

# DID WE FIX THAT?

Evaluating Implementation of the Presidential  
Commission on Election Administration's  
Recommendations in Ten Swing States



STEPHEN SPAULDING & ALLEGRA CHAPMAN

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The **Common Cause Education Fund** is the research and public education affiliate of Common Cause, founded by John Gardner in 1970, and one of the country's most effective advocates working to reduce the influence of special-interest money in politics and empowering voters to make their voices heard at all levels of government. The Common Cause Education Fund supports that work with a broad array of activities, including research, education, citizen engagement, coalition building, policy development and litigation, and by helping state and national leaders with strategic support, policy expertise, research materials, and legal analysis.

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# CONTENTS

<a href="#"><u>Recommendations of the Commission</u></a> . . . . .	4
<a href="#"><u>Executive Summary &amp; Findings</u></a> . . . . .	5
<a href="#"><u>Political Outlook</u></a> . . . . .	7
<a href="#"><u>Recommendations and State Performance</u></a> . . . . .	9
State Specific Charts:	
<a href="#"><u>Alaska</u></a> . . . . .	37
<a href="#"><u>Arkansas</u></a> . . . . .	39
<a href="#"><u>Colorado</u></a> . . . . .	41
<a href="#"><u>Florida</u></a> . . . . .	43
<a href="#"><u>Georgia</u></a> . . . . .	45
<a href="#"><u>Kentucky</u></a> . . . . .	47
<a href="#"><u>Louisiana</u></a> . . . . .	49
<a href="#"><u>Michigan</u></a> . . . . .	51
<a href="#"><u>North Carolina</u></a> . . . . .	53
<a href="#"><u>Pennsylvania</u></a> . . . . .	55

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).
2. Interstate exchanges of voter registration information should be expanded.
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through Departments of Motor Vehicles with their statewide voter registration lists.
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling-place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.
13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers at any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Voting should not be an endurance sport.

The stories flowing into Election Protection's headquarters on Election Day 2012 were as familiar as they were unfortunate. There were tales of voters waiting in line for as long as seven hours, resources improperly distributed (with thousands of voting machines in storage), poorly trained poll workers, demands for particular forms of government photo identification that many voters lacked, and poll watchers interfering with voters.<sup>1</sup> Some of the longest lines were in precincts located in African-American and Latino neighborhoods, with major shortages of voting machines and trained poll workers.<sup>2</sup>

When President Barack Obama took the stage late that night to claim victory, he acknowledged the problems suffered by so many voters across the country. "Whether you voted for the very first time or waited in line for a very long time – **by the way, we have to fix that** – ... you made a difference," he said.<sup>3</sup>

A little more than two months later, in the first State of the Union message of his second term, the President announced plans for a nonpartisan commission "to improve the voting experience in America."<sup>4</sup> Desiline Victor, a 102-year-old woman from Florida who waited three hours to cast her ballot, looked on from the First Lady's guest box in the House gallery.<sup>5</sup>

The Presidential Commission on Election Administration ("the Commission") was co-chaired by Robert Bauer and Benjamin Ginsberg, the top attorneys from President Obama's re-election campaign and that of his opponent, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.<sup>6</sup>

Members of the Commission included a diverse set of leaders from around the country with election administration expertise and/or customer service-oriented business expertise. The Commission's charge was limited: to identify best practices in election administration and make recommendations to improve the voting experience. This would include examining methods to lower obstacles to voting for, among others, military and overseas voters, voters with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency.<sup>7</sup> The Commission was *not* designed to propose any new federal or state legislation.<sup>8</sup>

In a six-month stretch, the Commission conducted four public hearings in different cities and states, taking testimony from the general public, experts, and academics. Commissioners also attended meetings of community interest groups, and spoke with academics, election administrators, and others at public forums hosted by think tanks and advocacy organizations.<sup>9</sup>

The Commission's report, delivered in January 2014, concluded that election administration problems vary from state-to-state and locality-to-locality and that some groups of citizens are more affected than others. The Commission made a series of broad-based recommendations to better the experience for American voters. Noting the particular challenges inherent in a system of 8,000 local jurisdictions that administer elections, the Commission targeted its recommendations "at common problems shared by all or most jurisdictions. For the most part, they are of a size that should fit all."<sup>10</sup>

The Commission's recommendations are comprehensive, but not exhaustive. There are numerous reforms supported by the voting rights community that the Commission left unaddressed because they were outside of the Commission's limited purview. For example, the Commission did not discuss partisan efforts to force voters to show the restrictive types of government-issued photo IDs at the polls that many underrepresented populations lack. Particularly, after the Supreme Court struck down the heart of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder*, careful vigilance and proactive reform is required to protect our democracy from racial discrimination at the ballot box. Many states have since imposed harsh restrictions and/or cut back on progressive reforms that specifically affect low-income voters – often people of color, students, and seniors. Much needs to be done across the country to correct these wrongs.

Still, adoption of the Commission's recommendations will greatly improve the voting experience for millions of Americans. The recommendations are written with election administrators in mind. Many of these suggestions do not require large budgets to implement.

This report examines the Commission's core recommendations, reminds election administrators of their importance, and evaluates their implementation (to the extent possible) in states where the 2014 elections are expected to be close, and so might produce a large turnout.

**Our findings are mixed, at best. Some states have adopted policies that address the Commission's recommendations. Others have a long way to go.**

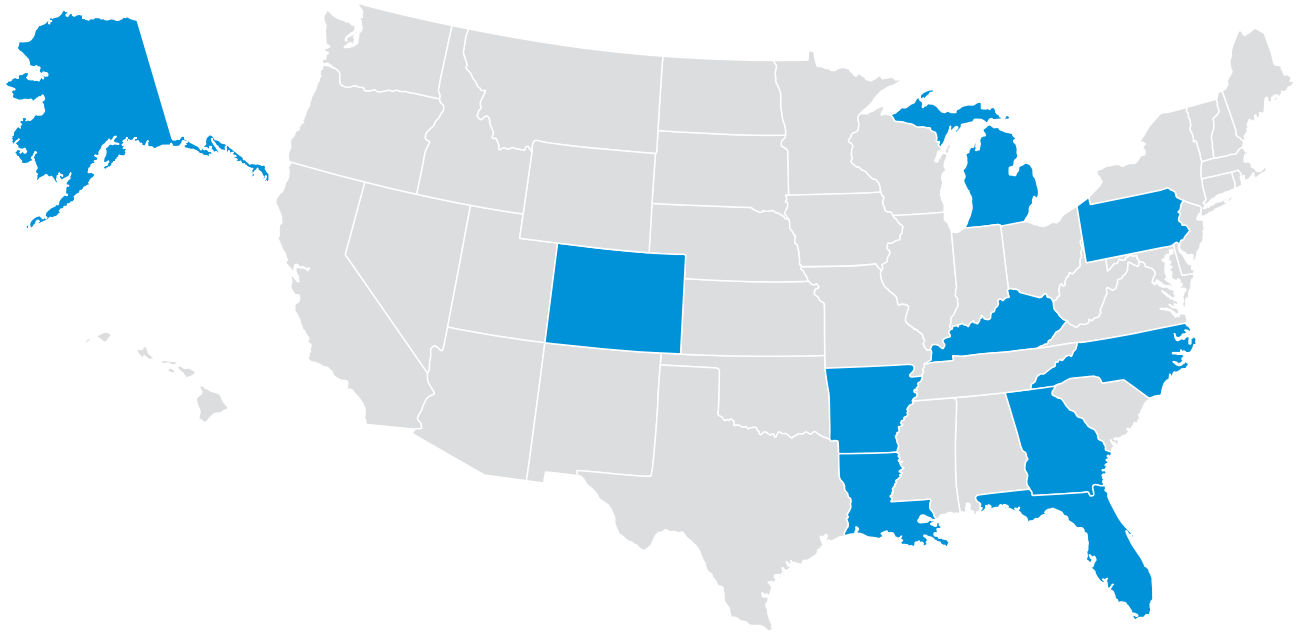
## FINDINGS

- None of the covered states has fully adopted all of the Commission's recommendations; there is significant room for improvement. However, not a single state has entirely ignored all of the recommendations, either. Of all of the states examined in this report, Colorado's election administration practices include the highest number of Commission recommendations.
- States across the country – included in this report and beyond – are failing to give voters as many options as possible when it comes to voting before Election Day. This could suppress turnout and lead to long lines for those that vote;
- States that are not covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act are failing to adopt the Commission's recommendation to provide sufficient bilingual support for limited English-proficient populations. This means that our democracy is not as inclusive and participatory as its promise;
- A majority of states have adopted electronic systems to seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through Departments of Motor Vehicles with statewide voter registration lists; although not specifically recommended by the Commission, we urge states to replicate this success by ensuring seamless integration of data acquired through *all* voter registration agencies, including public assistance agencies and healthcare exchanges;
- When it comes to poll-worker training, most states take a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction approach; this lack of uniformity could easily cause confusion for workers and voters alike, thereby keeping lines long;
- Six states conduct post-election audits as the Commission recommends; however none of these states has fully auditable elections because at least some of the voting systems do not produce a voter-verifiable paper record.

We hope this report will lift up the important work of the President's nonpartisan election commission and its common-sense recommendations. In conducting outreach to state election administrators when preparing this report, we were pleased to see some states quickly implementing recommendations that we brought to their attention. For example, some states immediately made improvements to webpages with information pertaining to military and overseas voters and improved website language concerning bilingual poll-worker outreach.

With these recommendations in place, the American voter in 2014 will be in a better place than 2012.

# POLITICAL OUTLOOK



We confined our analysis to ten states that are expected to have particularly close elections either for the U.S. Senate or the governorship. In each, spirited contests fueled by big-money advertising, particularly after the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United*, and intensified get-out-the-vote efforts, could result in increased turnout and long lines at the polls.

## Alaska

Sen. Mark Begich's bid for a second term is being challenged by Republican Dan Sullivan and the race is highly competitive.

## Arkansas

The contest between Sen. Mark Pryor and his challenger, Rep. Tom Cotton, has attracted national attention and substantial outside spending.<sup>11</sup> The gubernatorial race between incumbent Asa Hutchinson and challenger Mike Ross also is highly competitive<sup>12</sup> and Republicans are fighting to hold their 51-48 state House majority won in 2012.<sup>13</sup> U.S. House districts Two and Four are on the bubble and could become competitive.<sup>14</sup>

## Colorado

Colorado has hotly contested races up and down the ballot. Incumbent U.S. Sen. Mark Udall is being challenged by Rep. Cory Gardner and former congressman Bob Beauprez is trying to unseat Gov. John Hickenlooper.<sup>15</sup> There also is battle in the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and Democrats are fighting to increase their one-seat majority in the state Senate.<sup>16</sup>

## Florida

Perennial swing state Florida has a hot gubernatorial race between former Republican governor Charlie Crist, now a Democrat, and Gov. Rick Scott.<sup>17</sup> Florida also has at least three competitive U.S. House races.<sup>18</sup>

## Georgia

Michelle Nunn, the daughter of a popular former senator, is battling David Perdue for a seat in the U.S. Senate<sup>19</sup> and Jason Carter, grandson of the former president, takes on incumbent Nathan Deal for the governorship.<sup>20</sup> In the 12<sup>th</sup> House District, Rep. John Barrow, a Democrat, is in his fifth term in a mostly Republican district.<sup>21</sup>



## Kentucky

Incumbent U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell's battle to hold off challenger Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes is perhaps the nation's most closely watched contest this year.<sup>22</sup> State House races also are being closely contested, as Republicans look to flip five seats and erase a 54-46 Democratic majority.<sup>23</sup>

## Louisiana

Sen. Mary Landrieu is facing off against Rep. Bill Cassidy. Under Louisiana law, the contest will go to a runoff if no candidate earns at least 50 percent of the vote.<sup>24</sup>

## Michigan

An open Senate seat has sparked a competitive race between former Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land and U.S. Rep. Gary Peters.

