



**THE NEW MEXICO ELECTION ADMINISTRATION REPORT:
THE 2006 NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION**

PRINCIPAL AUTHORS:

R. MICHAEL ALVAREZ

*PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
CO-DIRECTOR, CALTECH/MIT VOTING TECHNOLOGY PROJECT*

LONNA RAE ATKESON

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

THAD E. HALL

*ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH*

AUGUST 2, 2007

Table of Contents

Study Executive Summary	2
Part 1: Election Day Voting	5
Preface	5
Executive Summary	5
Improve Ballot and Ballot Box Security	6
Enhance Ballot Privacy and Secrecy	7
Improve Ballot Design and Better Educate Voters	9
Improve Poll Procedures and Insure Common Use	10
Develop Ballot Reconciliation Procedures	11
Other Recommendations	12
Conclusions	13
Appendix 1.1: Polling Place Observation Procedures	14
Appendix 1.2: Project Team Members	15
Part 2: Poll Worker Experiences	16
Executive Summary	16
Poll Worker Study Overview	16
Poll Worker Demographics	17
Poll Worker Recruitment and Selection	18
Training	20
Quality of Polling Locations	23
Voter Identification	24
Problems at the Polls	25
Views Regarding Optical Scan Voting	26
Provisional Voting	27
Job Satisfaction and Confidence	27
Poll Worker Survey Conclusions	29
Appendix 2.1. Poll Worker Experiences Frequency Report	31
Appendix 2.2 Acknowledgements	51
Part 3: Voter Experiences and Confidence	52
Study Background	52
Experience with Ballot, Polls and Poll Workers	52
Voter Confidence	55
Voter Satisfaction	58
Voter Attitudes toward Voter Identification	59
Conclusion	60
Appendix 3.1: Survey Methodology	61
Appendix 3.2: The 2006 New Mexico Election Administration Survey Frequency Report	62
Appendix 3.3: Acknowledgements	72
Postscript: The 2008 Election and Beyond	73

Study Executive Summary

The New Mexico Election Administration Report on the 2006 November General Election is the product of three independent research projects focused on New Mexico's election administration efforts in the 2006 election. New Mexico has recently implemented a number of significant election reforms intended to create fair, accurate and voter-verifiable election administration systems. New Mexico, for example, is the first state that moved from a predominantly electronic voting system to one that mandated optical scan paper ballots statewide, with the intent of providing a paper trail so that elections could be audited for accuracy and to provide an environment that would promote greater voter confidence. The statewide implementation of this program and the use of ES&S M-100 and M-650 occurred in the fall 2006 general election. Prior to that there were at least six different voting technologies used throughout the state. Each of the three research studies summarized here examine a different aspect of the election process, each providing a very important look at the election administration question and an overall look at the 2006 election experience and environment in New Mexico.

Part I of this report focuses on Election Day observations in three New Mexico counties: Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe. The report overall notes that the new voting technology worked well on Election Day, but that better training of poll workers and judges, as well as better education of poll workers, poll judges and voters, should enhance the accountability and quality of the election experience. This report highlights a number of very specific recommendations to improve ballot security, voter privacy, promote uniformity in election administration procedures across precincts, develop post procedure election audits and ballot reconciliation procedures, improve ballot design and better educate voters.

Part II of this report examines the attitudes and experiences of a random sample of poll workers in the same three New Mexico counties. The goal of the survey was two-fold. First, the survey shows how poll workers generally view the election process in New Mexico. Second, it examines specific electoral issues and questions, gauges how poll workers are implementing specific laws, and considers how they view recent changes to state election laws. The executive summary covers the characteristics of poll workers, their recruitment and training, an assessment by poll workers of their polling locations, the use of voter identification, problems that occurred at the polls, views toward the new optical scan voting method, the use of provisional balloting, and job confidence and satisfaction.

Part III of this report turns to the attitudes and experiences of a random sample of registered voters in New Mexico's First Congressional District. The report examines factors associated with the voting experience, experience with the ballot, the polling site, voter interaction with poll workers, and voter confidence. The report also provides data on voter satisfaction and attitudes toward voter identification laws. This survey gives corroborating evidence supporting the findings of the Election Day observation and poll worker reports as well as providing additional information about how the public reacts and feels about their election process and the new voting method.

These independent research projects provide multiple perspectives on the election administration process in New Mexico and as such gives an overall picture of the 2006 November general election. More importantly, the reports show a system that is fundamentally working, where voter problems are infrequent, and where voter and poll worker confidence is generally high. For example, voters indicate that their confidence in their vote being counted is quite high with nearly two in five (38.6%) very confident and another two in five (43.9%) somewhat confident. Poll worker confidence is slightly higher with over nine in ten Bernalillo poll workers very confident (56.6%) or somewhat confident (34.4%). Both poll workers and voters rated the overall performance of their poll workers high with over four in five voters (86.9%) indicating their poll workers were very helpful (60.7%) or somewhat helpful (26.2%) and three in four poll workers rating the overall performance of their peers as an 8 (23%), 9 (23.5%) or 10 (27.6) on a 10 point scale.

These reports also highlight several areas where improvements could be made in voter, poll worker and poll judge education, poll worker and poll judge training, and precinct preparations. Although most polling locations had the supplies and workers they needed a small minority of poll workers reported that they did not have the supplies (13.8%) or workers (17.4%) needed to do the job. Of course, it is the responsibility of the election administrator to ensure each precinct site is ready to process voter ballots. Perhaps check lists should be developed to ensure each precinct has all the necessary supplies to perform its Election Day operations. And, while most of the facilities were in good or excellent condition to perform their duties a small minority, roughly one in ten were in poor or very poor condition. Some were noisy (8.7%), as pointed out by the poll worker post election survey and the Election Day observation report, while others did not provide adequate access for people with disabilities (10.8%), or had poor parking (9.9%). The poll worker survey also noted differences in how New Mexico's voter identification laws were applied. New Mexico's laws appeared to have been confusing to voters and poll workers alike. The law allows voters the choice of several types of identification they could provide including a verbal statement of their name, address, birth year and the last 4 digits of their social security number. Although many poll workers asked for voter identification, many of them did not. The voter survey confirmed this finding indicating that almost 65% of voters showed some form of voter identification, while 35% did not. Voters should be treated equally by poll workers and given the politics around this issue and the clear confusion by poll workers more effort should be made training poll workers on voter identification election laws. In addition to these issues, all three reports identify key areas and often recommendations on where and how voters could be better served including consideration of placement of voting equipment in polling booths, better ballot design and, given the popularity and long waits, more early voting sites or larger facilities and staff to accommodate the processing larger numbers of voters.

Voters and poll worker data also indicate that both groups were largely favorable to the new voting process. Poll workers gave the new process particularly high marks on reliability, privacy, and ease of use. And, although over three in five (62%) of poll workers indicated that voters were satisfied with the new system, there remains a relatively large percentage of dissatisfied voters. Voters in New Mexico confirmed this perception as nearly three in ten (28.8%) indicated their voting experience was more negative than previous election experiences. In Colorado, where a similar post election survey was conducted, voters overall were more positive and only one in ten had a more negative experience. Open-ended responses suggest that

a third of dissatisfied voters had problems with the new voting system. Perhaps the newness of the system or other factors played a role in this evaluation. It is important to note, however, that over eight in 10 voters (81.9%) voters rated their voting experience excellent or good, so large numbers of voters are satisfied. Only by surveying New Mexican voters and poll workers in future elections will we have important comparative information on which to make judgments about the reactions and attitudes toward the new voting system and the other election reforms being implemented in New Mexico.

We hope that our research is a useful tool as election administrators across New Mexico prepare for the upcoming elections in 2007 and 2008. Unfortunately, we cannot compare this election experience with previous election experiences. This first examination of the election process, however, has provided benchmarks to compare with future New Mexico elections. A broader study monitoring the 2008 contest would provide additional beneficial information from which to make recommendations, and would give us a point of comparison to gauge improvements in New Mexico's election administration. New Mexico is on the cutting edge of election administration and has executive and local leadership forging aggressively ahead with the intent of building a better, stronger, efficacious, and more voter-confident voting system. We hope these research projects are the first in a series of systematic attempts to study and evaluate the most important and fundamental aspect of our democratic system, the election process.

Finally, we wish to make clear that while our work was sponsored by independent research funding, our work would not have been possible without the assistance of many individuals throughout New Mexico who we thank throughout this report. We also relied upon the direct research support of many students and colleagues, and in each part of the report below we indicate those individuals who assisted with the research and analysis. Funding for these projects came from grants to the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; from research support provided by the Institute of Public Policy and International Affairs at the University of Utah and the Department of Political Science at the University of Utah; and from the Research Allocation Committee in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of New Mexico, and the Department of Political Science at the University of New Mexico. Of course, all of the conclusions and recommendations made within this report are ours.

Part 1: Election Day Voting

Principal Authors:

R. Michael Alvarez
Lonna Rae Atkeson
Jose Garcia
Morgan Llewellyn
Ray Martinez III
Ray Sadler
Steven Samford

Preface

In the 2006 general election, New Mexico undertook a statewide implementation of paper-based optical scan voting. With the assistance of county clerks in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe Counties, we had the unique opportunity to study this transition in a number of voting precincts on Election Day. Our study showed that in these three counties the transition to paper ballots generally went smoothly; we observed few significant problems with the new voting technology. Nevertheless, our Election Day fieldwork provided valuable observations on many procedural issues and polling place operations that have important implications for voter confidence and voter integrity. Therefore, we offer a series of recommendations that may help improve polling place voting operations in future New Mexico elections.

We thank the County Clerks and their Election Directors in the three counties that participated in our study: Bernalillo (County Clerk Mary Herrera and Election Director Jaime Diaz), Doña Ana (County Clerk Rita Torres and Election Director Lynn Ellins), and Santa Fe (County Clerk Valerie Espinoza and Election Director Denise Lamb). We also thank the many poll workers and voters throughout the state that answered our questions or allowed us to spend time with them on Election Day. The work of Alvarez and Llewellyn was supported by the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project and the work of Atkeson and Samford was supported by the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of New Mexico.

Executive Summary

Our research team had observers in polling places in three New Mexico counties on November 7, 2006: Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe. Our observations of polling place opening, Election Day operations, polling place closing, and election-night procedures showed overall few significant problems. The new optical scan ballot reader machines appeared to work well. Few system problems were reported and polling place operations generally ran smoothly. We did, however, observe several points in the election process where better education of poll workers, poll judges, and voters would improve the security, efficiency, consistency, and quality of the

vote experience. Based on our observational study, we offer the following recommendations that have the potential to enhance Election Day voting in future New Mexican elections:

- **Improve ballot and ballot box security.** We observed many places where the physical security of the optical scan ballots, ballot boxes, and voting sites should be enhanced.
- **Enhance ballot privacy and secrecy.** In many precinct locations, our team observed that voter privacy was problematic and that a number of actions by poll workers reduced the privacy of the ballot.
- **Improve ballot design and better educate voters.** In some locations we saw a high incidence of spoiled ballots and there were other complaints from voters and poll workers that can be resolved with better ballot design and voter education.
- **Improve poll procedures and insure common use of procedures.** We observed that some procedural implementations varied across precincts. All precincts in a jurisdiction should follow procedures in a consistent manner.
- **Develop clear and detailed ballot reconciliation procedures.** Current practice of post-election ballot reconciliation should be improved.

Below we explore each recommendation in detail, discussing the issues we observed on November 7, 2006. We also augment our observations with post election survey data from New Mexico Congressional District 1. These data come from a sample of registered voters provided by the New Mexico Secretary of State's office on October 10, 2006.¹ The survey included open-ended comments explaining why some voter's experience was poor or fair. These statements help to confirm many of our observations and, where appropriate, we quote from them. We finally present a series of miscellaneous recommendations in the concluding section of this report.

Improve Ballot and Ballot Box Security

The observation team noted a number of situations where ballot boxes (the metal boxes underneath the ES&S M-100 ballot scanners) were unlocked and open during polling place operation. One key recommendation arising from our study is that ballot boxes should be closed and the installed locks on the box remain locked during polling place operations. However, more can be done to physically secure the ballot boxes. The metal ballot boxes used in the counties we observed all possess the capability to have padlocks used to provide further physical security for voted ballots on Election Day --- and we recommend that padlocks be used to secure ballot boxes during future election operations. We also recommend that the ballot box doors and locks be sealed during election operations. Procedures should be developed to insure that each time the seals are broken, for any reason, by any election personnel (including poll workers, election judges, or technicians) that (1) the opening of the ballot box be witnessed by at least two

¹ Lonna Atkeson and Kyle Saunders conducted this post-election survey as part of an independent project. About 4,050 sample respondents received a contact letter immediately following Election Day requesting their participation in a survey assessing the congressional campaign in their district and their experiences with the election process.¹ The letter included a URL at which they could take the survey and provided voters with a toll free number where they could request a mail survey with a return self-addressed stamped envelope. The survey response rate was about 15%. More information can be found at: <http://vote2006.unm.edu>.

election personnel, (2) this action be logged, and (3) these log files become part of the audit trail from each precinct.

Absentee ballots that are dropped off at polling places and voted provisional ballots also need equally strong security measures. We observed instances where the blue zipper bag that contained dropped-off absentee ballots were scattered around, sometimes in locations far removed from other ballot materials, often left open, and in many situations outside the visible control of poll workers and election judges. We also observed situations where voted provisional ballots were loose and not clearly secured. Therefore procedures need to be developed to increase the security for voted absentee and provisional ballots.

Furthermore, we saw repeated instances where unvoted blank paper ballots were left in polling places in relatively insecure places. For example, we saw unvoted ballots sitting on or underneath a table with insufficient poll worker oversight to prevent an individual from taking an extra ballot unnoticed. Unvoted, blank ballots should be secured during the course of voting, to prevent both unintentional problems and attempts at election fraud.

Poll workers need to be informed that unsupervised manipulation of the voting equipment is strictly forbidden and all counties need to devote more resources for technical support before, during, and after the election. For example, observers noticed that, in one precinct, poll workers removed the printer cover from the scanning device, and that the printer was visible and open to manipulation during precinct operations (this was done because the poll workers “had problems with the cover”). Poll workers should be trained that altering the voting equipment is not proper procedure. If they encounter trouble with voting equipment, then the problem should be logged and reported to technical support. Any malfunctioning voting equipment should be taken from service until functional and the efforts undertaken to make the equipment functional should be witnessed by at least two poll workers, technicians, or other representatives of the jurisdiction’s election administrator. Finally, any manipulation of voting equipment or any problems with voting equipment should be recorded and logged and this log should become part of each precinct’s post-election audit trail.

