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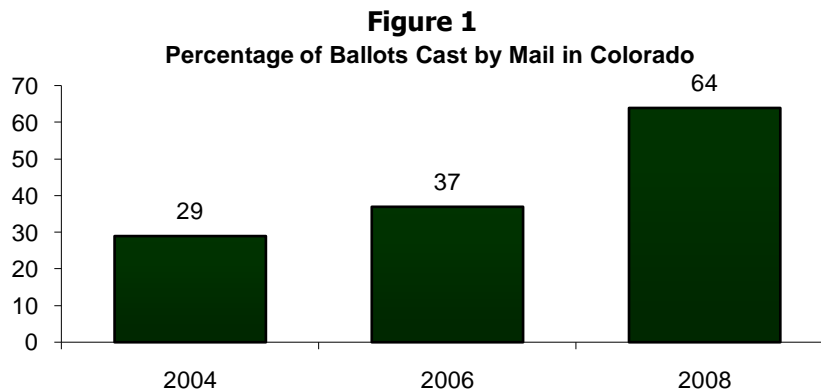
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The Role of Local Election Officials in Promoting Growth of Mail Voting

The use of voting by mail is growing rapidly across the country. In searching for the causes of this growth, researchers have looked at the influence of statutory changes and strategic intervention by civic engagement groups and political parties. Prior to this report, little attention has been paid to the various activities of local election officials to promote the use of voting by mail. The central role and significant discretion of local election officials in administering elections positions them to be major actors in the growth of voting by mail.

No state has seen faster growth in the use of voting by mail than Colorado in 2008. Already among the leading states in use of voting by mail in 2004 (29% of ballots cast) and 2006 (37% of ballots cast), Colorado saw voting by mail reach 64% of ballots cast in 2008 (Figure 1). This report finds that the County Clerks and Recorders in Colorado play a significant role in promoting the growth in voting by mail in the 2008 General Election. Their primary motivation appears to be the advantages they see in mail voting for running a fair and problem free election. The convenience to voters also plays a part in their motivation to promote mail voting.



The large jump in the use of voting by mail in Colorado in 2008 followed the passage of permanent mail voting status by the Colorado Legislature in 2007. Although other features of the Colorado electoral landscape changed for the 2008 election,ⁱ the permanent mail voting statute is likely a major cause of the massive increase in mail voting. Colorado joined California to make them the only states to allow this permanent mail voting status for the 2008 election.ⁱⁱ This statute allows voters to be placed on a list to receive a mail ballot for every election, rather than requiring voters to renew their request for a mail ballot every two years or for each election.

Previous research has generally shown that statutory changes in election procedures are unlikely to have significant effects on voting behavior (Gronke et al. 2008; Gronke and Miller 2007; Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller 2007; Kousser & Mullin 2007; Karp & Banducci 2000; Karp and Banducci 2001; Berinsky, Burns, and Traugott 2001; Hanmer and Traugott 2004; Berinsky 2005; Oliver 1996; Barreto et al. 2006; c.f. Southwell & Burchett 2000). Someone must act to encourage voters to change their behavior. Past research has focused on strategic communication by civic organizations and political parties to increase pre-Election Day voting. This report focuses for the first time on the role of local election officials in promoting voting by mail across the entire electorate.

Although this report is a case study of Colorado, the findings may resonate well beyond the Centennial State. The number of voters with legal access to “no excuse” mail voting continues to grow across the country. Twenty-eight states allowed mail voting without requiring a specific reason in the 2008 election (Early Vote Information Center 2008). The use of mail ballots varies widely and is growing within and across these states (Gronke et al. 2008). In 2008, a

constitutional amendment on the ballot in Maryland to permit re-instating pre-Election Day voting passed with 72% support. In 2009, New Jersey added permanent mail voting status as well. Legislation to create “no excuse” mail voting and/or to add permanent mail voting status is under serious consideration in several other states according to the Vote By Mail Project, an advocacy group which tracks state legislative action. The lessons learned from this in-depth case study in Colorado provide insights on the role and potential impact of local election officials in implementing the shift toward mail voting in other states.

