

electionlineWeekly—December 4, 2008 **electionline.org**

I. In Focus This Week

Pew Convenes Symposium on ‘Voting in America - the Road Ahead’

More than 250 state and local election officials, lawmakers and opinion leaders in election policy will descend on Washington, D.C., next week for a Pew-hosted symposium on the future of election reform. "Voting in America - the Road Ahead" is sponsored by the [Make Voting Work Initiative](#) of the [Pew Center on the States](#), in collaboration with the [JEHT Foundation](#).

The list of likely attendees includes the Secretaries of State-elect from Montana, Oregon, and West Virginia as well as the Secretaries of State from Alabama, California, Florida, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

Several dozen election administrators from high-profile local jurisdictions across the nation will also attend, as will a broad range of academic experts, philanthropists, leading advocates and other opinion leaders in election policy.

Speakers at the two-day event at the recently opened [Newseum](#) on Pennsylvania Avenue will discuss the 2008 election, perspectives from the campaign trail, plans for the transition to a new administration, innovations in early voting and the future of voter registration.

Breakout sessions will provide a rare opportunity for a nationwide dialogue among election officials, academic researchers and leading advocates to share perspectives on addressing many diverse challenges in election administration.

National Public Radio correspondent Pam Fessler will moderate a panel of election officials in a discussion of core questions about how we administer elections in a luncheon plenary entitled "Imagine We Could Start Over — How Would You Design an Election System?"

Highlights include: Perspectives on the new Administration from Chris Edley, Dean of Berkeley Law and Advisor to the Obama-Biden Transition Project; Political Consensus on Election Reform with Bob Bauer, Counsel for Obama for America and Trevor Potter, General Counsel for John McCain 2008; Early Voting in the Spotlight with Florida Secretary of State Kurt Browning; The Future of Voter Registration with California Secretary of State Debra Bowen and Jean-Pierre Kingsley, CEO of IFES and former Chief Electoral Officer of Canada; Andrew Kohut of the [Pew Research Center](#) on polling data and the 2008 electorate; Charles Stewart of MIT on the 2008 Survey of the Performance of American Elections (funded by Make Voting Work and AARP).

Breakout sessions will include:

- Best Practices in Ballot Design and Overcoming Legal Constraints
- Early Voting in 2008: What Happened and Will It Again?
- Grappling With the Costs of Elections
- Implementing Effective Post-Election Audits
- Administrative Challenges of Implementing Early Voting
- From Chads to Touch Screens and Back: The Past and Future of Voting Technology (organized by the AEI-Brookings Election Reform Project)
- Raising the Bar for Poll Worker Training
- FAQs Matter: Voting Information and Outreach
- Creating an Election System that Works for Military and Overseas Voters
- Polling Place Management: Lines and Efficiency
- Data for Democracy: Measuring Performance in Elections

Registration for this event is closed due to overwhelming demand. However, meeting materials will be available on our web site at www.pewcenteronthestates.org/votinginamerica.

II. Election Reform News This Week

- The battle to represent Minnesota in the U.S. Senate dragged on as election officials completed their second full week of a recount with now just over 90 percent of ballots re-tallied. As with the previous weeks of counting, this week brought with it lots of ups and downs. Early in the week, the team representing Democrat (DFL or Democrat Farm-Labor party) Al Franken said that it would [withdraw dozens of challenges](#). However on that same day, the Secretary of State's office asked county officials to [sort through an estimated 12,000 rejected absentee ballots](#). Approximately [170 uncounted ballots were discovered](#) inside of a voting machine that broke-down on Election Day. [Controversy swirled over 133 ballots](#) that may, or may not have disappeared in Minneapolis. And counting finally got underway in Wright, Winona and Scott counties with tensions flaring a bit in [Scott](#).
- In other recount news, Democrats in Texas [filed a federal voting-rights lawsuit](#) against Dallas County elections officials, accusing them of violating federal laws by not counting certain votes from electronic voting machines in the recount. According to *The Dallas Morning News*, In the federal suit, Democrats ask for a temporary restraining order that would require county elections officials to count for each candidate the straight-party votes on electronic voting machines not tallied during the initial count. As an alternative, the lawsuit asks a federal court to void the Nov. 4 results and order a new election for the seat, which has statewide political ramifications. The outcome of the race could change the balance of power in the state House. In response to the lawsuit, the county hired an [outside attorney](#) to represent it in the legal challenge.
- One of the first bills filed in the new Republican-led [Oklahoma Senate is a bill that would require all voters to show a photo ID at the polls](#). Sen. John Ford, R-Bartlesville, feels there is a good chance the bill will pass in the upcoming 2009 legislative session, now that Republicans hold a 26-22 advantage in the Senate. It takes 25 votes to pass a bill in the 48-member chamber. A less restrictive measure by Ford died earlier this year on a party-line vote. "Basically, this bill says that if you vote in person on election day, or the three days prior to election day, then you are required to show a photo ID," Ford told *The Associated Press*. "That photo ID must be issued by the federal government, the state government or a tribal entity. In lieu of a photo ID, the voter may show their state-issued voter ID card."
- The Alabama Ethics Commission closed a complaint Wednesday against [Secretary of State Beth Chapman](#) (R) after finding there was insufficient evidence that she broke ethics laws. Chapman had been accused of using campaign funds to pay her family, business and other expenses.
- And finally this week, a hearty congratulations to [Marion County, Ind. Clerk Beth White](#) who gave birth to a baby boy on December 1.