Additionally, in the event that the M-100 ballot scanner does not work, the metal box upon which the M-100 sits is equipped with a small slit through which the ballots can be collected. When ballots are collected without being scanned, a procedure should be developed whereby affected voters are notified that they are voting without the assistance of the scanner and they should be notified that they should check their ballots visually for errors. Poll workers should log instances when ballots are placed in the box without being scanned.

Enhance Ballot Privacy and Secrecy

Voters should have the ability to cast a private and secret ballot. There were numerous ways in which privacy and ballot secrecy can be improved. First, all precinct voting booths should be set up so that it is either very difficult --if not impossible-- for any election worker, other voter, or any other individual to easily observe a voter’s action in the voting booth. For example, team members observed poll booths that were oriented against walls, so that voter behavior could be observed by any individual standing in the middle of the room. In other locations, booths were

located next to open doors, so that individuals outside the poll site could potentially observe voter behavior within the voting booth. In several locations, voters were observed completing their ballots while sitting next to one another at community tables. For example, one voter remarked in the post-election survey: “The print on ballot was very small & booths were flimsy, uncomfortable & not private. Handing the completed ballot to the scanner with a poll worker standing by who could see it felt like an intrusion on my privacy.”

Second, poll workers should be trained to refrain from assisting voters with their ballots in ways that allow the poll worker to observe any votes cast by the voter. This is especially the case when voters ask questions of polling place workers while the voter is in the process of selecting candidates on a ballot. If the voter has a question that requires the poll worker to observe the voter’s marked ballot, that action should be logged for post-election auditing.

Third, because there are situations when poll worker voter assistance is necessary, poll workers should be trained to refrain from speaking to other poll workers, other voters, or the voter, in any way that might indicate the voter’s preference. For example, one team observed a poll worker loudly discuss with the voter what it meant to check “Democrat” when one voter had a problem with their ballot. Although the actions by the poll worker were well intentioned, they revealed to everyone in the polling place that the voter had Democratic preferences.²

Fourth, we observed several instances where voters received assistance in the completion of their ballot from other voters. To ensure transparency, if a voter requires the assistance of another voter or family member in the completion of their ballot, then poll workers should document this event for post-election auditing. A simple record identifying both the voter and his or her assistant would suffice.

Fifth, voters need to have greater ballot privacy. One way to enhance privacy is to provide some sort of privacy sleeve for the optical scan ballot that voters can use to keep their ballot secret. The privacy sleeve can be helpful when the voter must ask for assistance and when the voter takes their voted ballot to the scanning device and inserts it for error checking and initial tabulation.

Sixth, individual poll workers should be prohibited from inspecting the completed ballot of a voter unsupervised, before the ballot is deposited in the ballot box. Under the practices observed by team members, if the ballot contains a write-in candidate, then after the close of the polling site a single poll worker inspected the ballot to determine if the candidate is a qualified write-in candidate. If poll workers must inspect a completed ballot, then this event should be witnessed by more than one poll worker and documented; in this case, the provision of a privacy sleeve for the voted ballot could help insure ballot secrecy.

Seventh, procedures should be developed and implemented to insure the privacy of provisional ballots. In one case, observers witnessed a poll judge in a crowded and busy precinct place provisional or in-lieu of ballots on folding tables, with no privacy, apparently so he could keep track of them to ensure that those voters signed and sealed their ballots correctly. Though the

² In one instance, the observers noted that the poll worker’s loud comments about the voter’s difficulty with the ballot appeared to embarrass the voter.

judge was well intentioned, placing voters in special and non-private locations may endanger their privacy.

Improve Ballot Design and Better Educate Voters

In some polling locations, teams observed a high incidence of spoiled ballots. Many of the spoiled ballots appear to have occurred because some voters were confused by the straight party option on the ballot or voters were voting for more than one candidate (voting for candidate 1 then the voter changing their mind and placing an X through the mark for candidate 1 and filling in the circle for candidate 2). One voter remarked in a post-voting survey on this problem: “I crossed out one bubble and I had to redo my whole vote and resubmit it” and, “No instruction given on the ballot regarding voting straight ticket. I filled in the bubbles for that AND all the Democratic candidates, and have no idea whether that would invalidate my vote.” Another voter wrote,

I felt the bubble ballot instructions were confusing. Sometimes I do not vote on an issue if I feel I had not received enough information to make a decision. On this ballot, I was afraid that if I did not fill in a bubble my ballot may have turned up invalid. I also felt there should have been a way to correct mistakes made on the ballot without having to start all over again.

The issue of spoiled ballots may be resolved by (1) better ballot design, (2) increasing voter education, and (3) greater efforts by poll workers to give voters a quick orientation to the ballot. In some precincts the observation team saw poll workers giving voters no instruction regarding the straight party option on the ballot. While the team was in one such voting location, a number of voters ended up mistakenly marking the straight party option and then needing to spoil their ballot. In other precincts, teams observed polling place workers giving the voters a very quick introduction to the ballot and witnessed fewer spoiled ballots. Future elections with straight ballot voting should include improved efforts to educate voters on how to use the ballot, both before Election Day and when they receive their ballot. Ballot redesign might also be considered.³

Additionally, there were many complaints from voters and poll workers about the new optical scan ballots, especially that, from their perspective, it took longer to vote on the optical scan paper ballots than on the previous electronic voting technologies. In the post-election survey, many voters explicitly compared the electronic machines to the bubble paper ballots. For example, one voter said, “The prior machines were faster and easier” and another said “took too long to fill out the paper version.” There were also issues with the small print on the ballot. For example, a voter complained, “The lighting was poor so it was hard to tell if the bubbles were completely filled in. The small print on the ballots made it hard to read.” Survey evidence from CD1 suggests early and Election Day voters in New Mexico, who had shorter optical scan ballots, compared to early and Election Day voters in CO7, who had longer touch-screen ballots, averaged significantly longer to complete their ballot on a self-assessment (NM 12.5 minutes,

³ It would be instructive at this point to study spoiled ballot rates across precincts, if that data has been retained from the November 2006 election. By identifying precincts with high ballot spoilage rates, places where additional voter and poll worker education efforts are needed could be identified.

CO 10.5 minutes, $p < .05$). Interestingly, however, Colorado absentee voters took substantially longer to fill out their optical scan absentee ballot, averaging 31 minutes to New Mexico's 27 minutes. This suggests that bubble paper ballots on average take longer to complete than touch screen ballots. Given that this was the first time paper ballots were used voters may have been adapting to the new format in New Mexico. Nevertheless, more might be done to educate voters about how to vote on the optical scan ballot. Providing sample ballot materials before the election to voters might increase voter familiarity with the optical scan ballot and give voters a convenient referent to bring with them to the polling places when they come to vote.

The observer teams saw few voters using the voter assisted terminal or "Auto Mark" voting unit. Teams did not see poll workers informing voters about the voter assisted device, even in situations where a voter might have desired to use it. In some locations, the accessible devices were placed in odd and poorly-accessible locations in the polling place. In one location the accessible device was facing a door that was open to a school hallway, with a radio playing right behind it. In another the "Auto Mark" had boxes piled in front of it, when team members asked about this they were told that they did that because voters kept trying to insert their ballots into the "Auto Mark" machine, in most locations they were not easily visible nor placed where voters who might benefit from the use of the voter assisted terminal could see the availability of the voting mode. The accessible voting devices should be more visible in polling places, and poll workers should actively inform voters of their availability.

Improve Poll Procedures and Insure Common Use

Teams observed a number of situations where there was variation across polling places in how common procedures were implemented. For example, in one voting location where there were two precincts, a team watched while workers in one precinct followed what appeared to be common and accepted practices regarding the use of the voter "tickets," where it was given to the voter along with the ballot and taken back from the voter when she placed her ballot in the scanning device. In the other precinct in that same location, the workers would take the "ticket" from the voter when they gave the voter her ballot.

Another example of procedural variation concerned voter "tickets" and ballot spoilage. In most locations, teams observed that, when a voter spoiled his ballot, the original "ticket" was taken back by poll workers and a new "ticket" issued with the new ballot. Common procedure was for the "ticket" to be associated uniquely with each provided ballot. However, teams did observe locations where workers did not issue a new "ticket" when a voter spoiled his or her ballot. In these precincts, the "ticket" was associated with a voter, not a ballot. Such variation in the application of procedures will make post-election reconciliation and auditing difficult, if not impossible.

Procedural variation also occurred with the stub. Some precincts kept these all attached for reconciliation after the election but others placed them in piles on the table in no order, rendering it virtually impossible to use them for post-election reconciliation.

Similar issues arose on November 7 regarding provisional balloting and consistency across precincts. In at least one polling place, an observer team witnessed an election judge who

appeared not to inform two voters about their right to vote provisionally when the voter's name was not in the voter registration book. In this example, the election judge appeared to be attempting to do everything she could to determine the voter's correct registration status, which is well-intentioned. Luckily this happened at a time when there were few voters in the site and thus the election judge had ample time to use her mobile phone to determine the voter's registration status; if things were busier, the judge might not have this luxury. In other locations, teams noted the frequent use of provisional ballots, implying that in some polling places the election judges may have resorted to provisional ballots more frequently and perhaps more quickly than in others. While the election judge noted above might have been well meaning—trying to avoid the use of provisional ballots in situations where they might result in some or all of the ballot not being counted—the specific instances when provisional ballots should be used must be clearly communicated to election judges and poll workers to insure that the rules associated with provisional balloting are applied consistently throughout the jurisdiction.

The one significant issue that arose on Election Day occurred in Bernalillo County, where some precincts experienced problems due to a lack of supplies, especially blank ballots. In a summary of coverage of New Mexico's 2006 general election, electionline.org wrote:

Two precincts in Bernalillo County ran out of ballots and two dozen others in the county ran low ... Other counties in the state reported a smooth election on the paper-based ballots. (Electionline.org, "Election Reform Briefing 15: The 2006 Election", November 2006).

Team observers visited these locations. Both precincts had exceedingly long lines as well as frustrated judges, poll workers and voters. Such problems may ultimately reduce voter confidence in the election process and create an unnecessarily tense voting experience. In future elections, procedures should be developed and implemented to insure that all precincts have sufficient supplies on hand and that, in the unlikely event that a shortage arises, there are contingency plans in place in the polling place and the jurisdiction to deal with the problem quickly and efficiently.

The instances noted above are ones where enhanced poll worker or election judge training could mitigate the problem. Given the instances where observing teams witnessed important but simple procedures being applied differently, it is clear that more can be done to train New Mexican poll workers in the appropriate applications of procedures in future elections.

Develop Ballot Reconciliation Procedures

Observing teams were surprised to see that common forms of ballot reconciliation did not appear to be the norm in New Mexico. For one important example, there appeared to be no effort to reconcile the number of ballots provided to the precinct by the local election official at the start of the day against the number of ballots used (voted ballots, provisional ballots, spoiled ballots, and write-ins) in the precinct at the close of voting. This lack of reconciliation opens the door either to errors in ballot provisioning that might have been made and not caught or to some types of fraud (especially ballot box stuffing) that might occur and might not be easily observed.

A review of New Mexico election law regarding ballot reconciliation, especially in light of New Mexico's transition to optical scan paper ballots, is necessary. Ballot reconciliation procedures should be altered, where necessary, to require accounting in the precinct for all ballots issued and for a complete and detailed ballot reconciliation report to be performed before the voting materials and ballots are returned to election officials after the election. Ballot reconciliation is useful for proper auditing of an election and helps to maintain voter confidence in the process.

Other Recommendations

These additional recommendations are based on our observing efforts, and are provided in no particular order.

Election officials need to expend greater effort in evaluating the desirability of combining precincts into a single voting location. Specifically the number of registered voters in the precinct and the size of the location made available for the polling site must be jointly considered. Election officials need to determine the actual location size prior to polling site consolidation decisions. Observers noticed numerous polling sites where the space made available by the tenants of the facility for the election was quite small relative to the size of the building. Additionally, observers noticed instances of two and even three large precincts being combined into a single voting site barely large enough for one of the precincts. Additionally, some confusion occurred at these consolidated polling sites as some individuals waited in the wrong precinct line.

Cell phones, personal digital assistants, mp3 players, cameras, radios, and other electronic devices should be barred from use in any precinct, both by voters and precinct workers. This helps prevent distractions in the polling place and, as many of these devices are equipped with cameras, can help prevent a variety of types of election fraud. Team observers saw many instances where these devices were used (especially cell phones, and in one polling location a radio was playing quite loudly next to the accessible voting station), sometimes by precinct workers, even in places like Bernalillo County, where their use was clearly prohibited by signs in the polling place.

All electrical cabling should be secured to a wall or floor, by tape or other means. Where power strips or surge suppression devices are used, their "on-off" switches should be taped into the "on" position when in use to avoid unintentional (or intentional) power outages.

Entry and exit to the polling site should be clearly defined and controlled by the poll workers. Our teams observed repeated instances of open and unlocked doors through which individuals could obtain entry to the polling site unnoticed by the poll workers. Entry to the polling location should never be discouraged but steps can be taken to eliminate multiple poll site entrances by clearly marking a single poll site entry point. We also recommend that election officials avoid using locations as polling sites that will make it difficult to provide an accessible, secure, and distraction-free voting experience.

Laws and regulations regarding electioneering, especially the display of signs and other political activity, should be strictly enforced. Our teams saw repeated problems regarding

electioneering, especially political signs too close to polling places. When election officials were notified they took quick action to move signs, but other preventative action should be taken in the future to insure that all political activity is kept well away from polling place locations. One voter noted this as a problem in a post-voting survey: “I was pressured by representatives of the candidates as I entered the polling station.”

Poll workers and election judges should be encouraged to vote absentee or at an early voting location. Although we do not wish to be seen as discouraging the political participation of poll workers, we also are concerned by the appearance of poll workers or election officials casting ballots in the voting locations where they work on Election Day. Observing teams witnessed this behavior and, while potentially benign, to a voter or an observer this might be seen as potential evidence of tampering by polling place workers or other election officials.

Improve the physical layout of voting precincts. In many locations, observer teams noted problematic and confusing polling place layouts. For example, in many locations voters had to trace a complicated path, figuring out which precinct to vote in, where that precinct was located in the polling place, and then going from authentication to voting booth and then to the ballot scanner to cast their votes. Insuring that polling places are well laid out and are intuitive to voters will minimize problems and speed up the process for voters and poll workers.