## North Carolina

First-term Sen. Kay Hagan is being challenged by state House Speaker Thom Tillis.<sup>25</sup>

## Pennsylvania

Gov. Tom Corbett, considered perhaps the most vulnerable gubernatorial incumbent in the country, is being challenged by former Secretary of Revenue Tom Wolf.<sup>26</sup> Two U.S. House races in the Philadelphia suburbs, including an open seat in the 6<sup>th</sup> District, also are potentially competitive.<sup>27</sup> There are several competitive races in the state Senate, where the Republican Party holds a four-seat margin.<sup>28</sup> Pennsylvania is likely to remain an important swing state in the 2016 presidential race.

# THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATE PERFORMANCE

Each of the Commission's recommendations are discussed below, along with an evaluation of their implementation in the ten battleground states.

It is critical to note that the Commission's recommendations are in no way exhaustive and will not remedy all of the challenges voters face in casting ballots. In light of the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which gutted the heart of the Voting Rights Act, we must remain vigilant and proactive against attempts to discriminate against voters on account of race, at the national and state levels.

The Commission's charge was limited, and did not address every reform that voting rights and election administrators endorse. Still, these recommendations are important parts of a comprehensive approach to reforming how elections are administered to better the experience of voters. States should make every effort to consider them closely and adopt them as necessary.

## 1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).

Modernizing voter registration, including online registration, is necessary to advance the promise of a fully representative electorate.<sup>29</sup> Online registration allows registrants to electronically complete (and sometimes update) voter registration applications and transmit the information over the Internet.

Of the states we surveyed, only **Colorado**, **Louisiana**, and **Georgia** have adopted and implemented online voter registration.<sup>30</sup> Colorado and Louisiana implemented it in 2010, and Georgia did so in 2014. In all three states, residents must use a driver's license or other special state identification card to register. People who lack these specific types of identification are still able to complete an application, located on each state's online registration portal, but they will need to print and mail the form to election officials.

In **Kentucky**, qualified military and overseas voters may apply to register to vote and update their voter registration information online.<sup>31</sup>

**Michigan** allows voters to update their voter registrations online, but not to register to vote. Voters still need to complete paper registration forms. Once in the system, a Michigander can update her or his voter registration address and driver's license address simultaneously online.<sup>32</sup>

Online registration makes standing up to be counted more convenient and accessible. Administrative hurdles to registration suppress voter participation, especially among populations whose members move frequently or face language barriers.<sup>33</sup> While the National Voter Registration Act, the Help America Vote Act, and other important legislation have expanded access to the ballot and increased participation rates, registration barriers disproportionately affect voters of color, young people, senior citizens, and poor communities.<sup>34</sup> Unwieldy paper processes are prone to human error and can lead to inaccurate voter registration rolls.

No one who takes the responsibility to register to vote should find herself kicked-off the list simply because she moved or because an overworked election official inaccurately transferred information from a paper application to a computer database.

After reviewing a wide body of research, the Commission recommended that states adopt online voter registration as “an invaluable tool for managing the accuracy of voter rolls and reducing the costs of list maintenance.”<sup>35</sup> The Commission found that when properly adopted, online registration makes voter lists more accurate, saves money, and improves the

voting experience because voters can immediately verify that the information they transmit is accurately entered into databases.<sup>36</sup>

There is welcome progress in other states that are considering online registration. Within the past year, legislators in **Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania** introduced bills to advance online registration.<sup>37</sup> According to **Alaska's** Division of Elections, the state is moving towards online voter registration with the implementation of a new statewide system some time in 2015.<sup>38</sup>

#### COMMISSION FINDINGS ON ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION:

“The Commission received consistently affirmative assessments of the benefits that online registration can provide to the overall objectives of election administration. An online voter registration system:

- Reduces the high potential for error that exists with traditional paper-based systems;
- Saves jurisdictions a significant amount of money;
- Increases the accuracy and currency of the voter rolls, thereby reducing delays and congestion at polling places; and
- Improves the voter experience because voters get immediate feedback when they are registered or when their information (e.g., address, party, etc.) has been updated.”<sup>39</sup>

## ▶ 2. Interstate exchanges of voter registration information should be expanded.

As the Commission noted, “accurate voter lists are essential to the management of elections.”<sup>40</sup> Americans are increasingly mobile – roughly 12 percent moved in 2012<sup>41</sup> – and voters’ records may be on the rolls in multiple localities and states. Federal law requires state elections officials to maintain and regularly review voter registration lists.<sup>42</sup> However, there is a need to go beyond current law to ensure lists are as accurate as possible. Indeed, “as many as eight percent of registration records (representing 16 million people) are invalid and significantly inaccurate.”<sup>43</sup> And an estimated 51 million Americans – or 25 percent of the eligible voting population – remain unregistered.<sup>44</sup>

Unlike many democracies, our federal government does not currently register its citizens or facilitate the process for states.<sup>45</sup> (Note, though, that legislation was recently introduced to do just that.<sup>46</sup>) The Commission recommended that states form networks to track voters moving within and out of state to ensure addresses are updated. (Deaths and name changes are also tracked.) Duplicate records may be purged *only* after a statistically sound check is conducted to protect against error.

As noted by the Commission, only two systems now allow for registration cross-checks. The first, Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck Program (IVRC), is run by Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach and dubbed the “Kansas Project.” One of its primary aims, in addition to making registration rolls accurate, is to seek out duplicative registration records and identify what it believes to be evidence of voter fraud. The practices of participating states in attempting to identify such fraud, though, are not entirely transparent,<sup>47</sup> and most of the few allegations forwarded to prosecutors have not resulted in charges.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the comparisons between lists are done manually and are thus labor-intensive.

The second system, Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), is much more reliable. States participating in ERIC check their voter registration lists against data collected by other states and available on national databases to identify potential moves, deaths, name changes, and unregistered individuals.<sup>49</sup> States using ERIC can identify, and reach out to,

individuals not yet registered, unlike those using IRVC. Adoption of online voter registration (states are urged in their membership agreements to allow for online voter registration<sup>50</sup>), plus inclusion in ERIC, is a more comprehensive way for states to broaden their voter bases. While implementation of ERIC carries some upfront costs, states in the system recover those costs within two to four years, and continue to save money, especially as they rely less on paper systems, print-outs, and mailings.<sup>51</sup> The system is also safe: information shared among states is first encrypted for privacy.<sup>52</sup>

Roughly half the country and nine of the ten states we examined – **Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Louisiana, Alaska, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Kentucky** – are current members of the IVRC. **Florida** opted in for only one year in 2013;<sup>53</sup> **Colorado** and **Louisiana**, both members of IVRC, also participate in ERIC.<sup>54</sup> Ideally, all ten states would cut ties with the IVRC and, instead, subscribe to ERIC, which is a much more effective system, with more safeguards against needless dropping of current voters and additional mechanisms to expand registration.

### 3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through Departments of Motor Vehicles with their statewide voter registration lists.

The Commission correctly emphasized that each state’s department of motor vehicles (DMV) “plays a pivotal role in the registration of America’s voters,” thanks to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).<sup>55</sup> This is important, according to the Commission, because “a wide swath of the American electorate frequents these offices on a regular basis,” and because if “there is any identification document that citizens will keep current, it is the state-issued driver’s license or personal identification card.”<sup>56</sup>

Common Cause recommends that states also seamlessly integrate voter data acquired at *all* voter registration agencies, including public assistance agencies and healthcare exchanges. Many Americans – particularly due to income – never interact with DMVs but must still be afforded, by law, opportunities to register to vote at a variety of other agencies. The opportunity to register to vote at these agencies must be incorporated into their benefits processes – whether electronically or on paper – and that data should also be captured by the state.

The Commission found that many states could improve their DMV’s interaction with the voter registration process. Gaps in the process could lead to Election Day confusion. Voters who appear at their polling place after moving can find that their voter registration records have not been updated to conform to their new driver’s license addresses.<sup>57</sup>

Of the states examined for this report, **Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania** have fully implemented electronic voter registration systems so that all information sharing between DMVs and election administrators is digital.<sup>58</sup> In **Michigan, Colorado, and Kentucky**, transmission of data between DMVs and election officials is almost entirely paperless, except for the need for a “wet ink” signature on paper for new voter registrants.<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, **Alaska** does not fully and electronically integrate voter data acquired through the DMV with statewide voter registration lists. However, Alaska’s Division of Elections is moving towards DMV integration with the implementation of a new statewide voter registration system some time in 2015.<sup>60</sup>

States still have room for improvement. **In six of the states that we examined, less than half of new registrations came from DMVs during the 2012 election cycle.** In the Commission’s view, such low levels of participation “leave no doubt that Motor Voter is not working as intended.”<sup>61</sup>

The good news, however, is that more than 50 percent of new voters in four of the ten states examined in this report were registered through the DMV for the 2012 election cycle. The list includes **Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, and Pennsylvania**.<sup>62</sup> Michigan did best, with 84.70 percent of new registrations coming through the DMV.<sup>63</sup> The Commission praised Michigan for a system “that seamlessly integrates[s] the Motor Voter transaction into the DMV driver’s license

application program in such a manner as to keep a large number of voter records current and to save the DMV money in reduced staff time committed to this program.”<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, Colorado and North Carolina saw less than 25 percent of their voters register through the DMV during the same election cycle.<sup>65</sup>

#### 4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.

A well-run polling place is essential to a smooth election. When knowledgeable and well-trained elections officials administer the process, spotting and fixing problems (like broken machines and inadequate supplies of forms), voters move through the site quicker, and without long lines. Selecting the right polling locations is an important part of the process. Polling places must be sufficiently large, accommodating of voters with disabilities and language limitations, appropriately staffed, adequately supplied, and in accessible locations.

Citing their space, low costs, prevalence, and accessibility,<sup>66</sup> the Commission recommended that states predominantly use schools, rather than other sites, as polling places. Many states are already doing so: “About a quarter of voters nationwide voted in schools in the 2008 and 2012 elections, and close to one-third of Election Day voters did so.”<sup>67</sup> Of our ten states, **Georgia**,<sup>68</sup> **Michigan**,<sup>69</sup> and **Pennsylvania**<sup>70</sup> have the strongest statutory language encouraging the use of schoolhouses as polling places. All three of those require that local election authorities use schools or other suitable public buildings as polling places wherever practicable.