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.

[Flooding The Vote: Hurricane Katrina and Voter Participation in New Orleans](#) – By Betsy Sinclair, University of Chicago, Thad E. Hall, University of Utah, R. Michael Alvarez, Caltech, Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project, Working Paper # 70, November 2008

The researchers examine the New Orleans mayoral election of 2006 and how the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 affected who turned out to vote. Using data from twenty previous election cycles, U.S. Census data and flood-depth data, voting behavior before and after the hurricane is

compared. They find voters who lived in areas that suffered large-scale flooding were in fact more likely to vote than those that lived in less-flooded areas, suggesting it was possible to hold an election that was not biased against voters who faced steep resource challenges. The high level of interest, the media attention, campaigns and interest groups reaching out to voters and new voting procedures like expanded absentee and early voting and the use of vote centers are credited.

[Universal Voter Registration: Policy Summary](#) – By Wendy Weiser, Michael Waldman, and Renée Paradis, The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, November 2008

A move away from voter- initiated registration to universal registration where the government would be responsible for adding eligible citizens to voter rolls is recommended. The report cites the challenges of the current voter registration system including its inability to deal with today's mobile society, being prone to administrative error and the burden it places on election officials, especially when faced with processing thousands of last-minute voter registration applications before an election. Government-initiated registration could address these issues and several models that could be explored are described along with the possibility of the need for federal legislation to make it happen.

[Voting in 2008: Lessons Learned](#) – By Tova Wang, vice president for research, Common Cause, Nov. 10, 2008

In an initial assessment of the 2008 election, Wang states that while there was no election meltdown on November 4, many voters still faced problems at the polls. The report briefly examines long lines at the polls, deceptive practices, problems surrounding voter registration, voter caging and challenges, and the lack of voter fraud.

IV. Opinion

National: [Election reform](#); [Universal registration, II](#); [Electoral politics](#)

Alabama: [Vote fraud](#); [Ex-felon voting rights](#); [Federal lawsuit](#)

Arizona: [Election reform](#); [Yuma County](#)

Colorado: [Same-day registration](#); [Military voting](#)

Florida: [Internet voting](#); [Election reform](#)

Georgia: [Instant-runoff voting](#)

Kentucky: [Early voting](#)

Minnesota: [Rejected ballots](#); [Instant-runoff voting, II, III](#); [Recount, II](#)

Montana: [Election judges](#)

New Jersey: [Paper ballots](#)

New York: [Absentee voting](#)

Oklahoma: [Voter ID](#)

Pennsylvania: [Early voting](#); [Updated precincts](#)

Tennessee: [Voting machines](#)

Washington: [Recount](#); [King County](#)

West Virginia: [Election process](#); [Voting machines](#)

Wisconsin: [Voter ID](#)

***some sites require registration*

V. Job Opportunities

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

Election Administrator, Benton County, Wash. — position is under the direction of the County Auditor, an independently elected official, and is responsible for the management of voter registration and elections for Benton County. In addition, the County Auditor conducts elections for several junior-taxing

districts ranging from cities, towns and school districts to library and drainage districts. The County currently has 87,000 registered voters. The Election Administrator will supervise a full-time staff of 3 plus up to 20 additional staff during elections, as required. **Qualifications:** Extensive management experience with a minimum five years in election administration, or any combination of education and experience that would likely provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities, is qualifying. An in-depth knowledge of election laws, regulations and rules is desirable. In addition, the qualified candidate must have prepared and managed annual budgets, have experience in the management of automated information systems, and must have proven ability to meet deadlines, lead an experienced staff, and have served in some capacity in the public eye. The position requires that the Election Administrator be conversant with pending legislation and its potential impact on Election Department operations. Candidates with a college degree and/or certification as an Election Administrator by the Washington State Secretary of State will be highly considered. **Salary:** \$52,068 to \$67,572. **Application:** Please submit an application (available online at: www.co.benton.wa.us), resume, cover letter and five work-related references to: Bobbie Gagner, Benton County Auditor; c/o Benton County Personnel Resources Department; 7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Bldg. A; Kennewick, WA 99336. **Deadline:** Open.

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.