Conclusions

In our Election Day observations, we generally saw smoothly operating polling places and overall a smooth transition to the new optical scan voting system in New Mexico. We did observe a number of places where we believe the process can be improved and have offered a number of situations along those lines in this report. Specifically, there are five areas where we see that election procedures in New Mexico can be improved:

- **Improve ballot and ballot box security.**
- **Enhance ballot privacy and secrecy.**
- **Improve ballot design and better educate voters.**
- **Improve poll procedures and insure common use of procedures.**
- **Develop clear and detailed ballot reconciliation procedures.**

We hope these recommendations help to improve the electoral process in New Mexico.

Our Election Day observations were based upon only one election and therefore we cannot know how our results presented here compare to previous elections with different election systems in place. A larger study monitoring the 2008 contest would provide additional beneficial information from which to make recommendations, and would give us a point of comparison to gauge improvements in New Mexico’s election administration. In the near future, some members of this research team will also be reporting on other related research projects, including a survey of poll workers in the same three counties we conducted our observational study in, as well as results from the voter survey briefly mentioned in this report, and other similar research products on the 2006 election in New Mexico. We also hope that these research products provide further insights into improving the New Mexican electoral process.

Appendix 1.1: Polling Place Observation Procedures

Observers from our research group were in place in three New Mexico counties: Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe. Team A conducted observations in Doña Ana County. Team B conducted observations in Bernalillo. Team C observed Election Day voting in Santa Fe and Bernalillo Counties.

The observation activity of Team A included two precincts in suburban Las Cruces (Las Alturas and Hillrise) and two precincts in Anthony, New Mexico, among the most Hispanic precincts in the county. Members of this team observed the opening of Las Alturas and Hillrise, spent two hours observing the voting in Anthony, and observed the closing and post-electoral procedures of Las Alturas and Hillrise.

Team B spent all of their time in Bernalillo County, conducting unescorted observations. Team B observed polling place operations at Atrisco Elementary School, Ernie Pyle Middle School, Westside Community Center, Valle Vista Elementary School, John Adams Middle School, and Painted Sky Elementary School. Members of Team B observed post-election close-down procedures at Painted Sky Elementary School and further election administration procedures at the County Clerk's office in Albuquerque.

Team C began their election-day observation in Santa Fe, with an informal meeting with Denise Lamb (Santa Fe County Bureau of Elections Chief Director) and some members of her staff. We were introduced to one of Santa Fe County's technicians, who served as the team's guide for the Election Day observing effort. The team went to the Fort Marcy Complex for the opening of the precincts there, then to Wood Gormley Elementary, Acequia Madre Elementary, Guadalupe Parish Hall, Pojoaque Middle School, Tesueque Pueblo Intergenerational Center, and the San Ildefonso Pueblo. The team also visited the warehouse location where the absentee ballot sorting and tabulation operation was located, and where voting machines and materials were stored.

Team C also spent considerable time in Bernalillo County, conducting unescorted observations (in coordination with Team B). Team C observed polling place operations at Rio Grande High School, the Wyoming Terrace Mobile Home Park, the Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center, and the Church of the Good Shepherd. Team C also observed post-election close-down procedures at both Church of the Good Shepherd and Painted Sky Elementary School. Team C observed further election administration procedures at the Bernalillo County Voting Machine Warehouse and the County Clerk's office in Albuquerque.

Each team spent time observing poll site operations in each location, inspection of the voting equipment, and watched for irregularities. The teams also conducted informal interviews and discussions with poll workers, precinct judges, and voters, where possible and useful.

Appendix 1.2: Project Team Members

R. Michael Alvarez. Professor R. Michael Alvarez teaches political science at the California Institute of Technology, and is a Senior Fellow at the USC Annenberg Center for Communications. He has published widely in the areas of voter behavior, campaigns and elections, and statistics and methodology. He is currently the co-director of the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project, and has been working on election administration, voting technology, and electoral processes since 1999.

Lonna Rae Atkeson. Professor Lonna Atkeson teaches political science at the University of New Mexico where she is a Regents' Lecturer. She studies voter and candidate behavior, campaigns and elections, public opinion and political parties, state politics, and New Mexico politics and has published widely in these areas.

Morgan Llewellyn is a graduate student at the California Institute of Technology where his research interests include voter behavior, voting and information transfer.

Ray Martinez III is a principal of the The Martinez Consulting Group, and prior to that was commissioner and vice chair of the United States Election Assistance Commission.

Steven Samford is a graduate student at the University of New Mexico where his research interests include comparative politics and political economy.

Jose Z. Garcia is a professor of government at New Mexico State University, where his research interests include Latin America, the U.S.-Mexico Border, and New Mexico politics.

Ray Sadler is a retired professor of history at New Mexico State University, specializing in the Mexican Revolution.

Part 2: Poll Worker Experiences

Principal Authors:

R. Michael Alvarez
Lonna Rae Atkeson
Thad E. Hall

Executive Summary

To assess the implementation of the new voting technology in New Mexico and the implementation of election law generally, we surveyed poll workers in a random selection of polling precincts in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe. Our survey of poll workers allowed us to understand their views and attitudes on an array of issues. Based on our survey, we offer the following observations and recommendations that have the potential to enhance Election Day voting in future New Mexican elections:

- **Clarify the rules governing identification.** Many poll workers stated that they checked all voters for identification and did so because they thought that the law required it, but many other poll workers did not. Poll workers need to know when and when not to require voters to show identification.
- **Ensure polling places are accessible to the disabled.** Approximately 10 percent of poll workers stated that the precinct where they worked was inaccessible. Accessibility is not just important to individuals with defined disabilities but also to older voters who may not be technically disabled but have limited mobility.
- **Improve poll worker training.** Almost 40 percent of poll workers stated that the training they received on Election Day did not mirror the actual experience of working at a polling place. The training needs to be as congruent as possible with the actual experience.

Poll Worker Study Overview

After the 2006 general elections, the University of Utah and the University of New Mexico collaborated to conduct a survey of poll workers in three New Mexico counties: Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe. The goals of the survey were two-fold. First, the survey studied how poll workers generally view the election process in New Mexico. Second, it examined specific electoral issues and questions, gauged how poll workers are implementing specific laws, and considered how they view recent changes to state election laws. Poll workers in the survey were randomly selected from precincts in the three counties.

The survey was conducted between January 30, 2007 and March 15, 2007. Before the first wave of the survey, each respondent was sent an invitation letter by their local county clerk informing them of the survey and encouraging their participation. A reminder postcard was sent on

February 6, 2007. All individuals who had not returned a survey at that time were sent a new survey on February 13, 2007 and a second follow up post-card was sent on February 27. The survey numbers from the first and second waves were linked to ensure that no duplicate surveys were received. As the table below shows, the response rate was quite high with an overall response rate of 77.1 percent.

	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	TOTAL
Surveys Sent	529	117	113	759
Surveys Received	402	98	85	585
Response Rate	76.0	83.8	75.2	77.1

Poll Worker Demographics

The first components of the survey we examine are the demographics of New Mexico poll workers. Poll workers in New Mexico are relatively old; 59% of poll workers in New Mexico are 65-years-old or older. Poll workers are well-educated, with almost 70% having some college education. Poll workers are predominantly White (56.6%), but nearly two in four (38.4%) are Hispanic. Approximately 40% of poll workers are very comfortable with computers and use the Internet daily.

Poll Worker Demographics	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
18-54	17.66	17.17	14.63	17.20
55-64	24.13	25.25	20.73	23.80
65-74	30.60	39.39	40.24	33.40
75-plus	27.61	18.18	24.39	25.60
HS or less	30.91	31.11	29.33	30.70
Some College	39.25	32.22	30.67	36.90
College Grad	12.37	15.56	9.33	12.50
Post-Graduate	17.47	21.11	30.67	19.90
Native American	3.77	6.67	1.28	3.90
Hispanic	40.43	37.78	29.49	38.40
White	54.45	55.56	67.95	56.60
Other	1.35	0.00	1.28	1.10
Uses Internet Daily	35.57	42.42	51.22	38.90
Very Comfortable Using Computers	36.07	41.41	45.12	38.30
Democrat	58.82	63.74	42.50	57.20
Independent	4.55	10.99	6.25	5.90
Republican	36.63	25.27	51.25	36.90

There are demographic variations across the three counties. Doña Ana has the oldest poll workers, on average and also is the county with the largest percent of White (68.0%) and Republican (51.2%) poll workers. Doña Ana poll workers are the most comfortable with computers and have more who use the Internet daily. By contrast, Bernalillo has the highest percentage of Hispanic poll workers—just slightly higher than the percentage in Santa Fe County—and Santa Fe has the most who are self-identified Democrats. Santa Fe also has the

most poll workers with advanced degrees. These data suggest that there are unique issues across counties in New Mexico that election officials have to take into account. The age of the poll workers and the cultural diversity suggest that care should be taken in ensuring that training and procedures are designed to address differences in learning styles across these populations.

Poll Worker Recruitment and Selection

One key factor in election administration is the recruitment of poll workers. It is often suggested that there is a dearth of new poll workers joining the ranks. However, in New Mexico, we see a nice diversity of newer and older more experienced poll workers.

Poll Worker Recruitment	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
First Election Worked				
1994 Or Earlier	27.91	22.09	18.75	25.61
1995-2000	25.75	30.23	31.25	27.29
2001-2004	21.95	17.44	33.75	22.99
2005-Or Later	24.39	30.23	16.25	24.11
Number Of Elections Worked				
1-2	21.39	26.97	30.38	23.62
3-5	26.74	25.84	30.38	27.12
6-10	27.81	25.84	24.05	26.94
11 Or More	24.06	21.35	15.19	22.32
How were you first recruited as a poll worker?				
A Political Party Official	4.33	10.20	30.00	8.93
Another Poll Worker	40.20	30.61	23.75	36.25
An Advertisement In The Local Media	8.14	15.31	3.75	8.76
A Teacher Or Professor	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.70
An Official Job Posting By The County	1.27	3.06	2.50	1.75
Neighborhood Precinct Caucus Meeting	0.51	0.00	0.00	0.35
I Sought The Job On My Own	35.37	31.63	30.00	33.98
Some Other Way	9.16	9.18	10.00	9.28

For example, almost one-quarter of poll workers started working in the past two years and nearly half of them started working after 2000. Just over half of all poll workers have worked in five elections or fewer. There is a cadre of very experienced poll workers, with one quarter of poll workers having started as poll workers before 1994 and 22% having worked in eleven or more elections.

The recruitment of poll workers is also a key concern across the country. When we consider how poll workers are recruited, we find that poll workers are the best recruiters that counties have; 36% of poll workers were recruited this way in New Mexico. In Doña Ana County, political parties are also strong recruiters of poll workers, with 30% of workers recruited in this way. We also see that many poll workers are self-motivated; approximately 30% of poll workers sought the job out on their own. In Santa Fe County, advertising in the media works well and it is a moderately effective strategy in Bernalillo County. Counties should consider how they can

best leverage existing institutions—their own poll workers, political parties, and their own county government employees—to attract poll workers to the job.

Motivation Views (percent responding yes)	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
I think it is my duty as a citizen.	65.42	72.73	71.95	67.58
I am the kind of person who does my share.	52.99	49.49	45.12	51.29
I found it exciting.	33.08	31.31	20.73	31.05
I can be with people I enjoy.	33.58	27.27	14.63	29.85
I wanted to learn about politics and government.	31.84	20.20	26.83	29.16
I wanted to make some extra money.	29.35	15.15	12.20	24.53
I like to be with people who share my ideals.	24.13	19.19	17.07	22.30
I received recognition from people I respect.	16.42	9.09	3.66	13.38
I was asked by someone in my political party.	10.70	4.04	12.20	9.78
I did not want to say no to someone who asked.	11.69	6.06	3.66	9.61

If we consider what motivates poll workers to do their jobs, we find that citizen duty and views of responsibility are key motivators. Poll workers were allowed to select as many motivators as they wanted in the survey, and two-thirds said that it was their duty as a citizen to work as a poll worker and half said that they are the kind of person who does their fair share. Less than one-third of poll workers were motivated by factors such as money, camaraderie, or a desire to learn more about politics. Importantly, we also see that few poll workers do the job out of a sense of pressure from a peer; fewer than 10% were motivated because they didn't want to say no to someone.

In general, the poll workers like their co-workers or fellow poll workers. Fewer than 10% of poll workers disagreed with the statement that the poll workers in their precinct worked well together. In addition, half of all poll workers rated the performance of their fellow workers a 9 or 10 on a 1 to 10 scale and only 25% were rated 7 or lower.

Attitudes Toward Colleagues	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
The poll workers in my precinct worked well together.				
Strongly Agree/Agree	83.29	90.63	80.25	84.10
Neither Agree/Disagree	7.71	4.17	9.88	7.42
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	9.00	5.21	9.88	8.48
How would you rate the overall performance of your fellow poll workers?				
1 To 7	25.83	23.66	24.05	25.22
8	23.02	25.81	31.65	24.69
9	23.53	21.51	20.25	22.74
10	27.62	29.03	24.05	27.35

Training

In the survey, we asked poll workers a series of questions related to their experience with their training. More than 75% of poll workers did not find their training boring or think that the training lasted too long. Similar numbers found that the training was easy to understand. However, when we examine substantive questions regarding the content of the training, we see that less than 43% of all poll workers thought that the training included enough time practicing on the voting system. Even with an optical scan system, understanding how to interact with the tabulator and address ballot problems is a critical aspect of the poll worker job function. We also see that approximately 35% of poll workers did not think that the training spent enough time covering election laws and procedures. Training in these areas should be increased.

Attitudes to Training (Percent Yes)	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
The training was easy to understand.	76.92	71.43	63.75	74.12
The training sessions were too long.	26.94	17.89	18.99	24.29
The training sessions were boring.	22.45	12.63	20.51	20.50
I was able to spend enough time practicing on the voting system.	46.48	39.58	28.57	42.81
The training sessions spent enough time covering election law and procedures.	65.30	69.79	55.56	64.66
The training prepared me well for Election Day.	65.98	69.39	60.00	65.72
After the training, I was confident in my ability to do my job on Election Day.	72.45	71.72	69.14	71.85

When we consider the overall effectiveness of the training, we find that 66% of poll workers thought that the training prepared them well for Election Day and 72% thought that, after the training, they were confident in their ability to do their job on Election Day. Obviously, the other way to consider these data is whether it is problematic that approximately 30% of poll workers did not feel confident or prepared after going through their poll worker training.

The experience that poll workers had related to their training varied by county. Poll workers in Bernalillo County were more likely to view the training related to the voting system as different to what they experienced on Election Day. Bernalillo poll workers were also more likely to say that the training was a lot different compared to similar poll workers in the two other counties.

