voters are automatically registered," Rosemary E. Rodriguez, chairwoman of the Election Assistance Commission, told the paper. Rodriguez said universal registration would reduce the dependence on third-party groups like Acorn to sign up people and would remove the impetus for much of the pre-election litigation over who should be allowed to register. Supporters say universal registration could reduce registration fraud and the confusion at the polls that results when voters are purged from the rolls. According to the paper, such a plan would be costly and technologically difficult, and it could run into resistance from Republicans who have been wary of expanding registration, citing concerns about ineligible voters being added to the rolls. Some state officials say they would prefer to set registration standards themselves. But independent experts say easier registration and voting methods would ensure that huge crowds like those on Tuesday turn out without being discouraged by the long delays experienced in many states.

## III. Research and Report Summaries

*electionline* provides brief summaries of recent research and reports in the field of election administration. Please e-mail links to research to [sgreene@electionline.org](mailto:sgreene@electionline.org).

[Does HAVA help the 'Have-Nots'? US adoption of new election equipment, 1980-2008](#) – By Daniel K.N. Johnson and Kristina M. Lybecker, Colorado College Working Paper 2008-08, October 23, 2008

Johnson and Lybecker examine the transition to new voting technology in states and counties since the passage of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002. They examine the diffusion of

technology and the socioeconomic characteristics that may lead more rapid adoption in some jurisdictions more than others. Larger margins of victory, especially in counties with Republican majorities, have slowed the adoption of new technology in those counties. Additionally, younger counties adopt at a faster rate than older counties. Having federal money available has allowed some disadvantaged counties to move forward with new voting systems. In some cases, they argue, it might be appropriate for the federal government to get involved, such as it did with HAVA, to potentially help correct market or technological deficiencies.

[The California Voters' Experience: What Works for Them, What Does Not Work, and Where to Go From Here](#) – By Kim Alexander, the California Voter Foundation, Oct. 29, 2008

The report looks at the election system in California from the voter's perspective and is divided into four parts:

- Part one is an examination of voter registration and participation data for the state and describes the challenges faced in increasing voter participation.
- Part two looks at the voter experience from beginning to end, including registration, preparing to vote, voting and election results and examines the strengths and weaknesses at each step.
- Part three discusses structural obstacles to change including the Digital Divide.
- Part four addresses ideas for moving forward including the need for more uniformity in election procedures, establishing a voter participation goal, what groups could be involved in improving voter participation and a discussion of future research.

## IV. Opinion

National: [Vote-by-mail](#); [Election reform](#)

Alabama: [Election Day](#)

Alaska: [Vote count](#); [Voting system](#)

Arizona: [Wait times](#)

Connecticut: [Election Day](#)

Colorado: [Election Day](#); [Secretary of state](#); [Polling procedures](#)

Delaware: [Early voting](#)

Florida: [Election Day](#); [Early voting, II](#); [Buddy Johnson](#); [Vegas voting system](#); [Election struggle](#)

Georgia: [Ex-felon voting rights](#); [Voting system](#)

Indiana: [Voter ID, II](#); [Poll workers](#)

Iowa: [Recount](#)

Massachusetts: [Early voting](#)

Minnesota: [Recount](#); [Early voting](#); [Instant-runoff voting, II](#); [Voting system](#)

Missouri: [Voting system](#); [Polling places](#)

New Hampshire: [Voter ID](#)

New York: [Voting machines](#); [Lever voting machines](#); [NYC Board of Elections](#)

North Carolina: [Election Day, II](#); [Same-day registration](#)

North Dakota: [Voting process](#)

Ohio: [Provisional ballots](#); [Voter rolls](#); [Voting system](#)

Oklahoma: [Voting system, II](#)

Oregon: [Vote count](#)

Pennsylvania: [Election Day, II](#); [Early voting, II](#); [Polling places](#); [Election reform](#)

South Carolina: [Voting system](#); [Early voting, II](#); [Absentee ballots](#)

South Dakota: [Voter turnout](#)

Texas: [Voter ID](#)

Utah: [Smooth election](#)

Virginia: [Poll workers, II](#); [On-demand voting](#)

Washington: [Election officials](#)

West Virginia: [Voting process](#)

Wisconsin: [Poll workers](#); [Election Day](#)

## V. Job Listings

*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)*

**Project Manager, Make Voting Work, Washington, D.C.** — the project manager would lead a set of defined initiatives identified from within our areas of concentration and our evolving scope and strategy. While the specific focus will be dependent on the experience of the successful candidate and the roles assigned to existing staff, the project manager is expected to develop long-term strategies, generate and oversee a set of initiatives and research that advance the strategy, oversee consultants for related projects, build partnerships with critical allies and design campaign strategies. Working with the MVW team, and in consultation with colleagues across PCS and Pew, the project manager will assist in developing and executing strategic and operational plans for the project. The project operates in a highly collaborative environment that emphasizes teamwork and values input from a variety of perspectives. The project manager will be expected to contribute at multiple levels, taking lead responsibility for the design and implementation of certain activities, assisting in the execution of other activities, and filling in on duties where needed. The ideal candidate will have an educational and employment background in public policy or a related field, deep knowledge of the election system, and work experience undertaking projects involving many partners, complex issues, extensive writing and live presentations. The candidate preferably will have experience at the state or federal level with issue campaigns, communications strategies, and grassroots or grassroots organizing. This position is term-limited with an end date of December 2009. Application: For application instructions and to view the full job description candidates are invited to visit the Careers@Pew page on our Web site at [www.pewtrusts.org](http://www.pewtrusts.org).

**Senior Outside Government Sales Manager, Everyone Counts, San Diego, Calif.** — energetic, self-motivated Outside Sales Executives who is looking to fulfill his/her earning potential. In this position, you are required to have experience negotiating contracts with government agencies and you will be traveling extensively to visit with various clients in the United States. Responsible for closing deals with interested clients, and for ensuring the successful management of a growing sales team. Responsibilities include: Direct contact with state and local government agencies, understanding their needs and devising creative and effective sales solutions; seeking and responding to Request for Proposals (RFP) in a timely and successful manner; understanding the contract process and assisting state and local officials through every step of the approval process in order to obtain a signed contract; skillfully close deals with various state governments with whom we already have an established interest; successful management of growing sales team in the U.S.; extensive domestic travel. Qualifications: Strong desire to travel; at least 7 years experience managing a team of sales associates, ideally including multiple locations; experience with state or local elections; experience working with state government agencies; experience with responding to RFPs; proven performance in government-related sales; experience with technology solutions for government ; sharp presentation and written communication skills; experience managing a successful sales team. Application: [jobs@everyonecounts.com](mailto:jobs@everyonecounts.com). [Web site](#).