VOTER REGISTRATION MODERNIZATION

Presented by

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE

Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law

and

Nonprofit VOTE
Nonprofit VOTE is the nation’s largest provider of voter engagement resources and trainings designed specifically for nonprofits to help them to integrate nonpartisan voter participation into their ongoing activities and services.

Nonprofit VOTE is voter participation partner of the National Association of Secretaries of State for the nonprofit sector

Visit our website for more on our mission and partners: www.nonprofitvote.org
TODAY’S PRESENTERS

Myrna Pérez
Deputy Director
Brennan Center for Justice
The Brennan Center for Justice

Based at NYU, but work nationwide

Think Tank, Advocacy Group, Law Firm

- Study of statutes, practices, and reform initiatives and publications
- Advocacy, media work, and testimony
- Legal representation and technical advice
The Assault on Voting in 2011-2012

- 23 laws and 2 executive actions passed in 19 states
- 180 restrictive bills introduced in 41 states
Restrictive Laws Passed

As of November 2012, 25 laws and 2 executive actions passed in 19 states.
A National Pushback

• In the courts
  • 11 courts blocked or blunted restrictive voting laws

• In the court of public opinion
  • Laws were repealed as a result of citizen action in 2 states
There were 16 new laws and 2 executive actions in 13 states that were in effect for the 2012 election.
Problems on Election Day: Confusion and Misinformation

- Poll workers confused about ID in **PA** and **SC**
- Voters in the wrong precincts in **LA** and **OH**
- Emergency ballots and hurricane-related confusion in **NJ** and **NY**
"We have to fix that."

"We have to fix that": Officials look to make improvements at the polls before next election
By Haley Hernandez

Vote over, but election dysfunction remains
By Nathaniel Persily, Specialist: CNN
updated 2:44 PM EST, Sun November 11, 2012

Dear Mr. President: “Fix that”

The Washington Post
‘We have to fix that,’ but will we?
By Brad Plumer, November 08, 2012
A Voter Registration System Plagued with Errors

- **One in four** eligible citizens is not registered to vote
- **One in eight** registrations in the United States is invalid or significantly inaccurate
- **One in four** voters wrongly believes their registration is automatically updated when they change their address with the Postal Service
Voter Registration Modernization (VRM)

- Automation or Electronic Transfer
- Online Registration
- Portability
- Election Day Correction
Benefits of VRM

• 50 million eligible citizens added to rolls
• Increased registration rates: 2-fold to 7-fold
• More accurate rolls: 5X fewer errors
• Millions in savings to the states
• Less wrongful disenfranchisement
• Fewer complaints of potential fraud
Automation or Electronic Transfer

• States take responsibility to register consenting eligible citizens by transmitting information from government records to the voter rolls

• At least 23 states currently or will soon have fully or substantially automated voter registration at DMVs
Online Registration

• Allows voters to register, check, and update their registration records through a secure and accessible online portal
• At least 17 states currently or will soon offer online voter registration
Portability

• Once registered, a voter remains registered and her records move with her as long as she continues to reside in the state
• Numerous ways to achieve portability
• At least 8 states and the District of Columbia have portable registration
Election Day Correction

- Eligible citizens can correct errors to their voter registration records and register to vote on Election Day
- Ensures that voters do not bear the brunt of government mistakes
- Has boosted turnout in every state that has adopted it
- At least 11 states and the District of Columbia offer, or will soon offer, Election Day Correction
Case Study: Maricopa County, Arizona

- Online and automated registrations saved over $450,000 in 2008, and over $1 million over 5 years
- County election officials save at least 50¢ on data entry with every registration electronically received
- 2009 study: electronic voter registrations 5 times less error-prone
VRM Bills Passed in 2013

- **Colorado**: Broad-based modernization including, among other elements, Election Day registration, portable registration, and pre-registration of eligible 16- and 17-year-old citizens.
- **Maryland**: Online voter registration, early voting, same-day registration during early voting
- **New Mexico**: Automation of voter registration at the DMV office
- **Virginia**: Online voter registration
- **West Virginia**: Online voter registration
Pending VRM Legislation

At least 25 states have introduced bills that would modernize the voter registration system, in whole or in part, and make it easier for eligible citizens to register.

- Broad-based modernization: 3 states
- Automation: 5 states
- Online registration: 13 states
- Same day registration: 18 states
- Portability: 4 states
To modernize voter registration, promote access to voting for individuals with disabilities, protect the ability of individuals to exercise the right to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.
Brennan Center for Justice
www.brennancenter.org
myrna.perez@nyu.edu
info@nonprofitvote.org
617.357.VOTE (8683)
www.nonprofitvote.org

Nonprofit VOTE
89 South Street
Suite 203
Boston, MA 02111

Julian Johannesen
julian@nonprofitvote.org