When we consider how much training the poll workers received, the poll workers in Bernalillo County were more likely to have attended more than one training session. It might initially seem counter intuitive that poll workers who received more training also saw more implementation differences; more training, however, may enhance the perceived differences between training and Election Day experience. The data also show that poll workers in Bernalillo were less likely to have read or viewed any training materials they received from the election officials prior to the election. This finding could explain why they perceived more differences between training and Election Day; had they read all materials they might have been more aware of what to expect on Election Day. Doña Ana's poll workers were most likely to remember receiving training

materials in the mail and Santa Fe’s poll workers had the highest rate of reporting having read most of the materials.

Training Experience	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
Did you notice any differences between how you learned to use the voting system in training and how the voting system operated on Election Day?				
YES	42.63	26.67	35.06	38.94
If YES, to what extent did the training differ from the actual procedures?				
It Was A Lot Different	28.48	12.50	12.00	24.64
It Was Somewhat Different	46.84	58.33	44.00	47.83
It Was Just A Little Bit Different	24.68	29.17	44.00	27.54
Your local election official sponsored training sessions for election workers prior to the election to teach workers about election procedures and how to use the new optical scan paper ballot machines. How many training sessions did you attend?				
Zero	3.33	0.00	2.56	2.67
One	54.36	78.49	74.36	61.14
More Than 1	42.31	21.51	23.08	36.19
Did you receive any manuals, booklets, or video/DVD at your training session or in the mail to help you learn more about the election procedures?				
Yes	84.83	86.02	97.50	86.83
No	15.17	13.98	2.50	13.17
If YES, how much of the materials did you read or watch prior to Election Day?				
All Of It	59.62	74.03	68.92	63.46
Most Of It	29.02	19.48	20.27	26.07
Some Of It	10.09	6.49	8.11	9.19
None Of It	1.26	0.00	2.70	1.28

In addition to asking questions about the differences between the training and the Election Day experience, poll workers were also asked about the instructions that they received for various activities on Election Day. In general, approximately 70% of poll workers thought that the instructions for opening and closing the polls were clear. Santa Fe County poll workers were much more likely to agree that the instructions they received for opening and closing the polls were clear, with 84% agreeing the instructions were clear. Santa Fe poll workers were also more likely to agree that the instructions for securing the ballot box and for reconciling the election figures at the end of the day were clear. Almost one-quarter of poll workers in the other two counties disagreed that the instructions for these activities were clear.

Instructions and Procedures (Percent Agree)	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
The instructions I received from the election officials for opening the polls were clear.	71.79	83.67	69.14	73.46
The instructions we received from the election officials for closing the polls at the end of the day were clear.	65.64	80.61	64.20	68.01
The instructions for when to ask a voter for his or her identification before voting were clear.	78.01	84.54	83.95	79.96
The instructions for securing the voting machines, ballots, and ballot box were clear.	73.47	80.61	76.54	75.13
The instructions for reconciling the number of voters voting and the number of ballots cast were clear.	70.66	78.35	74.07	72.46

Given the high level of importance that surrounds these five activities—(1) opening the polls, (2) closing the polls, (3) asking for identification, (4) securing the ballots, and (5) reconciling the votes—it could be viewed as highly problematic that a large minority of poll workers did not agree that the instructions were clear for conducting these activities.

Supplies and Materials at Polls	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
Were you missing any supplies at your polling location?				
YES	13.78	12.12	16.05	13.81
Did your polling location have all the workers it needed?				
YES	82.44	94.95	59.26	81.33
Did you need to call the county clerk's office at any time during the Election Day?				
YES	64.34	73.47	67.53	66.37
My polling place had a county-precinct map to help voters locate their polling location.				
Strongly Agree/Agree	43.01	89.69	83.33	56.68
Neither Agree/Disagree	14.51	3.09	6.41	11.41
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	42.49	7.22	10.26	31.91

Another major issue for poll workers on Election Day is that they arrive at their polling location having all of the things that they need to do their job. Approximately 14% of poll workers across the counties reported that they were missing some supplies. Most troubling, however, is that nearly one in five (18%) of poll workers in Bernalillo County and two in five (41%) in Doña Ana

County reported that they did not have all of the poll workers that they needed in their polling location. We also see that poll workers like being able to communicate with the county clerk’s office; two-thirds of poll workers stated that they needed to contact the office at some time on Election Day. There were also reported differences across counties in the number of precincts reporting that they had a county precinct map to help voters locate their polling location if they were in the wrong place. Poll workers in Bernalillo County were four times more likely to report disagreeing with that statement than were poll workers in the other two counties. These administrative issues are largely the responsibility of the County Clerk’s office and measures should be put into place to ensure necessary supplies, adequate number of poll workers and communication means with the County Clerk are available to provide a low-stress, efficient and well- managed precinct. Factors like these ultimately translate into voter confidence and therefore administrative efforts should be made to make 100% of precincts ready for business upon opening.

Quality of Polling Locations

Polling locations are an important part of the election process because they are the place where the voter experiences the election.

Accessibility of Polls	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
Accessibility for people with disabilities.				
Poor/Very Poor	11.96	7.22	9.76	10.84
Neutral	11.20	10.31	18.29	12.06
Good/Excellent	76.84	82.47	71.95	77.10
Condition of the facility.				
Poor/Very Poor	9.14	2.06	8.54	7.85
Neutral	17.51	14.43	10.98	16.06
Good/Excellent	73.35	83.51	80.49	76.09
Noise level of the facility.				
Poor/Very Poor	8.67	4.08	13.58	8.58
Neutral	20.15	18.37	18.52	19.61
Good/Excellent	71.17	77.55	67.90	71.80
Availability of parking at facility.				
Poor/Very Poor	9.92	5.15	12.50	9.47
Neutral	14.76	6.19	3.75	11.75
Good/Excellent	75.32	88.66	83.75	78.77
Adequate space to operate the polls.				
Poor/Very Poor	13.99	14.29	15.85	14.31
Neutral	12.72	7.14	12.20	11.69
Good/Excellent	73.28	78.57	71.95	74.00
Temperature.				
Poor/Very Poor	12.18	14.29	8.54	12.02
Neutral	22.59	24.49	14.63	21.78
Good/Excellent	65.23	61.22	76.83	66.20
Total	394	98	82	574

The ability of people with disabilities—which also affects individuals who are not fully disabled but also individuals who are elderly and may have difficulty walking or opening doors—to access polling locations is very important and also a legal issue. The data from New Mexico counties show that polling places are an example of the 90-10 problem; it is 10% of the precincts that are problematic. Poll workers deemed approximately 11% of polling places poorly accessible to individuals with disabilities. Approximately 8% of workers thought that the polling location was generally of poor quality and a similar percentage thought that their polling location was noisy. Almost 10% of polling locations had poor parking availability and 14% felt that they did not have adequate space to operate their polling location. In addition, 12% of poll workers thought that there were issues with the temperature in their polling location that led them to rate the temperature poor or very poor.

Voter Identification

In the 2006 general election, New Mexico law required some form of voter identification, broadly defined, and included a simple written or verbal statement attesting to a voter name, year of birth and the last 4 numbers on their social security card. Poll workers could only ask for physical identification from newly registered voters who are voting for the first time and who did not register with the county clerk.

Voter Identification	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
How often did you ask voters to present identification before allowing them to vote?				
All Of The Time	39.22	24.74	46.25	37.72
Most Of The Time	16.62	10.31	13.75	15.12
Only Some Of The Time	25.71	32.99	25.00	26.87
Hardly At All	11.43	24.74	8.75	13.35
Never	7.01	7.22	6.25	6.94
What is the most common reason why you asked voters to present identification before they voted? Please select only ONE.				
Trouble Hearing/Easier To Read Name From Id	8.80	8.24	5.63	8.25
Verify Identity Of First-Time Voter	19.94	25.88	9.86	19.52
Verify Identity Of Provisional Voter	15.54	22.35	4.23	15.09
It's Required By Law To Verify The Identity Of Voters	47.80	36.47	69.01	48.89
To Prevent Fraud	6.45	3.53	9.86	6.44
I Did Not Recognize The Voter	1.17	3.53	1.41	1.61
Voter Was Challenged By Party Challenger	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.20

The application of the law, however, was inconsistent. We found 38% of all poll workers asked voters to present identification all of the time before allowing them to vote. This ranged from 25% in Santa Fe County to 46% in Doña Ana County. Approximately one-quarter of poll workers stated that they only asked for identification some of the time. For poll workers who asked for identification all of the time, 78% indicated it was required by law to verify the identity of voters and 6% did so to prevent fraud. For those who asked for identification most of the time, 59% did so because it was the law to verify voter identity, to prevent fraud, or because they did not recognize the voter.

By contrast, those poll workers who asked for identification only some of the time, 54% did so to verify a first-time voter, a provisional voter, or a challenged voter. Another 10% of poll workers ask for identification because they are either hard of hearing or find it easier to find a voter after reading the name off of the identification. We find similar results to these when we examine poll workers who asked voters for identification hardly at all.

One important issue to note about identification is that poll workers not only learn about identification laws during poll worker training but they are also exposed to voter identification issues in the media. New Mexico poll workers may have been exposed to the debates over identification in other states and not appreciated the variations in state identification laws across states. Poll workers may also have been confused by the public debate around the issue and the public service announcements from the New Mexico Secretary of State regarding their new voter registration cards.

Problems at the Polls

We asked poll workers about various problems that occurred at the polls on Election Day.

	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
There were problems setting up the voting machines in your precinct.				
Strongly Agree/Agree	35.31	14.58	25.93	30.44
Neither Agree/Disagree	13.40	9.38	16.05	13.10
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	51.29	76.04	58.02	56.46
There were problems closing the polling place at the end of the day and reporting the results.				
Strongly Agree/Agree	23.58	17.89	24.69	22.78
Neither Agree/Disagree	15.03	6.32	14.81	13.52
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	61.40	75.79	60.49	63.70
There were problems with the optical scan paper ballot machines throughout the day.				
Strongly Agree/Agree	14.62	6.19	10.00	12.50
Neither Agree/Disagree	12.27	9.28	16.25	12.32
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	73.11	84.54	73.75	75.18

Recent research conducted by the authors in other states has found that problems at the polls, especially problems closing down the polls, can lower both poll worker and voter confidence that ballots will be counted accurately.⁴ We see wide ranges for the number of problems that occurred on Election Day setting up the voting machines, with 35% of Bernalillo poll workers agreeing but only 15% of Santa Fe poll workers agreeing. Santa Fe also reported fewer problems closing polling places down; overall poll workers found polling place close down easier than start up. Relatively few poll workers reported problems throughout the day with the optical scan systems, although Bernalillo reported 15% problems throughout the day.

Views Regarding Optical Scan Voting

Given that New Mexico moved to all optical scan balloting, we wanted to gauge the views of poll workers toward this new technology. We asked a series of questions regarding the voting technology and its attributes, starting with the question of reliability. Here, we see that two-thirds of poll workers thought that the optical scan machines were reliable. Just over three-fourths of poll workers thought the optical scan machines were easy to use and just over 80% thought that they provided voters with enough privacy. Overall, 62% of poll workers thought that voters were satisfied with the optical scan voting machines.

When we asked about the Automark, we found that relatively few poll workers—only about 6%—stated that there were many voters who needed to use the Automark machines. In addition, less than one-third of poll workers expressed agreement that the voters who used the Automark machine thought it worked well.

Attitudes Toward Op-Scan (Percent Strongly Agree or Agree)	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
The optical scan paper ballot machines are reliable.	64.68	70.10	74.68	67.02
The optical scan paper ballot machines provide voters with enough privacy as they vote.	70.03	76.29	73.42	71.58
I thought the new optical scan paper ballot machines were easy to use.	75.78	83.51	87.65	78.83
Generally speaking, voters were satisfied with the optical scan ballot machines.	57.40	69.07	75.31	61.99
There were many voters who needed to use the Automark machine.	7.07	4.21	3.80	6.12
Voters who used the Automark machine thought it worked well.	36.21	19.54	31.94	32.82

⁴ See Thad Hall, Quin Monson, and Kelly Patterson. 2007. “The Human Dimensions of Elections,” University of Utah, Manuscript.

Provisional Voting

When we asked poll workers the reasons why they required provisional ballots—they could list multiple reasons—we found that almost 60% of all poll workers reported problems with voter rolls including inactive voters and voters not listed on the polls. An additional quarter of poll workers reported provisional ballots being cast as the result of voters being listed as having cast an early ballot or received an absentee ballot. According to poll workers, the rate of provisional balloting is closely linked to the quality and accuracy of the voter registration list in their county. If the rolls do not reflect the correct status of voters and appropriately track their voting status, voters can be forced to vote on a provisional ballot.

Bernalillo County had the largest number of poll workers stating that there were many provisional ballots cast in their jurisdiction, almost twice as many as the next highest county. We also see that Bernalillo and Doña Ana Counties have many more challengers at the polls than did Santa Fe County. These two counties also had more provisional ballots cast because of challengers, although as a percentage of all responses, provisional ballots cast because of challenges is relatively low.

Percent (Of Total Responses)	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
Voter Lacked Proper Identification	9.10	8.43	15.82	10.06
Voter Listed As Having Voted Early Or By Absentee Ballot	31.19	30.12	23.42	29.78
Voter Listed As Inactive On The Voter Roll	11.34	14.46	12.66	12.07
Voter Not On The Voter Roll	47.31	46.39	45.57	46.88
Voter Was Challenged By Party Challenger	1.04	0.60	2.53	1.21
There were many provisional ballots cast at my precinct.				
Strongly Agree/Agree	35.08	15.79	18.99	29.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	22.51	28.42	17.72	22.8
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	42.41	55.79	63.29	47.7
There were party challengers and watchers at my precinct.				
Strongly Agree/Agree	66.49	28.42	79.01	61.9
Neither Agree/Disagree	10.91	6.32	6.17	9.4
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	22.60	65.26	14.81	28.7

Job Satisfaction and Confidence

Finally, we examine two key factors that summarize the poll worker experience: job satisfaction and confidence that the ballots will be cast accurately. First, we consider how satisfied the poll workers were with their job on Election Day. Based on previous research, we know that poll worker satisfaction is sensitive to things such as problems at the polls but that overall, poll workers typically are rarely very dissatisfied with their jobs. We find that the percentage of poll workers expressing high levels of satisfaction was highest in Santa Fe County and lowest in Doña Ana. Only 1% of poll workers in Santa Fe County expressed any dissatisfaction, compared to 11% in Doña Ana County and 6% in Bernalillo County.