One state, **North Carolina**, specifically permits county elections boards to use schools as polling places, but does not mandate their use.<sup>71</sup> **Louisiana**<sup>72</sup> and **Kentucky**<sup>73</sup> authorize county authorities to designate public buildings as voting locations, but do not state a preference for schools. Three states – **Arkansas**,<sup>74</sup> **Alaska**,<sup>75</sup> and **Florida**<sup>76</sup> – offer no statutory requirements for the types of buildings to be used as voting locations. In **Florida**, though, if the elections supervisor asks, public tax-supported buildings must be made available.<sup>77</sup> **Colorado** uses an almost all-mail ballot system but also provides for in-person voting and ballot drop-off at a number of designated locations; it has avoided using schools for security reasons and because of timing. In-person voting and drop-off is available for at least fifteen days before a general election (or at least eight days for a non-general election), and schools are not a viable option for that length of time.<sup>78</sup>

The Commission acknowledged that, because of tragic shootings at schools across the country, security is a real concern when designating schools as polling places.<sup>79</sup> To address this problem, it recommended that during elections, students have an “in-service day,” taking them off the premises but keeping them on the academic schedule. We favor the recommendation, and suggest that states implement it to the best of their abilities.

#### 5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling-place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.

Another way to improve polling-place management, according to the Commission, is for states to establish vote centers at convenient locations. Vote centers are “polling place[s] at which any registered [voter] in the political subdivision holding the election may vote, regardless of the precinct in which the [voter] resides.”<sup>80</sup> Clerks at these sites often rely on electronically-accessible county-wide voter registration databases, allowing them to give each voter the appropriate ballot. Because vote centers are centrally located, often near malls and grocery stores or on the way to/from workplaces, they are attractive to both long-time voters and those who have not yet cast a ballot.<sup>81</sup>

In Larimer County, Colorado, where vote centers were adopted in 2003 (before the state switched to a mail-in ballot method), turnout increased by the next election and was directly attributable to their establishment.<sup>82</sup> A 2006 study found that eight percent of surveyed Americans were “too busy” to vote, and another eight percent stated that “it was difficult to get to the polls.”<sup>83</sup> The establishment of vote centers statewide, in convenient and accessible locations, could increase turnout.

Of the ten states reviewed, only **Colorado** and **Arkansas** have laws allowing or mandating local election officials to establish vote centers.<sup>84</sup> Absentee voting stations, permitted under **Alaska** law, are located in a number of jurisdictions, and have all 40 district state ballots. Some are open the entire 15-day early-voting period; others are open for shorter times.<sup>85</sup> Four states – **Florida**, **Pennsylvania**, **Kentucky**, and **Louisiana** – have no statutory authority for vote centers, or plans to establish them.<sup>86</sup> High marks go to **Colorado**, which uses an almost all-mail ballot system that allows voters to submit ballots by mail, at conveniently located and secure “drop boxes,” or to vote in-person at vote centers.<sup>87</sup>

Election authorities in **North Carolina**, **Georgia**, **Michigan**, and **Louisiana** have considered using vote centers over the past decade, but none has adopted statutory language for their establishment. In 2005, the **North Carolina** General Assembly authorized the Orange County Board of Elections to create a pilot program for the use of vote centers;<sup>88</sup> however, it appears the county did not follow through with this program,<sup>89</sup> and to date, there has been no further consideration of their use. In **Georgia**, the Secretary of State’s Election Advisory Council’s 2011 Recommendations Report stated that the “creation of vote centers” is an “item that requires future study by the Secretary of State’s Office;” however, there does not appear to have been any further movement or consideration.<sup>90</sup> In **Michigan**, the Secretary of State’s “Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges” report recommended a pilot super-precinct program.<sup>91</sup> And in the past year, **Louisiana** commissioned a study on election technology, including use of vote centers.<sup>92</sup>

We encourage states to adopt vote centers in all political jurisdictions and in locations easily accessible to both urban and rural populations, especially where turnout has been low. To expand the franchise to citizens who are traditionally marginalized from the political process – students, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income persons (which necessarily includes people of color) – centers should be placed in areas that provide easy access: schools, retirement communities, heavily-trafficked shopping centers in low-income neighborhoods, and the like.

## 6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.

Although voter turnout varies with each election, jurisdictions should be prepared to allocate resources so that voting proceeds efficiently. Faulty election equipment and inadequately resourced polling places are the leading causes of long lines on Election Day. This can depress turnout at future elections, delay accurate vote counting and exacerbate inequalities in access to the polls. Recent research shows that in 2012, precincts with significant populations of voters of color had longer wait times than mostly white precincts, in part because of resource allocation problems.<sup>93</sup>

The Commission said “election officials need greater access to industrial engineering tools that are regularly employed to help manage customer service queues.”<sup>94</sup> It advised that local election administrators utilize tools hosted by Caltech-MIT’s Voting Technology Project, available for free use on its website.<sup>95</sup> These included tools for poll worker management, as well as line and machine optimization.

No states examined in this report have formally or statutorily adopted use of these tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources, but we encourage states to utilize them as appropriate. As for machine allocation, **Louisiana** law sets the number of voting machines allocated to municipalities, depending on the number of registered voters in each precinct, 30 days before an election.<sup>96</sup> In **Michigan**, state law requires at least one voting station for every 300 registered voters in

each precinct.<sup>97</sup> However, machine allocation alone is not a measure of success. Inadequate polling sites, lack of resources as simple as pencils, severely underestimated numbers of paper and provisional ballots – and many other insufficient resources – can lead to major problems on Election Day and in the past, have plagued many states surveyed for this report.

Election law expert Tova Wang has examined the problem of a lack of resource allocation standards, finding that “many states have no requirements at all regarding machine allocation, and in others those rules are extremely vague. Often the decision is left to the counties, and only some of them have any concrete, discernible formula for making sure there are enough machines, that they are distributed equitably, and allocated in such a way to ensure minimal wait times.”<sup>98</sup>

Wait times in some of these states are more severe than in others, but can be affected by inadequately resourced polling locations. **Florida** voters waited the longest to vote in 2012 – an average of 45 minutes – according to Pew’s Elections Performance Index.<sup>99</sup> **Alaska** had the nation’s second shortest wait time to vote, at 3.4 minutes.<sup>100</sup> Clearly, there is significant room for improvement, and we encourage local election officials to adopt tools to efficiently allocate polling place resources.

### Average Voting Wait Time During the 2012 Elections

STATE	AVERAGE WAIT TIME [in minutes]
Alaska	3.7
Colorado	6.3
Kentucky	8
Pennsylvania	9.1
Arkansas	12.9
North Carolina	13.5
Georgia	17.8
Louisiana	20.2
Michigan	21.9
Florida	45

Source: Elections Performance Index (Pew) <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2014/elections-performance-index#indicatorProfile-WTV>



## ▶ 7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.

As noted by the Commission, polling places need adequate staff and resources to effectively manage Election Day (and early voting periods, for some). Electronic pollbooks – which are simply the electronic version of paper pollbooks listing eligible voters in each jurisdiction – allow poll workers to quickly and accurately locate voter information, confirm registration status, and provide the appropriate ballot.<sup>101</sup> Many systems provide real-time access to county and state registration lists, allowing poll workers to redirect voters who show up at the wrong site – a potential time-saver for voters and elections officials alike. For states with same-day registration, use of electronic pollbooks additionally allows clerks to immediately record a first-time voter’s registration information or any changes a current voter has to his/her address, without having to wait until after Election Day. Electronic pollbooks cut down on paper, potentially save money, and allow elections officials greater ease on an otherwise harried day.

**Colorado** and **Georgia** use electronic pollbooks in all jurisdictions, and **Michigan** uses them in the majority of jurisdictions.<sup>102</sup> Some counties in **Arkansas**,<sup>103</sup> **Florida**,<sup>104</sup> **North Carolina**,<sup>105</sup> and **Pennsylvania**<sup>106</sup> use them, but none has any state-wide mandate. **Alaska**, **Kentucky**, and **Louisiana** do not use electronic pollbooks in any jurisdiction,<sup>107</sup> although Alaska does plan on adopting them in 2015<sup>108</sup> and Louisiana is currently studying them.<sup>109</sup> Mindful that states need resources to make the necessary purchases – and budgets across the country typically are tight – we nevertheless advocate for all jurisdictions to pay the fees upfront to reap the ultimate benefits. Electronic pollbooks make elections more efficient, cut down on time, and pave the way for easier implementation of same-day registration, enhancing the experience for both voters and poll workers alike. Indeed, of all the potential resources poll workers seek, electronic pollbooks are a top priority.<sup>110</sup> Though it is essential that workers be adequately trained in how to use them, and that the proper software is purchased to prevent potential breakdowns, these are matters states are well-equipped to handle.

## ▶ 8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.

Scores of jurisdictions have reported to the Election Assistance Commission that poll worker recruitment is “very” or “somewhat” difficult, according to the Presidential Commission.<sup>111</sup> There are several obstacles to recruiting poll workers, including the fact that Election Day takes place in the middle of the workweek and too many employees cannot afford to take a day off to work the polls. Given rampant shortages of poll workers, state and local jurisdictions should provide incentives for people to join the pool of qualified individuals and increase the number of available workers.

The Commission made two specific recommendations: recruitment of high school and college students, and recruitment of employees in the private and public sector.<sup>112</sup>

### Student Poll Worker Recruitment

**Every state** examined in this report has a statutory provision that allows high-school-aged students to serve as poll workers. The majority have special programs allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to serve as poll workers and election assistants. In general, these programs allow interested students who meet citizenship and other training requirements to volunteer as poll workers. This serves the dual purposes of fostering civic engagement and gaining the assistance of tech-savvy youth.