Second, we examine whether poll workers are confident that the ballots will be counted accurately. This confidence is perhaps the single most important measure we have about the election process; if poll workers—the implementers of the election and the guardians of the ballots on Election Day—are not confident that the ballots will be counted accurately, the entire system may be undermined and questioned. In general, we see that less than 8% of poll workers express a lack of confidence that the ballots will be counted. However, the percentages of very confident poll workers in Bernalillo and Doña Ana Counties are only between 56 and 58%, compared to 75% in Santa Fe County.

Satisfaction and Confidence	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
Overall, how satisfied are you with your job as an election worker in the most recent election?				
Very Satisfied	64.12	78.13	56.79	65.44
Somewhat Satisfied	28.50	20.83	32.10	27.72
Somewhat Dissatisfied	6.11	1.04	11.11	5.96
Very Dissatisfied	1.27	0.00	0.00	0.88
How confident are you that votes in the November 7, 2006 general election were recorded accurately?				
Very Confident	56.63	75.00	58.02	59.93
Somewhat Confident	34.44	21.88	34.57	32.34
Not Very Confident	8.16	3.12	6.18	7.03
Not At All Confident	0.77	0.00	1.23	0.70

There is a correlation between satisfaction and confidence of poll workers and their training. Poll workers who were satisfied and confident are likely [$p=0.2$ or higher] to have thought that their training sessions:

- spent enough time covering election law and procedures;
- was easy to understand;
- prepared the poll worker well for election day; and
- left them confident in their ability to do the job on Election Day.

There is a similar correlation between poll worker satisfaction and confidence and the attitudes of poll workers toward the quality of the instructions they received related to (1) opening the polls, (2) closing the polls, (3) asking for identification, (4) securing the ballots; and (5) reconciling the vote.

Finally, we see a correlation between satisfaction [p= -0.31 and -0.31] and confidence [p= -0.19 and -0.28] and the occurrence of problems setting up the voting machines or closing the polling place.

We also asked poll workers to compare the new optical scan voting technology with the previously-used electronic voting technology. We find marked differences between Bernalillo County and the other two counties. In Santa Fe County, 73% of poll workers said optical scan was somewhat or much better than the previous system, as did 82% of poll workers in Doña Ana County. However, only 62% of poll workers in Bernalillo County preferred optical scan to the previous voting system. More than 25% of poll workers in Bernalillo County thought that the optical scan technology was somewhat worse or much worse than the previous voting system. By contrast, 12.6% of workers in Santa Fe and 7.7% in Doña Ana rated optical scan somewhat worse or much worse than the previous system.

	Bernalillo	Santa Fe	Doña Ana	Total
How would you compare the optical scan paper ballot system to the touch screen or other direct recording electronic system (DRE) that had been used previously at your polling place?				
Optical Scan Paper Ballot System Is Much Better	28.57	43.16	46.15	33.51
Optical Scan Paper Ballot System Is Somewhat Better	32.99	29.47	35.90	32.80
Optical Scan Paper Ballot System Is Somewhat Worse	16.62	10.53	3.85	13.80
Optical Scan Paper Ballot System Is Much Worse	9.87	2.11	3.85	7.71
I Never Worked As A Poll Worker With The Touch-screen Or DREs	11.95	14.74	10.26	12.19

Poll Worker Survey Conclusions

Most poll workers were confident that the ballots were counted accurately in the election and were satisfied with their experience on Election Day. A large percentage also thought that

optical scan balloting was much better or somewhat better than the previous systems used in the state. In addition, poll workers thought that most voters liked the optical scan system. This is obvious a positive statement for the decision to move to optical scan balloting.

The survey also identified several shortcomings in the current election system in New Mexico. The lack of clarity among poll workers regarding when to ask voters for identification is a serious issue, as is the general disconnect some poll workers saw between the poll worker training and the actual Election Day experience. This disconnect may be responsible for other problems poll workers reported, such as problems opening and closing the polling place or problems with identification. Election officials should examine their training processes and methods to see if they can address the issues identified by the poll workers in this study.

Appendix 2.1. Poll Worker Experiences Frequency Report

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job as an election worker in the most recent election?

	Percent
VERY SATISFIED	65.16
SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	27.90
SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	5.89
VERY DISSATISFIED	1.04
Total	100.00

2. How confident are you that votes in the November 7, 2006 general election were recorded accurately?

	Percent
VERY CONFIDENT	59.90
SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	32.29
NOT VERY CONFIDENT	7.12
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT	0.69
Total	100.00

3. How would you compare the optical scan paper ballot system to the touchscreen or other direct recording electronic system (DRE) that had been used previously at your polling place?

	Percent
OPTICAL SCAN PAPER BALLOT SYSTEM IS MUCH BETTER	33.45
OPTICAL SCAN PAPER BALLOT SYSTEM IS SOMEWHAT BETTER	33.10
OPTICAL SCAN PAPER BALLOT SYSTEM IS SOMEWHAT WORSE	13.63
OPTICAL SCAN PAPER BALLOT SYSTEM IS MUCH WORSE	7.61
I NEVER WORKED AS A POLLWORKER WITH THE TOUCHSCREEN OR DRE S	12.21
Total	100.00

4. How were you first recruited as a poll worker? Were you recruited by a political party official, another poll worker, an advertisement in the local media, a teacher or professor, an official job posting by the county, at a neighborhood precinct caucus meeting?

	Percent
A POLITICAL PARTY OFFICIAL	9.00
ANOTHER POLL WORKER	36.68
AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE LOCAL MEDIA	8.65
A TEACHER OR PROFESSOR	0.69
AN OFFICIAL JOB POSTING BY THE COUNTY	1.73
AT A NEIGHBORHOOD PRECINCT CAUCUS MEETING	0.35
I WASN'T RECRUITED BY ANYONE, I SOUGHT THE JOB ON MY OWN	33.74
SOME OTHER WAY	9.17
Total	100.00

5. Thinking about your decision to be a poll worker, please mark if each of these reasons was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in your decision to be a poll worker.

5a. I found it exciting.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	33.27
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	36.00
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	20.36
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	10.36
Total	100.00

5b. I wanted to learn about politics and government.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	31.72
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	36.38
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	22.39
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	9.51
Total	100.00

5c. I was asked by someone in my political party.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	10.86
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	16.76
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	18.86
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	53.52
Total	100.00

5d. I like to be with people who share my ideals.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	24.44
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	34.33
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	21.08
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	20.15
Total	100.00

5e. I think it is my duty as a citizen.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	70.80
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	24.07
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	3.01
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	2.12
Total	100.00

5f. I am the kind of person who does my share.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	55.19
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	36.43
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	6.74
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	1.64
Total	100.00

5g. I wanted to make some extra money.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	26.09
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	32.97
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	21.74
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	19.20
Total	100.00

5h. I received recognition from people I respect.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	14.71
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	28.31
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	29.98
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	27.00
Total	100.00

5i. I can be with people I enjoy.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	32.23
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	34.07
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	18.05
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	15.65
Total	100.00

5j. I did not want to say no to someone who asked.

	Percent
VERY IMPORTANT	10.67
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	12.36
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	19.85
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	57.12
Total	100.00

6. At any time during the training and recruiting process, did you consider not working at the polls on Election Day?

	Percent
YES	18.07
NO	81.93
Total	100.00

6a. If you answered YES, what was the most important reason you considered not working at the polls on Election Day? Please select only ONE.

	Percent
THE TRAINING WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH	40.24
CONCERNED ABOUT OPERATING NEW VOTING EQUIPMENT/NEW EQUIPMENT	21.95
PAY WAS TOO LOW	12.20
DAY WAS TOO LONG	21.95
DIFFICULTY WITH CHILD CARE	2.44
NO RESPONSE	1.22
Total	100.00

7. How likely are you to work as a poll worker in the next time election?

	Percent
VERY LIKELY	77.17
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	16.99
NOT VERY LIKELY	3.54
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	2.30
Total	100.00

8. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being very poor and 10 being excellent, how would you rate the overall performance of your fellow poll workers? You can use any number from 1 to 10.

	Percent
1	1.58
2	1.76
3	2.11
4	0.88
5	5.98
6	5.10
7	7.73
8	24.60
9	22.67
10	27.59
Total	100.00

9. In what election year did you first work as a poll worker?

	Percent
Before 1970	4.94
1970	1.29
1972	0.92
1974	0.18
1975	0.74
1976	0.18
1978	0.55
1980	2.22
1981	0.18
1982	0.37
1983	0.55
1984	0.55
1985	0.92
1986	2.03
1987	0.18
1988	1.66
1989	0.37
1990	3.70
1991	0.55
1992	1.66
1993	0.18
1994	1.48
1995	2.22
1996	3.88
1997	2.40
1998	3.70
1999	3.88
2000	11.46
2001	2.03
2002	6.65
2003	4.07
2004	10.17
2005	3.70
2006	20.15
2007	0.18
Total	100.00

10. Including the November 7, 2006 general election, in how many elections total have you worked as a poll worker?

	Percent
1	14.29
2	9.16
3	7.88
4	11.36
5	8.06
6	7.14
7	3.85
8	6.59
9	2.01
10	7.51
11	0.55
12	4.40
13	0.73
14	0.92
15	2.75
16	0.92
17	0.18
18	0.55
19	0.37
20	3.48
22	0.55
23	0.18
24	0.37
25	1.47
26	0.18
28	0.18
30	1.10
33	0.18
35	0.18
36	0.18
40	1.10
45	0.37
46	0.18
50	0.37
60	0.37
80	0.18
100	0.18
Total	100.00

11. Did you notice any differences between how you learned to use the voting system in training and how the voting system operated on Election Day?

	Percent
YES	38.52
NO	61.48
Total	100.00

11a. If YES, to what extent did the training differ from the actual procedures?

	Frequency
It was a lot different/	51
It was somewhat Different	99
It was a little bit Different	57
Total	207

12. Your local election official sponsored training sessions for election workers prior to the election to teach workers about election procedures and how to use the new optical scan paper ballot machines. How many training sessions did you attend?

	Percent
ZERO TRAINING SESSIONS	2.65
ONE TRAINING SESSION	61.38
TWO TRAINING SESSIONS	30.16
THREE TRAINING SESSIONS	3.88
MORE THAN THREE TRAINING SESSIONS	1.94
Total	100.00

13. Did you receive any manuals, booklets, or video/DVD at your training session or in the mail to help you learn more about the election procedures?

	Percent
YES	86.97
NO	13.03
Total	100.00

13a. If YES, how much of the materials did you read or watch prior to Election Day?

	Percent
ALL OF IT	63.21
MOST OF IT	26.22
SOME OF IT	9.30
NONE OF IT	1.27
Total	100.00

14. Thinking back on your training, please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

14a. I was able to able to spend enough time practicing on the voting system.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	10.30
AGREE	32.68
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	20.96
DISAGREE	27.18
STRONGLY DISAGREE	8.88
Total	100.00

14b. The training sessions were too long.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	5.48
AGREE	18.73
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	34.63
DISAGREE	35.51
STRONGLY DISAGREE	5.65
Total	100.00

14c. The training sessions were boring.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	5.33
AGREE	15.10
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	27.71
DISAGREE	41.56
STRONGLY DISAGREE	10.30
Total	100.00

14d. The training sessions spent enough time covering election law and procedures.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	15.88
AGREE	48.69
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	16.75
DISAGREE	14.66
STRONGLY DISAGREE	4.01
Total	100.00

14e. The training was easy to understand.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	17.22
AGREE	56.87
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	16.87
DISAGREE	7.83
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1.22
Total	100.00

14f. The training prepared me well for Election Day.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	17.80
AGREE	47.99
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	20.94
DISAGREE	10.47
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2.79
Total	100.00

14g. After the training, I was confident in my ability to do my job on Election Day.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	22.63
AGREE	49.22
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	16.93
DISAGREE	9.33
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1.90
Total	100.00

14h. The instructions I received from the election officials for opening the polls were clear.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	24.83
AGREE	48.61
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	14.41
DISAGREE	10.07
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2.08
Total	100.00

14i. The instructions we received from the election officials for closing the polls at the end of the day were clear.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	21.70
AGREE	46.18
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	15.97
DISAGREE	11.98
STRONGLY DISAGREE	4.17
Total	100.00

14j. The instructions for when to ask a voter for his or her identification before voting were clear.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	28.65
AGREE	51.56
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	10.24
DISAGREE	7.29
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2.26
Total	100.00

14k. The instructions for securing the voting machines, ballots, and ballot box were clear.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	24.91
AGREE	50.35
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	15.22
DISAGREE	7.61
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1.90
Total	100.00

14l. The instructions for reconciling the number of voters voting and the number of ballots cast were clear.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	24.13
AGREE	48.61
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	15.28
DISAGREE	9.55
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2.43
Total	100.00

15. Were you missing any supplies at your polling location?

	Percent
YES	13.99
NO	86.01
Total	100.00

16. Did your polling location have all the workers it needed?

	Percent
YES	81.21
NO	18.79
Total	100.00

17. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being excellent, how would you personally rate your polling facility in regards to the following?

17a. Accessibility for people with disabilities.

	Percent
Very Poor	4.49
Poor	6.22
3	12.09
Good	33.16
Excellent	44.04
Total	100.00

17b. Condition of the facility.

	Percent
Very Poor	2.41
Poor	5.52
3	15.86
Good	36.21
Excellent	40.00
Total	100.00

17c. Noise level of the facility.

	Percent
Very Poor	2.60
Poor	5.88
3	19.55
Good	36.16
Excellent	35.81
Total	100.00

17d. Availability of parking at facility.

	Percent
Very Poor	3.29
Poor	6.07
3	11.79
Good	32.76
Excellent	46.10
Total	100.00

17e. Adequate space to operate the polls.

	Percent
Very Poor	5.69
Poor	8.45
	3 11.72
Good	27.93
Excellent	46.21
Total	100.00

17f. Temperature.

	Percent
Very Poor	5.34
Poor	6.71
	3 21.51
Good	34.25
Excellent	32.19
Total	100.00

18. Did you need to call the county clerk's office at any time during the Election Day?

	Percent
YES	66.43
NO	33.57
Total	100.00

19. How often did you ask voters to present identification before allowing them to vote?

	Percent
ALL OF THE TIME	37.79
MOST OF THE TIME	15.29
ONLY SOME OF THE TIME	26.54
HARDLY AT ALL	13.53
NEVER	6.85
Total	100.00

19a. What is the most common reason why you asked voters to present identification before they voted? Please select only ONE.

	Percent
TROUBLE HEARING/EASIER TO READ NAME FROM ID	8.13
VERIFY IDENTITY OF FIRST-TIME VOTER	19.64
VERIFY IDENTITY OF PROVISIONAL VOTER	14.88
IT'S REQUIRED BY LAW TO VERIFY THE IDENTITY OF VOTERS TO PREVENT FRAUD	49.01
I DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE VOTER	6.35
VOTER WAS CHALLENGED BY PARTY CHALLENGER	1.79
	0.20
Total	100.00

20. Thinking back on your experience during the most recent election, please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

20a. There were problems setting up the voting machines in your precinct.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	9.12
AGREE	21.05
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	12.98
DISAGREE	35.79
STRONGLY DISAGREE	21.05
Total	100.00

20b. There were problems closing the polling place at the end of the day and reporting the results.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	6.88
AGREE	15.70
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	13.40
DISAGREE	41.45
STRONGLY DISAGREE	22.57
Total	100.00

20c. There were problems with the optical scan paper ballot machines throughout the day.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	3.19
AGREE	9.20
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	12.21
DISAGREE	43.19
STRONGLY DISAGREE	32.21
Total	100.00

20d. Generally speaking, voters were satisfied with the optical scan ballot machines.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	13.38
AGREE	48.24
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	21.83
DISAGREE	11.44
STRONGLY DISAGREE	5.11
Total	100.00

20e. The poll workers in my precinct worked well together.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	42.73
AGREE	41.33
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	7.36
DISAGREE	4.90
STRONGLY DISAGREE	3.68
Total	100.00

20f. The optical scan paper ballot machines are reliable.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	23.14
AGREE	44.17
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	25.27
DISAGREE	4.95
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2.47
Total	100.00

20g. The optical scan paper ballot machines provide voters with enough privacy as they vote.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	23.77
AGREE	47.71
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	12.50
DISAGREE	10.74
STRONGLY DISAGREE	5.28
Total	100.00

20h. I thought the new optical scan paper ballot machines were easy to use.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	28.57
AGREE	50.44
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	12.70
DISAGREE	5.47
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2.82
Total	100.00

20i. Sometimes I am not sure I am doing my job correctly because the laws keep changing.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	6.00
AGREE	19.75
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	37.57
DISAGREE	25.93
STRONGLY DISAGREE	10.76
Total	100.00

20j. There were many provisional ballots cast at my precinct.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	5.35
AGREE	23.89
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	22.82
DISAGREE	37.61
STRONGLY DISAGREE	10.34
Total	100.00

20k. There were party challengers and watchers at my precinct.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	16.78
AGREE	44.88
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	9.72
DISAGREE	15.37
STRONGLY DISAGREE	13.25
Total	100.00

20l. There were many provisional ballots resulting from the authentication of the voters being challenged.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	2.15
AGREE	7.33
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	24.15
DISAGREE	38.46
STRONGLY DISAGREE	27.91
Total	100.00

20m. My polling place had a county-precinct map to help voters locate their polling location.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	25.80
AGREE	30.74
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	11.48
DISAGREE	16.25
STRONGLY DISAGREE	15.72
Total	100.00

20n. There were many voters who needed to use the Automark machine.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	2.14
AGREE	3.92
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	16.40
DISAGREE	35.47
STRONGLY DISAGREE	42.07
Total	100.00

20o. Voters who used the Automark machine thought it worked well.

	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	9.75
AGREE	23.14
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	47.04
DISAGREE	9.37
STRONGLY DISAGREE	10.71
Total	100.00

21. To your knowledge, did any voter return a completed absentee ballot to your polling location?

	Percent
YES	60.04
NO	39.96
Total	100.00

22. Age Category

	Percent
18-24	0.51
25-34	1.69
35-44	3.39
45-54	11.53
55-64	24.07
65-74	33.22
75-84	20.51
85+	5.08
Total	100.00

23. Gender.

	Percent
FEMALE	64.69
MALE	35.31
Total	100.00

24. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a strong democrat, not so strong democrat, independent leaning democrat, independent, independent leaning republican, not so strong republican, or strong republican?

	Percent
STRONG DEMOCRAT	31.96
NOT SO STRONG DEMOCRAT	12.14
INDEPENDENT LEANING DEMOCRAT	12.14
INDEPENDENT	5.89
INDEPENDENT LEANING REPUBLICAN	5.89
NOT SO STRONG REPUBLICAN	8.57
STRONG REPUBLICAN	21.79
OTHER	1.61
Total	100.00

25. What is the highest level of education you completed?

	Percent
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ONLY	2.03
SOME HIGH SCHOOL, BUT DID NOT FINISH	4.60
COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL	24.49
SOME COLLEGE, BUT DID NOT FINISH	27.99
TWO-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE/A.A./A.S.	8.66
FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE/B.A./B.S.	12.52
SOME GRADUATE WORK	8.47
COMPLETED MASTERS OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	11.23
Total	100.00

26. Would you describe yourself as Native American, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, White/Caucasian, or Pacific Islander?

	Percent
NATIVE AMERICAN	3.73
ASIAN	0.53
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	0.53
HISPANIC/LATINO	37.12
WHITE/CAUCASIAN	54.88
OTHER	3.20
Total	100.00

27. What, if any, is your religious preference?

	Percent
PROTESTANT	29.72
CATHOLIC	39.86
LDS/MORMON	2.67
JEWISH	2.49
OTHER	8.01
NO PREFERENCE/NO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	9.61
PREFER NOT TO SAY	7.65
Total	100.00

28. How active do you consider yourself in the practice of your religious preference?

	Percent
VERY ACTIVE	39.53
SOMEWHAT ACTIVE	29.34
NOT VERY ACTIVE	11.09
NOT ACTIVE	7.16
DOES NOT APPLY/PREFER NOT TO SAY	12.88
Total	100.00

29. Not counting religious organizations, how many civic or community organizations like the Kiwanis Club, PTA, or League of Women Voters do you belong to?

	Percent
ZERO	51.60
ONE OR TWO	36.52
THREE OF FOUR	10.11
FIVE OR MORE	1.77
Total	100.00

30. What do you expect your 2006 family income to be?

	Percent
UNDER \$25,000	28.21
\$25,000 - \$39,999	24.26
\$40,000 - \$49,999	12.23
\$50,000 - \$74,999	18.15
\$75,000 - \$99,999	8.09
OVER \$100,000	9.07
Total	100.00

31. How would you describe your current employment status? Are you employed full time, employed part time, looking for work, a student, a homemaker, or retired?

	Percent
EMPLOYED FULL TIME	17.26
EMPLOYED PART TIME	11.74
UNEMPLOYED/LOOKING FOR WORK	4.09
STUDENT	1.07
HOMEMAKER	9.07
RETIRED	56.76
Total	100.00

32. If you are currently employed, did you take time off from your job to work at the polls or was Election Day your regular day off?

	Percent
I TOOK TIME OFF	76.28
ELECTION DAY WAS MY DAY OFF	23.72
Total	100.00

33. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

	Percent
JUST ABOUT ALWAYS	5.65
MOST OF THE TIME	30.97
ONLY SOME OF THE TIME	63.39
Total	100.00

34. How often do you use the internet?

	Percent
ONCE OR MORE A DAY	40.28
A FEW TIMES A WEEK	16.11
A FEW TIMES A MONTH	6.30
HARDLY EVER	10.16
NEVER	27.15
Total	100.00

35. Generally speaking, how comfortable do you feel using a computer?

	Percent
VERY COMFORTABLE	40.50
SOMEWHAT COMFORTABLE	29.75
NOT VERY COMFORTABLE	13.26
NOT AT ALL COMFORTABLE	16.49
Total	100.00

36. In what role did you work at the polls in the 2006 primary?

	Percent
PRESIDING JUDGE	23.00
ELECTION JUDGE	35.19
ELECTION CLERK	40.42
ELECTION TRANSLATOR	0.35
SOMETHING ELSE	1.05
Total	100.00

37. Did you work at the polling location where you would normally vote, or were you at a different location?

	Percent
I WORKED AT THE POLLING LOCATION WHERE I NORMALLY VOTE.	57.91
I WORKED AT A DIFFERENT POLLING LOCATION.	42.09
Total	100.00

Appendix 2.2 Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance with this project: Bernalillo County Clerk Maggie Toulouse, Bernalillo Election Director Jaime Diaz and Bernalillo Deputy Director Robert Adams, Doña Ana County Clerk Rita Torres and Doña Ana Election Director Lynn Ellins, Santa Fe County Clerk Valerie Espinoza and Santa Fe Election Director Denise Lamb, Ray Martinez III of The Martinez Policy Group, UNM graduate student Luciana Zilberman, UNM undergraduate student Alex Adams, UNM political science administrative assistant Joann Buehler, and UNM bulk mail supervisor Alisha Foster. We would also like to thank the hundreds of poll workers who responded to our survey and who gave us detailed comments about their evaluation of the 2006 November general election.

Part 3: Voter Experiences and Confidence

Principal Author:

Lonna Rae Atkeson

Study Background

In 2006, the University of New Mexico and Colorado State University collaborated to field a post-election mixed-mode (Internet and mail) survey in two of the most anticipated competitive congressional races in the county: New Mexico's First Congressional District (NMCD1) and Colorado's Seventh Congressional District (COCD7). We were interested in learning about how citizens interact with the election administration process. Both New Mexico and Colorado have recently undergone myriad reforms in their voting laws in response to interest group pressure to create fair, accurate and voter-verifiable election administration systems, making these states excellent choices for studying public opinion regarding election reform. New Mexico, for example, is the first state to move from a predominantly electronic voting system to one that mandated optical scan bubble paper ballots statewide, with the intent of providing a paper trail so that elections could be audited for accuracy. Furthermore, New Mexico passed legislation to implement a statewide 2% audit, beginning in 2008, to ensure the accuracy and fairness of election outcomes. Meanwhile, Colorado has been the frontrunner in the implementation of many innovative election changes, including vote centers, and recent changes to the law mandate a paper trail to ensure voter integrity. Both states have also been early adopters of early voting as well as no excuse absentee voting, resulting in many voters choosing to cast their ballots prior to Election Day. In addition, we were involved in observing and collecting data in these contests and so wished to augment that deeply qualitative knowledge of the district with a quantitative survey.⁵

Experience with Ballot, Polls and Poll Workers

The voting experience is a key factor in understanding voter confidence.⁶ Experience with the ballot, the polling site, and interactions with poll workers are the objective experiences the voter has with the voting process. These experiences form the core components of the local factors that influence voter confidence. When voters have problems voting—for example, because the

⁵ See Lonna Rae Atkeson and Lorraine Tafoya, 2007, "Close, but Not Close Enough: Democrats Lose Again by the Slimmest of Margins in New Mexico's First Congressional District," In *War Games: Issues and Resources in the Battle for Control of Congress*, edited by David Magleby and Kelly Patterson, Provo: Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, Brigham Young University. (it can be found at: www.unm.edu/~atkeson).

⁶ See Lonna Rae Atkeson and Kyle L. Saunders. 2007, "Voter Confidence: A Local Matter?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* (October, forthcoming). Also see: www.vote2006.unm.edu.

ballot is confusing, or too long, or poll workers are unhelpful—they are likely to feel less confident that their vote will be counted. Therefore, we begin our report by an examination of attitudes surrounding the voting experience.

The average time it took a NMCD1 voter to complete their paper ballot either early or on Election Day was about 12.5 minutes; Colorado voters, by comparison, almost exclusively using touch-screen machines and possessing longer ballots due to initiative measures, averaged significantly shorter at 10.5 minutes ($p < .05$). Interestingly, Colorado absentee voters took substantially longer to fill out their optical scan absentee ballot, averaging 31 minutes to New Mexico’s 27 minutes. This suggests that bubble paper ballots on average take longer to complete than touch screen ballots but the overall difference of a few minutes is not substantively large and likely inconsequential.

Overall, New Mexicans thought their ballot was not confusing. We asked, “How confusing did you find your ballot?” The survey data shows that nearly two third of voters (64.7%) did not find their ballot at all confusing, although about one-in-seven found it somewhat (13.6%) or very (1.1) confusing. However, when we compare New Mexico optical scan voters to Colorado touch screen voters, we find that Colorado voters were significantly less confused. The average early or Election Day score on a 4 point scale, where 1 is very confusing and 4 is not at all confusing (a lower score represents more confusion) for Colorado was 3.65 but for New Mexicans it was 3.50. Interestingly, absentee voters in Colorado were significantly more confused ($p < .001$) than Colorado voters using a touch-screen machine, yet there was no difference between absentee and early or Election Day voters in New Mexico ($p > .05$). This suggests that the optical scan ballot is likely slightly more confusing than touch screen voting systems.

How confusing did you find your ballot?	New Mexico	Colorado
Very confusing	1.1	1.6
Somewhat confusing	13.6	10.9
Not too confusing	20.6	24.9
Not at all confusing	64.7	62.6
Total	100.0	100.0
Mean Election Day voters	3.50	3.65
Mean Absentee voters	3.47	3.39

When we asked about problems at the polls, we found that New Mexicans have had very few problems with voting. Overall, only 1 in 5 voters has ever had a problem at the polls. The most commonly reported problems were (1) not being able to find the polling place, (2) having to vote provisionally, and (3) not finding their name on the registration list. In New Mexico, election officials often consolidate precincts in lower turnout elections to save money. The finding here suggests that either the consolidation or expansion of polling places needs to be better explained to voters so that they know where their polling site is located in each election.

New Mexico law required voter identification in 2006, but voters could use either a physical form of identification or could simply, in a written or verbal statement, attest to their voter name, year of birth and the last 4 numbers on their social security card. We found that about half (65%) of NMCD1 voters had to show some form of identification to vote, while 35% did not. We also

have found through more complex modeling that Hispanic voters were more likely to show some form of voter identification than other voters. Combined with the poll worker data, this suggests that while some poll workers were vigorously requiring some form of voter identification, others were not.

What type of voter identification did you have to show?	Percent
I didn't have to show any identification	35.3
I did have to show identification	64.7
Total	100.0
Identification used for those asked:	
Driver's License	33.8
Voter Registration card	58.4
Other form of ID	3.4
Driver's license & Other form of ID	.5
Driver's license & Registration card	3.9

In more sophisticated analysis, we examined how the New Mexico rule, allowing for a broad diversity of implementation, was applied. We modeled the influence of race (Hispanic and other non-white), education, income, gender, age, whether they voted early or not, whether they were first time voters, and their partisan registration on whether voters showed some form of identification or not. We found that self-identified Hispanics and men were more likely to show some form of voter identification than non-Hispanics and women and that early voters were less likely to show some form of identification. In addition, in our analysis we substituted Hispanic self-identification for a variable that represented whether or not the voter had a Hispanic surname. Surname offers a strong cue to ethnic identity and as such may be a better representation of how poll workers and others determine Hispanic identity. Substituting this variable for self-identification provided stronger results. A voter who was the median age, education, income, gender (female) and was not Hispanic had a 69% probability of showing some form of voter identification, while the same voter with a Hispanic surname had an 85% probability of showing some form of voter identification, a 16% increase. Even if voters did not realize they were being asked for identification when they testified verbally to their identity, this error in our data should be randomly distributed and therefore we should not see an effect. The fact that we do see an effect, and that it strengthens when we measure Hispanic ethnicity by surname instead of self-identity, suggests that the law was not applied equally across all groups.