The scope of the programs varies. Among the states studied, **Alaska** has one of the most thorough youth poll-worker statutes, called its “Youth Vote Ambassador Program.”<sup>113</sup> It allows students 16 or older to be appointed as “youth vote ambassadors.”<sup>114</sup> After training, these ambassadors serve as poll workers. The law also authorizes an election supervisor to appoint a member of the Youth Vote Ambassador Program to serve on a precinct election board.<sup>115</sup> **Arkansas** has a similar program that allows high school students to work as “election pages,” and assist election officers and voters with



disabilities as they enter and exit the polling place.<sup>116</sup> It also grants election pages an excused absence from school. In **Colorado**, students 16 or older may serve as “student election judges,” working at the polls to “promote greater awareness among young people concerning the electoral process, the rights and responsibilities of voters, and the importance of citizen participation in public affairs.”<sup>117</sup> In **North Carolina**, students must be at least 17 to serve as “student election assistants,” provided that they are enrolled in school (or homeschooled), and have an “exemplary academic record” and a recommendation from the principal.<sup>118</sup> In North Carolina, no more than two student poll workers may be assigned to any single polling place.<sup>119</sup> **Pennsylvania** has a law very similar to North Carolina’s – students must be at least 17, exhibit an exemplary academic record, and obtain the approval of the school’s principal.<sup>120</sup> **Michigan** law also provides for high school poll workers, provided that a student is age 16 or older, but does not have many other requirements.<sup>121</sup> In **Kentucky**, only one 17-year-old may serve in each precinct.<sup>122</sup> In **Louisiana**, student voters must be 17 and in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level at school or in a home study program, or already graduated from high school.<sup>123</sup>

Two states do not have specific programs for students, but have age limits that would allow certain students to serve as poll workers. In **Georgia**, 16 is the minimum age to become a poll worker through the general process.<sup>124</sup> **Florida** has no specific program, but allows 16- and 17- year-olds who have pre-registered to vote the opportunity to serve as poll workers.<sup>125</sup>

## Private and Public Employee Recruitment

Fewer states have requirements or laws that would expand jurisdictions’ ability to recruit more public and private sector employees, but some provide several good incentives. **Colorado** has an exemplary state law that allows state public employees to take administrative leave, with pay, on Election Day (unless the employee’s supervisor determines their work attendance is essential).<sup>126</sup> **Florida** law recommends that election supervisors create programs within their communities to forge public and private partnerships to recruit poll workers.<sup>127</sup> In **Michigan**, state employees receive a paid day off on even-year November general election dates, and according to the Secretary of State’s office, local election officials are encouraged to recruit State employees as poll workers on these days.<sup>128</sup>

Other states protect employees from losing their job for serving as poll workers. **Kentucky** allows any employee selected as an election officer to take a day off from work for training or working at the polls, without penalty or threat of penalty from their employers.<sup>129</sup> There is a similar protection for poll workers in **North Carolina**, where state law prohibits any employer from demoting or discharging an employee for appointment as a precinct official, so long as the employee gives at least 30-days’ notice of her intent to serve.<sup>130</sup>

There is significant room for innovation, however. States should expand administrative leave policies to cover public employees who agree to serve as poll workers, and more private employers should grant employees an opportunity to serve their neighbors without losing vacation time.

## ► 9. States should institute poll worker training standards.

Poll workers are responsible for effective management of precincts on Election Day, and so have the heavy burden of getting it right. When machines break down (as invariably they do), locations run out of provisional ballots or other materials, or a non-English speaker has trouble with the ballot, a poll worker must do what is necessary – and what is legally-mandated – to remedy the problem, fast. Otherwise, lines build up, wait times increase, and voters become further disenchanted with the political process.

To ensure polling place problems are kept to a minimum – and resolved quickly when they occur – the appropriate training is required. As the Commission notes, training programs vary widely by state and locality, and most poll workers get no

more than 2.5 hours of training before reporting for duty.<sup>131</sup> While we take no position on length of time required for training, we agree that poll-monitor training must be made more uniform and should be statutorily required in every state.<sup>132</sup> Online programs with baseline information, created by states' elections officials, should be distributed to all jurisdictions, with included instructions that each county and/or jurisdiction add additional information to reflect the nuances of each county's system.<sup>133</sup> The way trainings are conducted can be decided at a jurisdictional level, but state mandates should explicitly require that all poll workers undergo prescribed training before the polls open.

Each state in this study – **Alaska**,<sup>134</sup> **Arkansas**,<sup>135</sup> **Colorado**,<sup>136</sup> **Florida**,<sup>137</sup> **Georgia**,<sup>138</sup> **Kentucky**,<sup>139</sup> **Louisiana**,<sup>140</sup> **Michigan**,<sup>141</sup> **North Carolina**,<sup>142</sup> and **Pennsylvania**<sup>143</sup> – has some statutory language prescribing training for at least some poll workers. While almost all of these states require training for all poll workers, **Pennsylvania** does not mandate it for election clerks, requiring training only for judges, inspectors, and machine operators in districts using voting machines.<sup>144</sup> However, the Pennsylvania Department of State is creating a Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors (SURE) user manual and online training video for County Election Offices to use in training employees on registration and election issues.<sup>145</sup> We advise all states to adopt legislation requiring *everyone* who will be in a polling precinct on Election Day to undergo some form of state-issued training by the time the doors open.

**Florida** is the only state reviewed that explicitly requires poll workers, by statute, to undergo a “statewide uniform training curriculum.”<sup>146</sup> The remaining states employ a more flexible approach and require that training be conducted in accordance with materials like a “pamphlet provided by the secretary of state,”<sup>147</sup> or general guidelines that state training “shall include but not be limited to” various election administration issues such as operation of the voting machine, confirmation of a voter's identity, etc.<sup>148</sup> While individual districts should determine the most effective methods for training their poll workers, there should always be a minimum level of training required for all individuals working the polls (volunteer or employee) throughout the state. Using that minimum requirement as a floor, individual districts can tailor the training to best suit their own needs (such as instructions on how to operate the machines, which may vary county by county).

The Commission also specifically recommended that states implement online training programs with interactive tools to ensure poll workers comprehend what they've been taught and can put it into practice.<sup>149</sup> Most states provide at least some training materials on their elections websites, and some make training videos available online. High marks go to **Michigan**: its Secretary of State's site includes a vast number of training videos and guidebooks, in addition to an interactive e-learning center.<sup>150</sup>

Other states make available video and guidebook trainings on their respective elections sites, but do not share interactive learning tools, if any exist. **Kentucky**<sup>151</sup> shares a precinct election officer guide, **Louisiana**<sup>152</sup> makes available two training videos on the Secretary of State's website, and **Pennsylvania**<sup>153</sup> has a number of short training videos posted. **Arkansas** also shares a number of training guides on its Board of Election Commissioners' site.<sup>154</sup> **Alaska**'s Division of Elections' website provides a link for training handbooks and videos.<sup>155</sup>

Other states could do more. **Florida** requires poll workers to attend at least a two-hour training (three hours for higher positions), but makes no materials available online.<sup>156</sup> **Colorado**, **Georgia**, and **North Carolina** do not make training videos or manuals available on their respective elections sites, and do not specifically address poll-working guidelines.

## 10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.

An inclusive democracy must fully welcome all citizens to participate in its elections. It is not enough merely to open the polling place if substantial numbers of Americans cannot access it. There are more than 25 million U.S. residents with limited English proficiency<sup>157</sup> and up to 46 million Americans with disability accommodation needs.<sup>158</sup> This is why it is

important that election officials work with local organizations representing different constituencies to best accommodate all populations.

The Commission recommends that as “a threshold matter, an election official must work with community groups in order to understand the needs of voters with disabilities and limited English proficiency, as well as to gain assistance and advice as to how to meet those needs.”<sup>159</sup>

In our review, **Colorado** had some of the best examples demonstrating how advisory groups can work closely with election officials.

In 2007, **Colorado**’s then-Secretary of State Mike Coffman established a Voter Accessibility, Independence and Privacy Task Force made up of advocates for the disabled, with a primary focus on the use of electronic voting machines.<sup>160</sup>

To help voters with limited English proficiency, Denver established a Spanish Language Voting Advisory Committee (ACCESO) by city ordinance in 2010.<sup>161</sup> ACCESO’s mission is to “provide advice and guidance to the ... Elections Division to assist in communicating to the Spanish language community for purposes of providing elections information and promoting voting and participation of all citizens in the elections process.”<sup>162</sup> It meets monthly leading up to general and local elections.<sup>163</sup>

**Louisiana**’s Election Assistance for Disabilities (LEAD) Advisory board provides guidance on disability issues and the elections process.<sup>164</sup> Among other duties, it is tasked with the development of best practices to promote access to and participation in elections by individuals with disabilities. The Secretary of State’s office reports that Louisiana has a contract with the Advocacy Center to conduct training throughout the state for those with disabilities, including veterans and senior citizens. This includes allowing voters to practice on the accessible voting machines.

We encourage states to enact similar laws and ordinances to establish formal advisory groups. All of the states examined in this report have organizations on the ground that would serve as vital partners in programs that work to advocate for the needs of non-English speakers and disabled voters.

## 11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.

One in seven potential voters has an accessibility issue, a figure likely to grow along with our average life spans.<sup>165</sup> Under federal and state law, elections officials must ensure that polling places are accessible in a number of ways. Parking lots must be within a certain distance from the polling place; corridors and halls must be sufficiently ample for wheelchairs; seats must be available for those who need them while waiting in line; and voting machines and paper ballots must be made accessible to those with vision impairments, among other requirements.

So that nothing slips through the cracks on Election Day (or during early voting), the Commission recommended that states and localities adopt management practices to ensure polling places are accessible, as required by law.<sup>166</sup> Two tools to facilitate this are checklists, which elections officials responsible for polling place oversight can refer to when assessing the space for accessibility, and videos that illustrate proper practices.<sup>167</sup>

All states have made some efforts under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) by using the accessibility checklist issued by the Department of Justice under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).<sup>168</sup> Several states have adopted more comprehensive strategies than those required by the federal government. **Pennsylvania**,<sup>169</sup> **Kentucky**,<sup>170</sup> **North Carolina**,<sup>171</sup> **Alaska**,<sup>172</sup> and **Colorado**<sup>173</sup> have produced in-depth videos on creating accessible polling places. Stand-out efforts include

**Pennsylvania**'s detailed video, which includes strategies for last-minute, on-the-day solutions to accessibility issues, and **North Carolina**'s online photo database of all polling places that allows voters to view their route to the ballot box in a particular polling location. **North Carolina** and **Kentucky** also have helpful checklists for elections officials to use at the polling place: Kentucky has a section on "Disability Awareness Guidance" in its Precinct Election Officer's Guide,<sup>174</sup> and North Carolina has some "dos and don'ts" created by a local nonprofit, as well as an accessibility survey.<sup>175</sup>

**Michigan** has also done a comprehensive job in adopting accessibility management practices; it uses a series of helpful videos and one of the most detailed accessibility checklists among the states surveyed.<sup>176</sup>

**Louisiana** has a comprehensive guidebook, "Informational Pamphlet for Election Day Voting," and instructive videos on the Secretary of State's website.<sup>177</sup> While both provide some helpful information on how to help disabled individuals at the polls, they lack specific guidelines on ensuring the polling place is physically accessible. **Arkansas**' Secretary of State's office collaborated with the Arkansas Disability Rights Center (ADRC) to produce a voter demonstration video; the ADRC circulated these videos to every county in 2008.<sup>178</sup> **Georgia** does not make available training videos or polling place accessibility checklists on its elections website; **Florida** posts the checklist, but not videos, on its Division of Elections' site; an accessibility poll worker video is forwarded to each county for training.<sup>179</sup>