When we examine our poll worker data, however, we find no evidence that different types of poll workers asked for identification differently. Thus, we do not see that white poll workers were more likely to ask for id than Hispanic poll workers; statistically both groups asked for voter identification, by their own assessments, equally. Likewise, we see no evidence that particular partisan groups or other demographic characteristics influenced who asked for identification. Therefore, there is no systematic evidence that specific subgroups of the population applied the law differently; all groups equally applied or misapplied the voter identification laws. Given the political sensitivity of this issue, better poll worker training will be need in future election contests, especially as new laws go into effect for the 2008 election cycle.

Voters who choose to vote early or on Election Day must find their vote center or polling site, wait in line and must interact with poll workers. These experiences also influence voter confidence. Very few voters had problems finding their polling location. Only 6.4% of early and Election Day voters had problems finding their polling site and this was equivalent to what we found in the Colorado sample. There were differences, however, by voting method in the experience individuals had waiting in line. NMCD1 voters who voted early waited in line on average six times longer than those who chose to vote on Election Day. The average NMCD1 voter waited over 40 minutes in early voting lines compared to 7.5 minutes ($p < .001$) on Election Day. Interestingly, in Colorado early voters waited on average only 7.5 minutes to cast their ballot, but Election Day voters waited on average 13.5 minutes ($p > .05$). This suggests that more needs to be done to make early voting more efficient in New Mexico. Overall, NMCD1 voters found their poll workers to be very (60.7%) or somewhat (26.2) helpful; very few found them not too (5.7) or not at all helpful (2.9).

How helpful were the poll worker and your voting location?	Percent
Very helpful	60.7
Somewhat helpful	26.2
Not too helpful	5.7
Not at all helpful	2.9
DK/NS	4.5

Voter Confidence

We focus our attention here on two specific measures of voter confidence. The first asked, “How confident are you that YOUR VOTE in the November 2006 election will be counted as you intended.” The second asked, “How confident are you that the bubble paper ballot used to record votes will prove an accurate reflection of ALL THE VOTES?” Voters were more confident that their own vote would be counted as intended than all the votes.

Voter Confidence that Personal Vote or All the Votes will be Counted as Intended	Personal Vote	All the Votes
Very confident	38.6	20.4
Somewhat confident	43.9	46.0
Not too confident	11.5	18.4
Not at all confident	3.8	7.2
DK/NS	2.2	8.0

Previous work shows that the quality of the voting experience influences voters’ confidence and the perceptual lens that voters bring to the voting booth through their party identification.⁷ The problems in election administration since 2000 and allegations of partisan politics, whether in Florida with former Secretary of State Katherine Harris or in Ohio with former Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, are likely to have created a perception that problems in election administration favor GOP political outcomes over Democratic ones. Therefore, we expect party

⁷ Atkeson and Saunders, 2007.

identification to structure perceptions of the political process, with Democrats having less voter confidence than Republicans.

We begin by focusing on how the local factors influence voter confidence. Recall that about 20% of NMCD1 voters have had some past voting problem. When we compare voter confidence by people who have and have not had a voting problem, we find that voting problems reduce voter confidence in the belief that their personal vote will be counted correctly and that all the votes will be counted correctly. Voters who never had a problem were more confident than voters who had some type of past problem.

Voter Confidence in Voter's Vote and All the Votes being Counted by Past Voting Problems				
	Personal Vote		All the Votes	
	Problems	No Problems	Problems	No Problems
Very confident	28.4	41.9	20.5	22.5
Somewhat confident	46.9	44.4	38.5	52.6
Not too confident	16.0	10.8	30.8	17.6
Not at all confident	8.6	2.8	10.3	7.2
Mean Confidence	2.05	1.74	2.30	2.10

Helpful poll workers also make a difference in voter perceptions. The more helpful poll workers were perceived to be, the greater voter confidence in their personal vote being counted. Notice how over nine in ten voters who perceived their poll workers as very helpful were very (47.8%) or somewhat (43.3%) confident that their vote would be counted correctly. But for those who felt their poll workers were not too or not all helpful not quite six in ten (57.1%) were very (10.7%) or somewhat (46.4%) confident. A similar relationship (not shown) was found for the measure of voter confidence in all the votes being counted.

Voter Confidence that Personal Vote is Counted by Poll Worker Helpfulness			
	Not too/not at all Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Very Helpful
Very confident	10.7	31.4	47.8
Somewhat confident	46.4	53.5	43.3
Not too confident	32.1	9.3	7.4
Not at all confident	10.7	5.8	1.5

A confusing ballot also detracts from the vote experience reducing voters' confidence that their ballots and other voters' ballots will be tabulated accurately. Below we show the results when we cross tabulate both confidence measures by views that the ballot was confusing. For example, only one in five voters who were somewhat or very confused by their ballot, compared to over two in five voters who found their ballot not confusing at all, were confident their vote was counted. And, although hardly any voters who found their ballot not at all or not too confusing were not at all confident, about one in seven voters who found their ballot somewhat or very confusing were not at all confident that their personal ballot would be counted accurately.

Voter Confidence in Personal Vote and All the Votes being Counted by Confusing Ballot						
	Personal Vote			All the Votes		
	Not at All Confusing	Not Too Confusing	Somewhat or Very Confusing	Not at All Confusing	Not Too Confusing	Somewhat or Very Confusing
Very confident	44.6	36.0	20.3	27.1	15.7	10.0
Somewhat confident	44.6	50.0	40.6	51.9	55.4	36.7
Not too confident	9.1	11.6	23.4	14.7	26.5	33.3
Not at all confident	1.7	2.3	15.6	6.4	2.4	20.0

We asked voters to agree or disagree with the following statement, “It took too long to vote with the ballot I used.” We then compared those who agree, neither agree nor disagree, or who disagree with this statement with their vote confidence. The table below shows that the perception of how long it took to complete the ballot affects voter confidence, especially confidence in all the votes being counted. Notice that voters who agreed with the statement were less confident than voters who disagreed with the statement.

Voter Confidence in Personal Vote and All the Votes by Whether or Not It Took Too Long to Complete the Ballot						
	Personal Vote			All the Votes		
	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Very confident	37.6	31.9	42.4	13.7	14.9	31.7
Somewhat confident	41.1	58.3	46.2	43.9	56.8	52.2
Not too confident	16.3	5.6	9.8	28.1	24.3	12.8
Not at all confident	5.0	4.2	1.6	14.4	4.1	3.3

Below, we show how voter confidence is structured by partisanship. We see very little difference between Republicans and Democrats in terms of their own vote being counted but Democrats are particularly less confident when we examine how they feel about all the votes. When we examine a model where we control for demographic and other characteristics, we find a larger affect of partisanship on voter confidence in their own vote being counted as intended.⁸

Voter Confidence in Personal Vote and All the Votes being Counted by Party Identification						
	Personal Vote			All the Votes		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep
Very confident	42.0	25.0	39.9	25.9	15.2	18.4
Somewhat confident	46.4	46.9	43.5	43.9	42.4	52.8
Not too confident	9.4	15.6	13.1	28.1	27.3	18.4
Not at all confident	2.2	12.5	3.6	14.4	15.2	10.4

⁸ See Atkeson and Saunders, 2007.

Voter Satisfaction

Ultimately, we are also interested in voter satisfaction. We asked a variety of questions to tap into voters' overall experience. For example, we asked, "How would you rate your overall voting experience? Excellent, good, fair or poor." We found that over three-quarters of voters had a good to excellent experience, but some voters had only a fair or poor experience. Coloradans rated their overall experience slightly more favorable than did voters in New Mexico ($p < .01$).

How Would You Rate your overall Voting Experience by State		
	New Mexico	Colorado
Excellent	25.1	34.8
Good	56.8	56.9
Fair	14.3	7.0
Poor	3.8	1.3
Mean	3.03	3.25

We followed up the above question with an open-ended response asking those who rated their experience fair or poor to explain why they did so. The most often provided responses related to (1) the new paper ballot system, (2) a long wait, (3) poll worker problems, and (4) distrust with the system. For those who rated the system poorly, the cumbersomeness of the new paper ballot system was not well-liked. For example, one voter said, "felt like we went back 100 year in time using paper ballots-which, in my opinion, are more easily tampered with than electronic ballots." Another voter said, "No ID check, long wait, plus the use of manual marking of bubbles which took much longer" A third voter offered that, "The prior machines were faster and easier." However, with time, voters may come to appreciate the paper audit trail, which has the potential to decrease the voting system against fraud. Indeed, our post election survey data suggests that voters perceive paper ballots to provide a better paper audit trail than touch-screen devices.

. For Those Who Rated their Voting Experience Fair or Poor, Why?	
Paper ballots	33.8
Long Wait	29.2
Poll worker problems	10.8
Distrust with system	9.2
Campaign	4.6
Ballot print too small	4.6
Ballot too long	3.1
Campaign outside polling stations	1.5
County election officials	1.5
Confusing ballot	1.5

We also asked, "How would you rate your voting experience in this election compared to prior voting experiences? Much more positive, somewhat more positive, about the same, somewhat more negative, or much more negative?" Although we found that more than two-thirds of people rated their experience about the same or better, when we compare New Mexico optical scan voters to Colorado voters, who used a touch screen system and had paper audit trails for the first

time, we find that New Mexicans were significantly less positive. The mean score (a lower score is better) for New Mexico is 3.12 and for Colorado it is 2.83 ($p < .001$).

How Would You Rate Your Voting Experience in this Election Compared to Prior Voting Experiences by State		
	New Mexico	Colorado
Much more positive	5.9	9.1
Somewhat more positive	14.0	15.8
About the same	49.5	66.4
somewhat more negative	18.0	5.6
Much more negative	10.8	4.8
Mean Score	3.12	2.83

Voter Attitudes toward Voter Identification

Finally, we were interested in how voters felt about voter identification laws. The Help America Vote Act required minimal voter identification laws in states and the Report of the Commission on Federal Election Reforms suggested that federal voting laws require some sort of voter identification. In addition, recent bills in the US House increased federal voter identification requirements, including proof of citizenship. New Mexico’s legislature has long had debates about voter identification laws and a new program will be implemented in 2008 to ensure proper voter identification. The debate surrounding the issue focuses on the possibility of disenfranchising some voters, who may not have access to appropriate voter identification, versus ensuring the system against voter fraud.

We asked registered voters a simple question, “Do you think that voter identification rules help prevent voter fraud?” Seven in ten registered voters thought voter identification rules help to prevent voter fraud. Meanwhile about one in seven (16.7%) of registered voters do not think that voter identification rules help prevent voter fraud. And, over one in ten are not sure. We find few demographic differences in responses to this question, except regarding partisanship: Democratic identifiers are much less likely to believe that voter identification rules do not prevent fraud.

Do you think that voter identification rules help prevent voter fraud?				
	Total	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Yes	69.9	62.6	63.3	81.6
No	16.7	22.7	14.3	8.0
DK/NS	13.4	14.7	18.4	10.3

We then asked voters, “Do you think voter identification rules prevent some voters from casting their ballot at the polls?” We find that about one-quarter (25.5%) of registered voters agree that voter identification rules may prevent voters from casting a ballot at the polls. About half (51.2%) of respondents disagreed with this statement and nearly another one quarter (23.3%) were not sure, a rather high margin of “DK/NS.” However, what makes this a majority position is the rather large hegemony of opinion by Republicans compared to Democrats and

independents. Once again, we find a strong party difference in attitudes, with only a little more than one in ten Republican voters (13.3%) believing that voter identification rules prevent some voters from casting ballots, while over one-third (34.3%) of Democrats and nearly one quarter (24.5%) of independents feeling the same way.

Do you think voter identification rules prevent some voters from casting their ballot at the polls?				
	Total	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Yes	25.5	34.3	24.5	13.3
No	51.2	42.3	53.1	63.0
DK/NS	23.3	23.4	22.4	23.7

When we pitted the two debates against one another, we asked, “Some people argue that voter identification rules prevent some voters from going to the polls, while others argue that voter identification rules prevent voting fraud. Which is more important? Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote or protecting the voting system against voter fraud?” Over half (52.2) of the respondents supported voter identification, but over two in four voters (41.4%) thought it was more important to ensure everyone who is eligible has the right to vote. Moreover, this is a very polarizing and partisan issue. Democrats feel stronger about ensuring everyone has the right to vote and Republicans, and to a lesser extent Independents, feel stronger about protecting the system against voter fraud. These are substantial differences across partisans in terms of attitude preferences.

Voter Identification Debate Total Frequency and by Party Identification				
	Total	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	42.8	56.1	37.5	25.3
Protecting the voting system against voter fraud	52.2	38.0	54.2	71.8
DK/NS	5.0	5.9	8.3	26.8

Conclusion

We examined a series of questions related to voter’s attitudes toward New Mexico’s election administration. We found that **most** people were satisfied and confident in the process. We did, however, find that there were some people who were dissatisfied with the process. In many cases, these problems are fixable through better education of voters and better training of poll workers. We also found that though most people believed that voter identification rules prevent fraud, they were more split, especially by party, on whether that disenfranchised voters and consequently what might be the most appropriate public policy regarding voter identification. In addition to this executive summary, a detailed frequency report related to election administration survey questions is provided below in the methodological appendix, and additional information is available at www.vote2006.unm.edu.

Appendix 3.1: Survey Methodology

The 2006 New Mexico Election Administration Survey was based on a random sample of registered voters in New Mexico's First Congressional District that was provided by Secretary of State Rebecca Vigil-Giron after the final registration day for the 2006 general election.⁹ Just before Election Day, we sent out letters to our sample respondents requesting their participation in our Election Administration Survey. The letter provided sample respondents with a URL (votewmexico.unm.edu) and explained that respondents could also request a mail survey and a return self-addressed stamped envelope by contacting us via a toll free number or by calling our offices. Sample registered voters who did not respond were re-contacted three times with a postcard. The first postcard was sent November 17, the second was sent December 1, and the final postcard was sent December 19. The response rate for the sample was about 15.3% (n=471), 4 in 5 of respondents (79%) chose to answer the Internet survey while the remaining 1 in 5 respondents (21%) chose to answer the mail option.¹⁰ The margin of error is plus or minus 4.5%.

Survey questions asked about their election experience (voter confidence, voting problems, method of voting, experience with poll workers, voter satisfaction), their faith in the election process (including the ability of the machines to provide paper audits), their attitudes toward fraud, voter access, voter identification as well as other political attitudes and behaviors including evaluations of the President, the congressional candidates and their local and state election administrators. We also asked several questions related to the congressional race (vote choice, political activity, etc.) and a variety of demographics.

For a full description of the instrument, resulting frequency report and the Colorado executive summary please go to: <http://vote2006.unm.edu>.

⁹ Because this was an election oriented survey with many questions focusing on voter experience with the election process, our respondents were almost all voters. Only 3% of registered voters who did not turnout for the 2006 election chose to participate.

¹⁰ A detailed examination of how our design fared can be found at: www.vote2006.unm.edu.

Appendix 3.2: The 2006 New Mexico Election Administration Survey Frequency Report

1. How interested were you in the US House race in your district between Heather Wilson and Patricia Madrid?

Very interested	84.2
Somewhat interested	13.5
Not too interested	1.7
Not at all interested	0.6

2. How many days in the past week did you watch news on TV?

None	7.5
One day	5.1
Two days	5.8
Three days	6.4
Four Days	7.0
Five days	10.7
Six days	4.1
Every day	52.8
Don't know/Not sure	0.6

3. How many days in the past week did you read a daily newspaper?

None	20.1
One day	11.0
Two days	13.1
Three days	7.2
Four Days	3.3
Five days	3.3
Six days	3.9
Every day	37.9
Don't know/Not sure	0.2

4. How would you describe your own political philosophy?

Strongly liberal	10.1
Liberal	17.3
Moderate leaning liberal	16.1
Moderate	12.8
Moderate leaning conservative	15.6
Conservative	15.9
Strongly conservative	9.2
Don't know/Not sure	3.0

5. We are interested in whether you strongly approve, approve, disapprove, or strongly disapprove of how the following have handled their jobs.

5a. President George W. Bush	
Strongly approve	7.1
Approve	26.3
Disapprove	12.8
Strongly Disapprove	51.2
Don't know/Not sure	2.6

5b. Representative Heather Wilson	
Strongly approve	17.2
Approve	31.4
Disapprove	25.6
Strongly Disapprove	23.2
Don't know/Not sure	2.6

5c. Secretary of State Rebecca Vigil-Giron	
Strongly approve	6.3
Approve	39.7
Disapprove	19.0
Strongly Disapprove	9.1
Don't know/Not sure	25.9

5d. Your county election official	
Strongly approve	4.8
Approve	38.9
Disapprove	14.8
Strongly Disapprove	12.4
Don't know/Not sure	29.1

5e. The US Congress	
Strongly approve	0.9
Approve	24.3
Disapprove	40.4
Strongly Disapprove	29.6
Don't know/Not sure	4.8

6. Did you happen to vote in the 2006 general election?

Yes, I did vote	96.8
No, I didn't vote	3.2

7. [Voters only:] Is this the first time you have ever voted?
- | | |
|-----|------|
| Yes | 1.1 |
| No | 98.9 |
8. [Voters only:] Did you vote early, by absentee or on Election Day?
- | | |
|-----------------|------|
| Early | 30.5 |
| Absentee | 27.7 |
| On Election Day | 41.8 |
9. [Early & Election Day voters only:] Did you vote using a bubble paper ballot or a voter-assisted terminal?
- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Bubble paper ballot | 97.5 |
| Voter-assisted terminal | 2.5 |
10. [Voters only:] How confusing did you find your ballot?
- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| Very confusing | 1.1 |
| Somewhat confusing | 13.6 |
| Not too confusing | 20.6 |
| Not at all confusing | 64.7 |
11. Did someone contact you and encourage you to vote early absentee or on Election Day?
- | | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| No | 40.1 |
| Absentee | 5.0 |
| Early | 8.5 |
| Election Day | 16.1 |
| Absentee & Election Day | 2.0 |
| Absentee & Early | 3.7 |
| Early & Election Day | 8.5 |
| Early, Absentee and Election Day | 16.1 |
12. [Voters only:] How would you rate your voting experience in this election compared to prior voting experiences?
- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| Much more positive | 5.8 |
| Somewhat more positive | 15.6 |
| About the same | 49.0 |
| Somewhat more negative | 17.8 |
| Much more negative | 10.7 |
| Don't know/Not Sure | 1.1 |
13. [Voters only:] How confident are you that **YOUR VOTE** in the November 2006 election will be counted as you intended?
- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| Very confident | 38.6 |
| Somewhat confident | 43.9 |
| Not too confident | 11.5 |
| Not at all confident | 3.8 |
| Don't know/Not sure | 2.2 |

14. How confident are you that the bubble paper ballot used to record votes will provide an accurate reflection of **ALL THE VOTES**?

Very confident	20.4
Somewhat confident	46.0
Not too confident	18.4
Not at all confident	7.2
Don't know/Not sure	8.0

15. [Voters only:] How would you rate your overall voting experience?

Excellent	25.1
Good	56.8
Fair	14.3
Poor	3.8

15a. If you rated your experience fair or poor, why? [Valid Percent, n=77]

Paper ballot	33.8
Long Wait	28.6
Poll worker problems	9.1
Distrust with system	10.4
Ballot too long	3.9
Campaign	3.9
Ballot print to small	3.9
Campaigning outside polling station	1.3
County election officials	2.6
Confusing Ballot	2.6

16. [Early and Election Day Voters:] How helpful were the poll workers at your voting location?

Very helpful	60.7
Somewhat helpful	26.2
Not too helpful	5.7
Not at all helpful	2.9
Don't know/Not sure	4.5

17. [Early and Election Day Voters:] Was your polling station or vote center easy to find?

Yes	91.7
No	6.2
Don't know/Not sure	2.1

18. [Voters only:] Overall, how confusing did you find your voting experience?

Very confusing	0.9
Somewhat confusing	13.5
Not too confusing	25.9
Not at all confusing	59.2
Don't know/Not sure	.5

19. [Early & Election Day Voters:] What type of voter identification did you have to show?

I didn't have to show any ID	35.3	
		% within ID Shown
Driver's License	21.9	33.8
Voter Registration Card	37.8	58.4
Other form of ID	2.2	3.4
Driver's license & Other form of ID	.3	.5
Driver's license & Registration card	2.5	3.9

20. Do you think voter identification rules prevent some voters from casting their ballot at the polls?

Yes	25.5
No	51.2
Don't know/Not sure	23.3

21. Do you think that voter identification rules help prevent voter fraud?

Yes	69.9
No	16.7
Don't know/Not sure	13.4

22. How confident are you that the current election process in your state produces election outcomes that reflect the will of the people?

Very confident	14.5
Somewhat confident	56.6
Not too confident	19.4
Not at all confident	7.8
Don't know/Not sure	1.7

23. How confident are you that the current election process in the United States produces election outcomes that reflect the will of the people?

Very confident	8.0
Somewhat confident	48.8
Not too confident	29.2
Not at all confident	12.5
Don't know/Not sure	2.5

24. Have you ever had any problems while voting?

No	79.8
Yes	20.2

25. Some people argue that voter identification rules prevent some voters from going to the polls, while others argue that voter identification rules help prevent voting fraud. Which is more important?

Ensuring that everyone who eligible has the right to vote	42.8
Protecting the voting system against fraud	52.2
Don't know/Not sure	5.0

26. Below are some statements – please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement, or if you have no opinion.

26a. The bubble paper ballot method provides for a paper receipt that can validate the election results.

Strongly agree	32.5
Somewhat agree	34.7
Neither agree nor disagree	12.1
Somewhat disagree	6.6
Strongly disagree	4.4
Don't know/Not sure	9.7

26b. I enjoyed voting with the method I used.

Strongly agree	18.5
Somewhat agree	18.7
Neither agree nor disagree	28.0
Somewhat disagree	13.9
Strongly disagree	20.9

26c. Photo identification should be required of each voter to prevent voter fraud.

Strongly agree	48.0
Somewhat agree	23.5
Neither agree nor disagree	10.9
Somewhat disagree	7.6
Strongly disagree	7.8
Don't know/Not sure	2.2

26d. Proof of citizenship should be required of each voter to prevent voter fraud.

Strongly agree	44.8
Somewhat agree	20.4
Neither agree nor disagree	9.9
Somewhat disagree	9.5
Strongly disagree	15.4

26e. It took too long to vote with the ballot method I used.

Strongly agree	15.3
Somewhat agree	20.1
Neither agree nor disagree	19.4
Somewhat disagree	16.9
Strongly disagree	28.3

26f. Public officials don't care much what people like me think

Strongly agree	18.1
Somewhat agree	28.9
Neither agree nor disagree	18.1
Somewhat disagree	23.6
Strongly disagree	11.3

26g. I consider myself well qualified to participate in politics.

Strongly agree	51.6
Somewhat agree	29.5
Neither agree nor disagree	10.9
Somewhat disagree	3.1
Strongly disagree	4.8

27. Do you consider yourself a:

Strong Democrat	18.9
Democrat, not so strong	16.0
Independent, closer to Democrats	16.2
Independent, Independent	7.4
Independent, closer to Republicans	7.4
Republican, not so strong	13.6
Strong Republican	16.0
Other Party	4.3
Don't know/Not sure	.2

28. How satisfied were you with your voting experience in the 2006 fall election?

Very satisfied	38.6
Somewhat satisfied	47.5
Not too satisfied	10.9
Not at all satisfied	3.0

29. How much of the time do you trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

All of the time	1.3
Some of the time	23.1
Not much of the time	66.4
Never	7.7
Don't know/Not sure	1.5

30. Did you vote in the primary election in August?	
Yes	56.9
No	43.1
31. What year were you born? (Ages calculated)	
18 – 25	5.4
26 – 35	7.2
36 – 45	11.9
46 – 55	24.5
56 – 65	25.8
66 – 75	15.5
76 – 85	8.6
86 and Over	1.1
32. Are you male or female?	
Male	45.4
Female	54.6
33. What is the highest grade of education you have completed?	
Less than a HS degree	2.0
HS degree	9.0
Some college	23.7
Completed trade school	2.9
College degree	32.1
Masters degree	21.9
JD	1.8
MD	2.0
PhD	4.6
34. What kind of work do you do?	
Work in a small business (50 employees or less)	10.7
Work in a large business (over 50 employees)	19.5
Work in education field	9.6
Work in government	8.4
Self-employed	12.9
Homemaker	4.2
Student	5.1
Retired	27.8
Other	1.8
35. Is anyone in your household active or retired military?	
Yes	20.8
No	78.8
Don't know/Not sure	.4

36. Are you or anyone in your immediate family a member of a union?

Yes	19.8
No	79.3
Don't know/Not sure	.9

37. Are you a born again Christian?

Yes	20.3
No	76.0
Don't know/Not sure	3.7

38. What is your religious denomination or church affiliation?

Assembly of God	0.4
Atheist	7.5
Baptist	4.3
Buddhist	1.6
Catholic	19.3
Christian Science	0.2
Church of Christ	1.2
Congregationalist	0.4
Disciples of Christ	0.2
Episcopal	3.0
Quaker	0.2
Hindu	1.8
Jewish	2.0
Just Protestant	0.6
Latter Day Saints/Mormon	2.4
Lutheran	3.0
Methodist	4.1
Non-Denominational	5.1
Orthodox	0.4
Other	6.3
Pentecostal	0.4
Presbyterian	4.5
Protestant	1.2
UCC	0.2
Non-known	5.5
Refused	18.1

39. What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

Black/African American	1.6
Native American	0.7
Hispanic/Latino	19.0
Asian	2.0
White	76.7

40. [If respondent indicated Hispanic/Latino:] would you describe your Hispanic/Latino origin as:

Mexican	24.7
Cuban	1.2
Latin American	3.7
Spanish	65.5
DK/NS	4.9

41. What is your marital status?

Married	62.8
Divorced	4.5
Never married	11.6
Widowed	4.2
Separated	16.7
Don't know/Not sure	.2

42. To the best of your knowledge, what was your total family income before taxes in 2005, including yourself and all those living in your house?

Under 10k	2.8
\$10,000-19,999	3.2
\$20,000-29,999	6.6
\$30,000-39,999	9.1
\$40,000-49,999	8.7
\$50,000-59,999	11.0
\$60,000-69,999	6.6
\$70,000-79,999	5.3
\$80,000-89,999	6.6
\$90,000-99,999	4.7
\$100,000-114,999	7.0
\$115,000-129,999	3.8
\$130,000-144,999	2.1
\$145,000-159,999	1.5
\$160,000-174,999	1.3
Over \$175,000	3.6
Refused	16.1

Appendix 3.3: Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following individuals for their help and assistance with this project including: former New Mexico Secretary of State Rebecca Vigil-Giron, who provided us with the voter registration file, Colorado State University political science Professor Kyle Saunders, political science staff assistant Joann Buehler, political science graduate student Luciana Zilberman, political science undergraduate student Alex Adams, bulk mail supervisor Alisha Foster, the Research Allocation Committee at the University of New Mexico who funded this study, political science chair Professor Mark Peceny, R. Bruce Cary of Los Alamos National Labs, and all of the registered voters who responded to our request for participation.

Postscript: The 2008 Election and Beyond

We hope that our research in the 2006 election, and the recommendations that we draw from our work, provide productive guidance for election administrators, policymakers, and the interested public as they all seek to continue to make the election process in New Mexico more accurate, accessible, user-friendly, and free from fraud. We also hope that our research effort provides the baseline from which we can continue to evaluate election reform in New Mexico. Finally, we see the research projects that we have presented in this report as foundations for the development of a broader methodology for studying election administration and for improving the performance of election systems in New Mexico and elsewhere.

It is common for academic research articles to conclude with a call for additional research on the same topic. In this situation, we believe that follow-up studies in New Mexico, like ours, are critical for the state's ongoing efforts to improve the election process. The studies reported here for the 2006 election, while we see them as quite important, were also limited in scope to specific geographic regions of the state. In 2008, studies like these need to be extended to other counties in New Mexico, to allow for the study of election practices in those counties, and to also help researchers compare election administration in other and diverse parts of the state to the counties we have begun to study.

We also need to broaden the focus of future studies to include other aspects of the election process not studied here, especially early and absentee voting practices, the voter registration process, post-election auditing, and finally how New Mexico's new voter identification regulations are implemented. Each of these dimensions of election reform in New Mexico merit independent study and analysis, research efforts that we hope will be facilitated in the 2008 election and thereafter.