## 12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.

The Commission recommended that states survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.<sup>180</sup> Of our ten states, **Colorado**,<sup>181</sup> **Louisiana**,<sup>182</sup> **Pennsylvania**,<sup>183</sup> and **Florida**<sup>184</sup> require an accessibility checklist to be completed for each polling center prior to an election. **Florida**'s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) polling place survey checklist is the most detailed with 65 factors, 12 diagrams, and two comment boxes.<sup>185</sup> Of the other states requiring accessibility audits, **Colorado**'s survey contains 28 factors, two diagrams, and two comment boxes;<sup>186</sup> **Louisiana**'s survey contains 53 factors, eight diagrams, and 0 comments boxes;<sup>187</sup> and **Pennsylvania**'s survey contains 25 factors, 0 diagrams, and one comment box.<sup>188</sup>

The remaining six states – **Alaska**, **Arkansas**,<sup>189</sup> **Georgia**,<sup>190</sup> **Kentucky**,<sup>191</sup> **Michigan**,<sup>192</sup> and **North Carolina** – require polling places to meet accessibility standards, but do not have statewide statutory polling place accessibility survey or audit requirements. However, election authorities in Arkansas, North Carolina, Michigan, and Alaska say they do their own accessibility surveys. In **Arkansas**, the Secretary of State's office reports that as a result of a litigation settlement agreement, the State Board of Election Commissioners must survey every polling site after every general election to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.<sup>193</sup> In **North Carolina**, the State Board of Elections has surveyed and photographed each polling place and posts pictures of polling place entrances and layouts online.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, according to the North Carolina Board of Elections, state officials perform accessibility audits on a periodic basis and require counties to meet ADA standards for their voting sites.<sup>195</sup> In 2010, the **Michigan** Bureau of Elections coordinated with the Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service to survey each polling location in the state; Michigan also employs an election specialist dedicated to polling place accessibility.<sup>196</sup> The **Alaska** Division of Elections conducts statewide surveys of polling places to check for compliance with the ADA, but does not offer any details regarding the frequency or extent of the program online.<sup>197</sup> However, its Division of Elections' director explained that the state follows ADA requirements and has a survey it uses when securing polling places.<sup>198</sup> It is Alaska's policy to use ADA-compliant public facilities before agreeing to use private buildings. However, there are circumstances in rural Alaska that limit the number of public facilities available for use.

### ▶ 13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers at any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.

A growing number of voters and potential voters are limited English proficient (LEP), and need extra assistance on Election Day. As the Commission stated, “[n]o voter, for any reason, should be made to feel unwelcome or in any way a “second-class” citizen.”<sup>199</sup> This is particularly true given that, as reported in Common Cause’s and Demos’ publication, “Bullies at the Ballot Box,” some individuals and groups use intimidation tactics against immigrant communities at the polls. It is essential, then, that bilingual poll workers are on hand to eliminate any confusion caused by others and provide needed guidance, from the time an LEP individual steps in line until he or she casts a ballot. Otherwise, voters with limited English may be discouraged from participating in elections going forward.

Because language limitations can be a huge barrier for some, the Commission recommended that election officials work with members of minority language groups in their jurisdictions to address language needs at the polls.<sup>200</sup> Resources are often in short supply but, if elections officials identify their language needs early – especially with respect to the anticipated number of potential LEP voter turnout – they can seek out bilingual volunteers from nearby advocacy groups to provide necessary translation of voting documents and interpretation services. Just as important is ensuring that translations and interpretations are performed by adequately skilled individuals. We recommend that jurisdictions use some form of language skill test and/or require a certain level of certification.

Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act<sup>201</sup>, jurisdictions covered under a certain formula are required to provide language assistance to language minority groups by way of translation (of all voting materials) and interpretation during voting. The following states contain covered jurisdictions required to provide language assistance services: Colorado (3), Alaska (9), Michigan (3), Pennsylvania (3), and Florida (11). Any assistance or materials provided in English must also be provided in the language applicable to the covered population.

**Colorado**, again, gets high marks for robust statutory language. “If the county clerk and recorder finds that a precinct is composed of three percent or more non-English-speaking eligible electors, the county clerk and recorder shall take affirmative action to recruit full-time or part-time staff members who are fluent in the language used by the eligible electors and in English. The action shall be conducted through voluntarily donated public service notices in the media, including newspapers, radio, and television, particularly those media that serve those non-English-speaking persons.”<sup>202</sup> Additionally, the Secretary of State’s website announces that voters with special needs, “including the need for language assistance, have the right to have an election judge or any other person they choose[,] assist them with voting.”<sup>203</sup>

**Alaska**, which is covered under Section 203 for provision of services in Native American languages, states on its Elections Division website that on-call translators are made available on Election Day, and language assistance is given through bilingual registrars, outreach workers, bilingual poll workers, and translations in communities where needed.<sup>204</sup> Hats off to the Last Frontier for this online assurance; we expect and hope that the realities on the ground mirror its intentions. Like Colorado, however, it should add language to its statutes regarding bilingual poll worker requirements.

**Michigan**’s Secretary of State’s website posts some, but not all, of its forms in Spanish, but makes no mention of bilingual poll workers on the ground;<sup>205</sup> state statutes are also silent on the matter. One Michigan jurisdiction is required under the Act to provide election materials in Bengali; both that jurisdiction and the state provide translated forms for it. Jurisdictions with high percentages of non-English-speaking voters “regularly employ bilingual poll workers,” though this appears to be ad hoc.<sup>206</sup> **Florida** advertises a voter assistance hotline in Spanish and English on its Division of Elections’ website; its site previously made no mention of bilingual poll workers, but it has since updated its FAQs on poll workers, encouraging bilingual individuals to apply.<sup>207</sup> As well, **Pennsylvania**’s Secretary of State’s site is silent on the matter, and so are its statutes.



As the Commission recommended, the above states' jurisdictions should not be alone in providing interpretation and translation services. Any state with a sizable limited English proficient population should, through its local jurisdictions, reach out to advocates within those communities to recruit interpreters and translators on, and prior to, Election Day (especially for translation of voting materials). Doing so will make for a more efficiently run election.

The remaining states are not covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. **Louisiana**<sup>208</sup> has statutory language requiring assistance in jurisdictions with "significant" limited English proficient populations; it's a step in the right direction. **Kentucky** and **North Carolina** have no statutory language regarding assistance for limited English proficient persons; neither do their elections divisions' websites. **Arkansas** does not have a law on the books either, although its Secretary of State's website<sup>209</sup> does state that voters in "jurisdictions with a statutorily-specified minimum number of language minority voters" may be entitled to ballots and assistance in another language (paving the way for inclusion under the VRA, if populations were to increase). **Georgia**<sup>210</sup> law states that electors shall not receive outside assistance, "unless [they are] unable to read the English language . . .," but it does not make additional assurances for bilingual poll workers; neither does its Secretary of State's website.

Invariably, a limited English proficient person who speaks a rare language will show up on Election Day, and no available interpreters will be on hand. We advise that, if the voter is not accompanied by someone who can provide needed interpretation services, elections officials have quick access to a telephonic interpreter to handle the matter.

#### 14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.

The Commission wrote that voting materials are "notoriously complex" and difficult to read, and urged jurisdictions to engage in usability testing of their voting and polling place materials and adopt plain language requirements.<sup>211</sup> Because people may have varying levels of English proficiency and bureaucratic language is confusing to many, the recommendation was not just limited to jurisdictions with large numbers of non-English speakers.<sup>212</sup> The report further noted that confusing materials are often due to laws that add requirements for voting materials without consideration for usability or readability.

Surprisingly, our survey of state election statutes, regulations, and administrative guidance shows that states have done very little effort to implement this recommendation. While research indicates that plain language substantially influences voting,<sup>213</sup> all but one of the surveyed states' election rules do not require any standard of readability or plain-language requirement in their election materials. The exception is **Florida**, which requires that voter registration application forms "be in plain language."<sup>214</sup> The survey did not turn up any requirements that states or local jurisdictions perform any usability testing on voting materials, although free resources for such testing are available.<sup>215</sup>

#### 15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.

Today's Americans are often busy or discouraged by the political process. Turnout for presidential elections in recent decades has rarely exceeded 60 percent<sup>216</sup> and satisfaction with government is at an all-time low.<sup>217</sup> Because polling places are often difficult to locate and staff, can be plagued with long lines, and remain stuck to business-hour schedules, states should increase efforts to expand pre-Election Day voting.<sup>218</sup> With early voting, no-fault absentee voting, and vote-by-mail programs, states could increase overall turnout and hopefully, expand the electorate to populations traditionally marginalized in our political process.

Several states covered in this report already permit some voting before Election Day. Indeed, as the Commission noted, “nearly a third of voters in the 2012 Election cast their ballot before Election Day, more than double the rate of the 2000 election.”<sup>219</sup>

**Colorado**, as of 2013, has an all-mail elections system. Between 22 and 18 days before an election, officials mail out ballots, which can be returned by mail, in-person at a voter service and polling center, or at a secure drop box. Additionally, eligible voters may register and vote in-person at a number of locations until and through Election Day.<sup>220</sup> Elections officials can also track ballot movement through an online system – another tool recommended by the Commission.<sup>221</sup> Because of the many conveniences afforded voters through its comprehensive system, **Colorado** gets top marks.

**Georgia**,<sup>222</sup> **Alaska**,<sup>223</sup> and **Florida**<sup>224</sup> allow early voting and no-fault absentee voting, giving voters additional options to cast their ballots.<sup>225</sup> **Arkansas** and **Louisiana** both permit early voting, but do not allow no-fault absentee voting.<sup>226</sup> This may be due to the risks associated with relying on the U.S. Postal Service to deliver the votes on time and to the proper location.<sup>227</sup> As the Commission recommended<sup>228</sup> – and as Colorado practices – ballot tracking mechanisms should be used for absentee or by-mail voting to ensure on-time arrival and delivery of ballots, along with any remedial measures needed in advance of Election Day.

**Pennsylvania**, **Michigan**, and **Kentucky** do not allow any early voting.<sup>229</sup> (All require excuses for absentee voting.) **North Carolina**, which previously had one of the most progressive sets of electoral laws, has since drastically cut its practices. As of the time of this writing, the Supreme Court granted the state a stay after the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit, in reversing the lower court’s decision, upheld same-day-registration and out-of-precinct ballot acceptance for the upcoming mid-terms.<sup>230</sup> A full trial on the merits of the case, including the state’s new photo ID requirement for 2016, will be held next year; for the upcoming mid-terms, voters should expect elimination of same-day registration and out-of-precinct ballot counting.<sup>231</sup> Early voting has been limited in the Tar Heel state: whereas voters once had 17 days to vote before Election Day, they now have ten. (County boards still must provide early voting for the same amount of hours as in the last election, and may do so by opening more early voting sites or extending hours at their existing ones. One caveat is that boards may seek a waiver of this requirement.)

As the Commission noted, “[e]arly voting is here to stay.”<sup>232</sup> Early voting, vote-by-mail, and no-excuse absentee voting allow voters to vote at times that fit their schedules. We urge states to not only adopt these reforms, but also implement them with such other reforms as Election Day and/or same-day registration; in combination, they may help to boost overall turnout.<sup>233</sup> States with same-day registration have consistently higher turnouts – especially of low-income individuals – than those without it, and at least some of that added turnout is a direct result of the practice.<sup>234</sup>

## 16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.

The Commission made particular note of the problems that can plague military and overseas voters as they register, receive a ballot, return the ballot, and have it counted as cast.<sup>235</sup> Without access to local election offices, distance can be a hurdle when a voter stationed in a far-off location ten time zones away needs to interface with election administrators. While praising the major improvements brought about by federal legislation such as the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act and the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act, the Commission found major inconsistencies between states as to how the laws are enforced.<sup>236</sup> For example, “two soldiers, both using the same [postcard voter] form in different states, could have their registrations and ballot requests become inoperative at different times.”<sup>237</sup>

To help ameliorate some of the challenges military and overseas voters face, the Commission recommended that states provide ballots and registration materials on their websites.<sup>238</sup> This should not be confused with actually *voting* via the Internet, which we oppose due to security and privacy concerns, but making voter registration forms and the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) available online is an important improvement in the voting process for military and overseas voters.

The Commission explained that states vary in the types of resources and information available on their websites, including the prominence with which the websites display information to military and overseas voters.<sup>239</sup> Two of the most important items that should be included on websites are the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA), an absentee ballot request that can be retrieved online, filled out by hand and then mailed, e-mailed, or faxed to the election administrator, depending on the states' requirements; and the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB), which serves as an emergency ballot in case voters fail to receive their absentee ballot.<sup>240</sup> This is an area where many states could make big improvements to voter services with low administrative costs.

The states examined in this report are inconsistent in what they display on their military and overseas voter information pages regarding the FPCA and the FWAB. **Every state examined in this report**, except **Alaska** and **Michigan**, includes a link or online version of the FPCA directly on its website.<sup>241</sup> All but **Michigan** and **Pennsylvania** include a link to the FWAB directly on their websites.<sup>242</sup> All states, however, make reference to the FPCA and the FWAB, and if the form is not located directly on their websites, they provide links to the federal government's Federal Voting Assistance Program's website run by the Department of Defense.

The states also vary in their consistency regarding extra information to military and overseas voters (for example, frequently asked question (FAQ) sections and ballot tracking resources). **Colorado** and **Kentucky** have strong military and overseas voters' informational sections on their websites. **Colorado**'s site includes 2014 election information, voter and general information, forms, suggested websites, contact information, and an online tool for military and overseas voters to access a ballot. **Kentucky**'s website has a detailed FAQ section and an "online wizard" to help overseas voters and their relatives cast ballots. **Louisiana, Arkansas, Alaska** and **Florida** all have a link to track a request for an absentee ballot or the status of a returned ballot.

Still, all states could make major improvements to webpage design to ensure that important information is clearly marked.

## 17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.

When it comes to voting machine technology, the states are at a stand-still. Since the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has not had a quorum of commissioners for several years, it is unable to approve and update new uniform standards for voting machines. The only standards currently operational were passed in 2005. Many states use these standards for benchmarks when deciding which machines to purchase. Thus, they're now stuck with machines they have had for over ten years – and many of these are beginning to fail.

Without new standards, vendors are uncertain of what should be included or ultimately will be required for new equipment. Both election administrators and vendors also seek a more efficient and affordable certification process for machines. Some say innovators in the field are deterred from either improving upon current machines or deploying far less expensive off-the-shelf hardware.

Updated standards have been drafted, however, and are waiting for approval whenever the EAC is reconstituted. Many vendors are working on equipment and software design being reviewed under an "innovation class" set of criteria by the EAC's Certification Program. However, some jurisdictions aren't waiting for federal action; instead, they're developing innovative systems through very transparent and public processes; for example, Los Angeles County in California and Travis County in Texas.

Still other activity is occurring in a stakeholder committee – the IEEE Election Standards Committee<sup>243</sup> – made up of industry members, academics, election officials, and advocates who are working on standards for data reporting in a




common data format. Those standards will improve all election data reporting, make audits and recounts easier, make election night reporting more robust and useful, and help with providing blank ballots to military and overseas absentee voters, in a much more workable format.

The Commission suggested that “either some other body within or apart from the EAC must be in charge of approving standards or the states should adapt their regulations.”<sup>244</sup> The IEEE Standards Committee is helping to advance this process. Moreover, states like California have responded to the stand-still by moving the whole process to the state level. California, which used to require all voting systems to be certified to the federal voting machine standards, recently passed a law mandating that the Secretary of State set the standards governing voting systems. The Secretary of State is also now responsible for certification and testing of voting systems used in California and approval of voting system labs.<sup>245</sup>

We urge the Congress to act swiftly in confirming new commissioners so that the EAC can function at full capacity. A federal oversight program is needed to help disseminate uniform guidelines on machines and software, especially because some states are not as familiar with voting technology issues as others. Establishing a minimum baseline for performance standards – particularly in usability, accessibility and reliability – makes sense for all jurisdictions. While some states can oversee the testing and certification processes and develop more advanced standards on their own, many lack the resources to do so; all should be able to rely on a federal baseline standard for the foreseeable future.

Finally, Common Cause recommends an additional focus on certifying machines prior to their use in any election and on confirming scientifically that every election outcome is reported accurately. Elections should be structured to provide convincing evidence that the reported outcomes reflect how people voted. This can be accomplished with a combination of compliance audits and risk-limiting audits using voting systems that produce a voter-verifiable paper ballot.<sup>246</sup> More regulation is needed to ensure that the evidence trail is correct and complete: Common Cause recommends mandatory requirements for robust ballot reconciliation, accounting, and verified chain of custody.

 **18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.**

Machines fail. We experience these malfunctions in our daily lives; washing machines spring leaks and automobiles break down on the side of the highway. When voting machines fail, the valid outcome of the election is at risk. Software malfunctions combined with human error can lead to the declaration of the losing candidate as the winner. That is why post-election audits are particularly important. A post-election audit is a check on the election process. Good post-election audits check machine results by inspecting some of the paper ballots manually. Well-designed and executed audits can catch and correct errors that make someone other than the true winner appear to win.

The Commission recommended that officials conduct post-election audits as a best practice of election administration.<sup>247</sup> Post-election audits help to ensure that the outcome of the election is what voters intended – and was not the result of machine malfunction or human error. The Commission endorsed two forms of audits: risk-limiting audits, which ensure the outcome of the election is correct, and machine performance audits, which spot-check machine function. Common Cause strongly endorses the risk-limiting audit as the most comprehensive audit system, because it provides strong statistical evidence that an outcome is correct. Moreover, the Commission strongly recommended that election jurisdictions publish data gathered on the audit outcome and on machine performance. With respect to machine performance, the Commissioners noted that “[i]t is very likely that a problem experienced by one jurisdiction is one soon to be experienced by another using the same or similar equipment.”<sup>248</sup>

Of the ten states, only **Colorado** is moving towards implementation of risk-limiting audits statewide, and has a law that

requires their use in 2017.<sup>249</sup> **Florida**<sup>250</sup> and **Colorado**<sup>251</sup> require post-election audits of voting equipment *and* mandate significant public disclosure of the audit results. **Pennsylvania**,<sup>252</sup> **Kentucky**,<sup>253</sup> **Alaska**,<sup>254</sup> and **North Carolina**<sup>255</sup> require post-election audits of voting equipment machine performance audits, but of these states, only **Alaska** requires that the results be publicized. Unfortunately, **Arkansas**, **Georgia**, **Louisiana**, and **Michigan**<sup>256</sup> have no state requirements for post-election audits.

It is important to note, however, that *none* of the states surveyed with post-election audit requirements have elections which are fully auditable. **Florida**, **Kentucky**, and **Pennsylvania** still deploy voting systems that do not produce a voter-verifiable paper record and, therefore, a manual audit is not fully possible.<sup>257</sup> In fact, one-third of counties in Kentucky use paperless voting machines that cannot be audited and checked against a paper record.<sup>258</sup> **North Carolina**<sup>259</sup> and **Colorado**<sup>260</sup> allow military and overseas voters to cast ballots via the Internet, and **Alaska**<sup>261</sup> allows *any* absentee voter to cast a ballot over the Internet. With internet voting, no voter-verified paper ballot is produced, meaning post-election audits in those three states are not fully possible.

The extent and nature of post-election audits varies greatly by state. In **Colorado**, the Secretary of State publicly and randomly selects at least five percent of the voting machines used in each county to be audited.<sup>262</sup> **Kentucky** also has two distinct audit procedures. First, the law provides for a manual recount of randomly selected precincts representing between three and five percent of the total votes cast in each election.<sup>263</sup> Second, the Kentucky Attorney General is required to make an independent inquiry for any irregularities that may have occurred in at least five percent of Kentucky's counties.<sup>264</sup> In **Florida**, county canvassing boards can complete either a manual or automated audit with different requirements for each.<sup>265</sup> **North Carolina** requires the number of ballots to be audited be chosen following consultation with a statistician.<sup>266</sup>

## 19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.

To ensure elections are run most effectively – with all populations included and voting times reduced – states and local jurisdictions should capture and critically analyze data obtained from several voting points (e.g., the time of registration to the time an individual casts a ballot). Without this bird's-eye view, states are powerless to know where they have gone wrong and how they can improve.

Each state examined has collected and published voter turnout and registration data, as well as other statistics, on the websites of their state election agencies, although some states make more information available than do others. At a minimum, each state has published its voter registration numbers, which are often updated monthly.<sup>267</sup> Every state – aside from **Louisiana** – also reports the turnout percentage for most major elections based on the number of votes cast compared to the number of voters registered.<sup>268</sup> **Michigan** and **Pennsylvania** additionally report a turnout number based on the percentage of voters out of the voting age population.<sup>269</sup>

Many states – **Alaska**, **Colorado**, **Florida**, **Georgia**, **Kentucky**, **Louisiana**, **North Carolina**, and **Pennsylvania** – also report registration or turnout figures in subcategories including age or race.<sup>270</sup> This is particularly important for states in determining where additional outreach is needed to bring all voter-eligible populations into the process. **Florida** has published the number of registrations received from different agencies (required by the NVRA to provide the service) and means of registering – such as from the DMV, whether by mail or online – as well as information on the number of voters who voted early or by mail.<sup>271</sup> This information is useful for elections officials and individuals or groups as they work to improve their administration processes. It is also helpful to see where NVRA agencies – such as public assistance or disability offices – are failing to provide required registration services.

**Arkansas** was particularly noteworthy in terms of the data and statistics it recorded: the state also publishes an analysis

of voting trends every two years in a report called “Voices of Arkansas.”<sup>272</sup> Statistics infrequently included in data for all states were comprehensive records of line wait times and frequency of other issues and problems. This is information that the Commission recommended for states to keep better track. In assessing these wait times, states will know where they need to send out additional resources for the next election to better serve the electorate.

## CONCLUSION

Much work remains to improve the American voting experience. The Presidential Commission on Election Administration provided important, commonsense recommendations that we urge state election officials to examine closely and adopt where appropriate. Implementation of some of the Commission’s recommendations, such as online voter registration, will require an act of the state’s legislature or a formal rulemaking. Others, such as improving poll worker recruitment and use of online tools to monitor and manage long lines at polling places, could be adopted more quickly.

Of course, in a time of austerity in many states, we are keenly aware of the challenges presented by threadbare budgets and scarce resource allocation. Still, many of the Commission’s recommendations could be accomplished at very little cost, such as revamping websites catering to military and overseas voters to make them more accessible and user-friendly.

The great benefit of implementing the Commission’s recommendations is that our elections will better fulfill the promise of inclusive, vibrant, and participatory democracy.

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ALASKA	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	No online voter registration; new statewide system may be implemented some time in 2015.	Unsatisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Alaska is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC), but not of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Alaska does not appear to fully and electronically integrate voter data acquired through the DMV with its statewide voter registration list.	Unsatisfactory
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Alaska does not have statutory language regarding use of schools or types of buildings to be used as polling places.	Unsatisfactory
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Some jurisdictions in Alaska have absentee voter centers that have all 40 jurisdictions’ state ballots; some, but not all, are open for the duration of the entire early voting period.	Mixed
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	Alaska has no statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 3.7 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	No jurisdictions in Alaska use electronic pollbooks, but they are moving toward using them in 2015.	Mixed
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	Alaska’s strong youth poll worker program, called the Youth Vote Ambassador Program, allows students age 16 or older to serve as poll workers, subject to training. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Alaska has statutory language prescribing training for poll workers, and its Division of Elections’ website posts training videos and manuals.	Satisfactory
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. Alaska does do important outreach to limited English proficient populations. We encourage Alaska to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Alaska uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist, and has training videos and manuals.	Satisfactory
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Alaska Division of Elections conducts statewide surveys of polling places to check for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance; Alaska should consider making details regarding the frequency or extent of the program available online. Alaska has unique challenges with its rural populations, including ADA-compliant buildings.	Satisfactory



13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Alaska (partially covered by Sec 203 of the Voting Rights Act), on its Elections Division website, states that on-call translators are available on Election Day, and that language assistance is also given through bilingual registrars, outreach workers, bilingual poll workers, and translations. We recommend that it add this language to its statutes.	Satisfactory
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Alaska allows early voting and no-fault absentee voting.	Satisfactory
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	Alaska provides a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) on the Division of Elections website, but not the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA).	Mixed
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal matter.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Alaska requires post-election audits of voting machine equipment performance; however, because Alaska allows absentee voters to electronically transmit their ballots over the Internet, its elections are not fully auditable.	Mixed
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Alaska captures some registration data according to age, and additional voter history data according to age and gender, but could do more with respect to data on wait times, frequent polling place problems, etc.	Mixed

ARKANSAS	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	No online voter registration.	Unsatisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Arkansas is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC), but not of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Arkansas has fully implemented electronic voter registration systems with election officials, such that the entire process of sharing information between DMVs and election administrators is digital.	Satisfactory
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Arkansas does not have statutory language regarding use of schools or types of buildings to be used as polling places.	Unsatisfactory
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Arkansas statutorily allows but does not require local elections officials to establish vote centers. The law passed in 2013, and the Secretary of State issued regulations in May 2014, so this is relatively new for the state.	Mixed
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	No statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 12.9 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	Some counties in Arkansas, but not all, use electronic pollbooks; there is no state-wide mandate.	Mixed
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	Arkansas law provides for a program that allows high school students to be appointed as “election pages” to assist election officers and voters with disabilities. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Arkansas has some statutory language prescribing training for poll workers. Its State Board of Election Commissioners’ website provides several training manuals.	Satisfactory
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. We encourage Arkansas to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Arkansas uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist; it has also worked with the Arkansas Disability Rights Center (ADRC) to create a voter demonstration video, which was circulated to every county in 2008.	Satisfactory
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Arkansas requires polling places to meet accessibility standards. As the result of a litigation and settlement, Arkansas’s State Board of Election Commissioners must survey each polling site after every general election.	Mixed



13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Arkansas (not covered by Sec 203 of the Voting Rights Act) does not statutorily provide for bilingual poll workers, but its Secretary of State’s website announces that in jurisdictions with a “statutorily-specified” minimum number of language minority voters, bilingual ballots and assistance will be provided (as a measure for the future).	Mixed
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Arkansas allows early voting, but does not allow no-fault absentee voting.	Mixed
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on Arkansas’s website, as is a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).	Satisfactory
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal matter.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Arkansas has no state requirements for post-election audits.	Unsatisfactory
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Arkansas maintains detailed data and statistics and publishes an analysis of voting trends every two years in a report called “Voices of Arkansas.”	Satisfactory

COLORADO	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	Online voter registration adopted.	Satisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Colorado is a member of both the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC) and the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Mixed
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Transmission of data between DMVs and election administrators is almost entirely paperless, but still requires a “wet ink” signature on paper for new voter registrants.	Mixed
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Colorado uses an almost all-mail ballot election system, but provides for in-person voting and drop-off at a number of locations for at least 15 days before a general election; it does not use schools for drop-off due to security reasons and extended period for drop-off.	Satisfactory
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Colorado, leading the charge, passed legislation establishing vote centers a decade ago.	Satisfactory
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	No statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 6.3 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	All jurisdictions in Colorado use electronic pollbooks.	Satisfactory
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	In Colorado, students 16 years old and older may serve as “student election judges” and participate as poll workers. One exemplary provision of Colorado law allows state public employees the opportunity to take administrative leave, with pay, on Election Day. We encourage election officials to establish other robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Colorado has statutory language prescribing training for some poll workers, but its Secretary of State’s website does not provide any manuals or videos regarding the training.	Mixed
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. However, Colorado has some of the best examples demonstrating how advisory groups can work closely with elected officials. For example, the Secretary of State’s office administers a Voter Accessibility, Independence and Privacy Task Force in partnership with disability advocates to improve the voting experience for members of the disability community. Denver also established a Spanish Language Voting Advisory Committee (ACCESO) by city ordinance to provide advice and guidance to the Elections Division on communicating to the Spanish language community.	Satisfactory

11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Colorado uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist and has produced an in-depth video exclusively on creating accessible polling places.	Satisfactory
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Colorado requires an accessibility checklist to be completed for each polling location prior to an election.	Satisfactory
13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Colorado's robust statutory language, partially covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, calls for recruitment of full- or part-time bilingual workers for precincts with three percent or more of non-English-speaking electors.	Satisfactory
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Beginning 15 days before each general election, Colorado allows voters to vote in-person or return completed ballots at secure drop boxes or by mail.	Satisfactory
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	Colorado has a strong military and overseas voters' information section on its website. A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on Colorado's website, as is a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).	Satisfactory
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal matter.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Colorado is moving toward the implementation of risk-limiting audits statewide, and has a law that requires their use in 2017. Colorado currently requires post-election audits of voting machine equipment and mandates significant public disclosure of the audit results. Still, Colorado allows military and overseas voters to electronically transmit their ballots over the Internet, so its elections are not fully auditable.	Mixed
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Colorado collects detailed data on voter registrations, and breaks it down in a number of sub-categories. Because it uses a mail system, keeping data on wait times, frequent polling places problems, etc., may not make sense for the state.	Satisfactory

FLORIDA	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	No online voter registration.	Unsatisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Florida opted into Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC) for one year in 2013. It is not a member of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Florida has fully implemented electronic voter registration systems with election officials, such that the entire process of sharing information between DMVs and election administrators is digital.	Satisfactory
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Florida does not have statutory language regarding use of schools as polling places, but if the elections supervisor requests the use of public-tax-supported buildings, they must be made available.	Mixed
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Florida has neither considered nor adopted legislation establishing vote centers.	Unsatisfactory
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	Florida has no statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 45 minutes in line - unfortunately, the longest wait time in the United States.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	Some jurisdictions in Florida use electronic pollbooks, but not all do; there is no state-wide mandate.	Mixed
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	Florida has no specific program under state law for youth poll worker programs, but it does allow 16- and 17-year-olds who have pre-registered to vote the opportunity to serve as poll workers. Florida law has an exemplary provision that recommends that election supervisors create programs within their communities to forge public and private partnerships for poll-worker recruitment.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Florida has strong statutory language prescribing a uniform state-wide training for poll workers. Although its Secretary of State’s website does not provide any manuals or videos regarding the training, it does specify that the training runs at least two hours. Training materials, moreover, are sent directly to the counties.	Satisfactory
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. We encourage Florida to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Florida uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist. Although it does not post accessibility training videos on the Division of Elections’ website, such videos are sent directly to counties.	Satisfactory

12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Florida requires an accessibility checklist to be completed for each polling location prior to an election. Florida's ADA polling place survey checklist is the most detailed.	Satisfactory
13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Florida (partially covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act) advertises a voter assistance hotline in Spanish and English on its Division of Elections' website; previously it made no reference to bilingual poll workers, but its FAQs have been updated to encourage applications from bilingual speakers. We recommend that it accordingly update its statutes.	Satisfactory
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability. However, Florida does require that voter registration application forms "be in plain language."	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Florida allows early voting and no-fault absentee voting.	Satisfactory
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on Florida's website, as is a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).	Satisfactory
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal question.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Florida requires post-election audits of voting machine equipment and mandates significant public disclosure of the audit results. However, Florida still deploys some voting systems that do not produce a voter-verifiable paper record and, therefore, a manual audit is not fully possible.	Mixed
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Florida has published the number of registrations received from different agencies and by means of registering - such as from the DMV, whether by mail or online - as well as information on the number of voters who voted early or by mail. The state could do more by way of capturing wait times and frequent polling place problems, but it gets extra points for capturing detailed registration data.	Satisfactory

GEORGIA	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	Online voter registration adopted.	Satisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Georgia is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC), but not of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Georgia has fully implemented electronic voter registration systems with election officials, such that the entire process of sharing information between DMVs and election administrators is digital.	Satisfactory
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Georgia has strong statutory language regarding use of schools as polling places.	Satisfactory
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Georgia has considered legislation regarding vote centers, but has not passed any such legislation.	Mixed
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	No statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 17.8 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	All jurisdictions in Georgia use electronic pollbooks.	Satisfactory
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	Sixteen is the minimum age to become a poll worker through the general process. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Georgia has some statutory language prescribing training for poll workers, but its Secretary of State’s website does not provide any manuals or videos regarding the training, and does not specifically address poll-working guidelines.	Mixed
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	Georgia has no statewide statutory policy in place. We encourage Georgia to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Georgia uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist, but does not appear to do more.	Mixed
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Georgia requires polling places to meet accessibility standards, but does not have statewide statutory polling place survey or audit requirements in place.	Mixed
13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Georgia (not covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act) law does not make assurances for bilingual poll workers; neither does the Secretary of State’s website.	Unsatisfactory
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory

15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Georgia allows early voting and no-fault absentee voting.	Satisfactory
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on Georgia's website, as is a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).	Satisfactory
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal question.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Georgia has no state requirements for post-election audits.	Unsatisfactory
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Georgia captures voter turnout by demographic, but does not appear to do more by way of data on wait times, frequent problems at polling places, etc.	Mixed



KENTUCKY	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	No online voter registration. However, a new law allows qualified military and overseas voters to register to vote and update their registration information online.	Mixed
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Kentucky is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC), but not of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Transmission of data between DMVs and election administrators is almost entirely paperless, but still requires a “wet ink” signature on paper for new voter registrants.	Mixed
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Kentucky does not have statutory language regarding use of schools as polling places, but does for public buildings in general.	Mixed
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Kentucky has neither considered nor adopted legislation establishing vote centers.	Unsatisfactory
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	No statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to use the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of eight minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	No jurisdictions in Kentucky use electronic pollbooks.	Unsatisfactory
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	In Kentucky, only one 17-year-old may serve in each precinct. This could limit the scope of available high school youths to volunteer or work as poll workers. However, Kentucky law allows any employee selected to serve as an election officer to take a day off from work for training or working at the polls. This is a laudable provision of state law. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees to take advantage of this provision.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Kentucky has some statutory language prescribing training for poll workers; its Secretary of State’s website provides a precinct election officer guide, but no training videos.	Mixed
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. We encourage Kentucky to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Kentucky uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist, includes a section on “disability awareness guidance” in its precinct election officers’ guide, and has produced in-depth videos exclusively on creating accessible polling places.	Satisfactory

12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Kentucky requires polling places to meet accessibility standards, but does not have statewide, statutory polling place survey or audit requirements in place.	Mixed
13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Kentucky (not covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act) makes no statutory provision of bilingual poll workers; neither does the Secretary of State's website.	Unsatisfactory
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Kentucky does not allow for any early voting options.	Unsatisfactory
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on Kentucky's website, as is a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Kentucky's site has a detailed FAQ section and an "online wizard" to help military and overseas voters.	Satisfactory
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal question.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Kentucky requires post-election audits of voting machine equipment and mandates significant public disclosure of the audit results. However, Kentucky deploys some voting systems that do not produce a voter-verifiable paper record and, therefore, a manual audit is not fully possible.	Mixed
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Kentucky captures registration and turnout by subcategories, but could do more by way of data on wait times, frequent problems at polling places, etc.	Mixed

LOUISIANA	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	Online voter registration adopted.	Satisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Louisiana is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC) and the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Mixed
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Louisiana has fully implemented electronic voter registration systems with election officials, such that the entire process of sharing information between DMVs and election administrators is digital.	Satisfactory
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Louisiana does not have statutory language regarding use of schools as polling places, but does for public buildings in general.	Mixed
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Louisiana has not adopted legislation establishing vote centers, but they are being considered as a part of a study on voter technology.	Mixed
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	No statewide rule in place. However, state law sets the number of voting machines allocated to municipalities. We encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 20.2 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	No jurisdictions in Louisiana use electronic pollbooks, but they are being considered as part of a study on voter technology.	Mixed
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers	In Louisiana, student poll workers must be 17 years old and in the 12th grade. This could limit the pool of available volunteers. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well.	Mixed
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Louisiana has some statutory language prescribing training for poll workers; its Secretary of State’s website provides two training videos, but no manuals.	Mixed
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. However, it does have an Election Assistance for Disabilities Advisory Board to provide guidance on disability issues. Louisiana is encouraged to fully adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Louisiana uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist, and has a comprehensive guidebook and instructive video that include accessibility issues.	Satisfactory
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Louisiana requires an accessibility checklist to be completed for each polling location prior to an election.	Satisfactory

13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Louisiana (not covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act) statutes provide that in jurisdictions with significant limited-English proficient persons, assistance will be provided; there is no across-the-board requirement for bilingual poll workers. We recommend further instructions regarding determinations of “significant” populations.	Satisfactory
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Louisiana allows early voting, but not no-fault absentee voting.	Mixed
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on Louisiana’s website, as is a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Moreover, Louisiana provides for online completion of the FPCA.	Satisfactory
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal question.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Louisiana has no state requirements for post-election audits.	Unsatisfactory
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Louisiana keeps detailed registration statistics, but it could do more by way of data on wait times, frequent polling place problems, etc.	Mixed

MICHIGAN	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	No online voter registration, although voters may update their registration online while changing their driver’s license address.	Mixed
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Michigan is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC), but not of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Transmission of data between DMVs and election administrators is almost entirely paperless, but still requires a “wet ink” signature on paper for new voter registrants.	Mixed
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Michigan has strong statutory language regarding use of schools as polling places.	Satisfactory
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling-place management, while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Michigan has neither considered nor adopted legislation establishing vote centers.	Unsatisfactory
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	Michigan law requires at least one voting station for every 300 registered voters. Jurisdictions in Michigan are encouraged to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 21.9 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	Michigan uses electronic pollbooks in the majority of its jurisdictions, but there is no statewide requirement.	Mixed
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	Michigan law allows for high school poll workers, provided that a student is at least 16 years old. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well. State employees in Michigan also receive a paid day off on even-year November election dates, and are encouraged to serve as poll workers.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Michigan has statutory language prescribing training for poll workers, and its Secretary of State’s website includes a vast number of trainings and manuals, in addition to an interactive e-learning center.	Satisfactory
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. We encourage Michigan to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Michigan uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist and a series of very helpful videos on accessibility issues.	Satisfactory

12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Michigan requires polling places to meet accessibility standards, but does not have statewide, statutory polling-place survey or audit requirements in place. In past elections, the Michigan Bureau of Elections coordinated with the Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service to survey each polling location. Michigan employs an election specialist dedicated to polling place accessibility.	Satisfactory
13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Michigan's (partially covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act) Department of State's website posts some, but not all, forms in Spanish; it makes no mention of bilingual poll workers and neither do its laws. But its SOS states the office provides some translated forms, and that jurisdictions with large numbers of limited English-proficient voters provide bilingual poll workers.	Mixed
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Michigan does not allow for any early voting options.	Unsatisfactory
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	Michigan refers to both the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) and the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) on its website, and includes a link directing users to the Federal Voting Assistance Program's website, but does not directly link to either the FPCA or the FWAB.	Mixed
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal question.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Michigan has no state requirements for post-election audits.	Unsatisfactory
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Michigan reports registration and turnout data, but could do more by way of data captured on wait times, frequent polling place problems, etc.	Mixed

NORTH CAROLINA	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	No online voter registration.	Unsatisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	North Carolina is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC), but not of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	North Carolina has fully implemented electronic voter registration systems with election officials, such that the entire process of sharing information between DMVs and election administrators is digital.	Satisfactory
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	North Carolina permits county boards to use schools as polling places, but does not mandate their use.	Mixed
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	North Carolina has considered but not adopted legislation establishing vote centers.	Mixed
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	No statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 13.5 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	Some jurisdictions in North Carolina use electronic pollbooks, but not all do; there is no state-wide mandate.	Mixed
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	Students must be at least 17 years old to serve as “student election assistants,” and must be enrolled in school (or homeschooled) with an exemplary academic worker. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	North Carolina has some statutory language prescribing training for poll workers, but its State Board of Elections’ website provides no training videos or manuals.	Mixed
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. We encourage North Carolina to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	North Carolina uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist and has produced an in-depth video exclusively on creating accessible polling places along with a “do’s and don’ts checklist.”	Satisfactory
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	The North Carolina State Board of Elections has surveyed and photographed each polling place, and posts pictures of polling place entrances and internal layout on the Internet for public viewing.	Satisfactory
13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	North Carolina has no statutory language on bilingual poll workers; its State Board of Elections’ website does not mention their employment.	Unsatisfactory



14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	North Carolina offers early voting and no-excuse absentee voting, but the legislature recently made cuts to early voting, and these have been upheld. Due to the cuts, it now gets a “mixed” review.	Mixed
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on North Carolina’s website, as is a link to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).	Satisfactory
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal question.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	North Carolina requires post-election audits of voting machine equipment. However, North Carolina allows military and overseas voters to electronically transmit their ballots over the Internet and so its elections are not fully auditable.	Mixed
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	North Carolina keeps detailed records of voter registration statistics, but it could do better by way of data on wait times, frequent polling place problems, etc.	Mixed

PENNSYLVANIA	STATUS	ASSESSMENT
1. States should adopt online voter registration (“OLVR”).	No online voter registration.	Unsatisfactory
2. Interstate exchanges of voter information should be expanded.	Pennsylvania is a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck (IVRC), but not of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).	Unsatisfactory
3. States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through DMVs with their statewide voter registration lists.	Pennsylvania has fully implemented electronic voter registration systems with election officials, such that the entire process of sharing information between DMVs and election administrators is digital.	Satisfactory
4. Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	Pennsylvania has strong statutory language regarding use of schools as polling places.	Satisfactory
5. States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.	Pennsylvania has neither considered nor adopted legislation establishing vote centers.	Unsatisfactory
6. Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.	No statewide rule in place. However, we encourage jurisdictions to utilize the tools made available by the Commission. In 2012, voters waited an average of 9.1 minutes in line.	Mixed
7. Jurisdictions should transition to electronic pollbooks.	Some jurisdictions in Pennsylvania use electronic pollbooks, but not all do; there is no state-wide mandate.	Mixed
8. Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.	Students must be at least 17 years old to serve as “student election assistants,” and must be enrolled in school (or homeschooled) with an exemplary academic record. We encourage election officials to establish robust programs to recruit public and private sector employees as well.	Satisfactory
9. States should institute poll worker training standards.	Pennsylvania prescribes training for some poll workers but does not mandate it for election clerks (just judges, inspectors, and machine operators). Its Secretary of State, though, does provide a number of short training videos on its website, but no manuals. It is in the process of creating a Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors users manual and online training to instruct all new employees of county election offices on registration and elections issues; it should get extra points for this effort.	Satisfactory
10. Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.	No statewide statutory policy in place. We encourage Pennsylvania to adopt this recommendation of the Commission.	Mixed
11. States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	Pennsylvania uses a DOJ-issued accessibility checklist, and has produced an in-depth video exclusively on creating accessible polling places.	Satisfactory
12. States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.	Pennsylvania requires an accessibility checklist to be completed for each polling location prior to an election.	Satisfactory

13. Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.	Pennsylvania's (partially covered by Sec. 203 of the Voting Rights Act) statutes and Secretary of State's website are both silent on bilingual poll workers. We encourage that the state address the matter.	Unsatisfactory
14. Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.	No statewide statutory policy in place to test for plain language and usability.	Unsatisfactory
15. States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	Pennsylvania does not offer any early voting options.	Unsatisfactory
16. States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	A link to the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is provided directly on the state's website, but no link goes directly to the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).	Mixed
17. The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A; a federal question.	N/A
18. Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	Pennsylvania law requires post-election audits of voting machine equipment performance. However, because Pennsylvania still deploys voting systems that do not produce a voter-verifiable paper record, a manual audit is not fully possible.	Mixed
19. Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	Pennsylvania reports on turnout and registrations, but it could do better by way of data on wait times, frequent polling place problems, etc.	Mixed



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