Research Methodology

This report is based on two rounds of surveys of the County Clerks and Recorders in Colorado conducted before and after the 2008 General Election as well as analysis of voter turnout in the 2008 General Election using the official Colorado voter database.ⁱⁱⁱ

The surveys were primarily conducted by cadets in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy at West Point under the supervision of Dr. Rachel Sondheimer.^{iv} The pre-election survey was conducted at Clerks’ busiest time of year. Therefore, the pre-election survey was limited to collecting information concerning Clerk expectations for the upcoming election and asking questions whose answers might be different given the hindsight available in the post-election survey round. The post-election survey used a longer questionnaire to gather a wider range of information about the Clerks’ 2008 election administration decisions. The methodology used in the pre- and post-election surveys is detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

In order to maximize participation, the Cadets identified themselves as calling from West Point. There was some risk that having cadets introduce themselves as such had the possibility of influencing responses, especially with regard to the questions about UOCAVA voting. However, the research team determined that getting responses from as many Clerks as possible was more beneficial than the risk of bias on these questions. Fortunately, based on the frank comments some Clerks’ provided about UOCAVA and its administration by the Department of Defense, it seems unlikely that the West Point affiliation biased commentary.

Jefferson County Clerk Pam Anderson, our collaborator, reported that several of her fellow Clerks said they only participated in the survey because of the involvement of the West Point cadets. They noted that the cadets deserved cooperation with the survey based on their commitment to serving the country and their respectful and polite demeanor in conducting the surveys. The responsiveness to the West Point Cadets may help explain our completion rate for the survey of local election officials: 56 of 64 for the pre-election survey and 51 of 64 for the post-election survey.

In addition to the potential bias from the West Point affiliation of the survey, there is also the possibility of bias because the Clerks are unwilling to provide full answers to any survey about legally sensitive matters such as the degree of compliance with legal mandates or discretionary actions that could be subject to lawsuits. The survey promised confidentiality of individual level responses. The Clerks were generally cautious about discussing compliance with legal mandates and about discussing voter demographics which are (or could be) protected under federal and state equal protection laws, so the findings on these topics should be treated with appropriate caution. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that they would have been any more forthcoming for any other survey.

The primary limitation of this research design is that it uses data from a single state and a unique moment in that state’s history of election administration. Studying the 2008 election in Colorado presents a trade-off between insights because election administration practices are in transition and the possibility that these insights are not applicable beyond this singular moment. As with all

social science research, the findings of a single study should be applied to other contexts (in time or geography) with caution. By conducting a thorough analysis of the data in this case study, we hope to identify important elements that can be easily tested in other elections. Replicating the findings in other locations will increase the confidence that these are 'true' elements of election administration. Contradictory evidence should cause us to reconsider whether some elements are unique to Colorado in 2008. Future experience will almost certainly demonstrate that some of the findings below are robust across time and geography, while others do not generalize beyond this particular study.

Motivation for the Study

The primary motivation for this research is the lack of attention to the role of election officials in the major shift towards mail voting. The specific motivation for the study in Colorado was the pattern of sign-up for permanent mail voting as of the summer of 2008. In about a year after permanent mail voting status went into effect, 11 of Colorado's 64 counties had already signed up more than 40% of registered voters for permanent mail ballot status. Several counties reached registration levels over 50% and one, Jefferson County, had surpassed 64% opt-in among active registrants before Labor Day. However, thirty three of the state's counties had less than 10% of registrants signed up for permanent mail ballot status.^v There was virtually no difference in opt-in rates by party affiliation in any of the highly adoptive counties nor statewide (30% D, 31% R), suggesting that individuals or entities other than partisan organizations were driving these varied adoption rates. Based on public comments by some Clerks and the observations of people active in Colorado campaigns about mailings from some Clerks to voters, the Clerks were prime suspects as the non-partisan actors driving the expansion of permanent mail voting.

The existing academic literature on mail voting focuses on the effects of statutory changes to allow no-excuse absentee voting on turnout (Gronke et al. 2008; Gronke and Miller 2007; Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller 2007; Karp and Banducci 2001; Berinsky, Burns, and Traugott 2001; Hanmer and Traugott 2004; Berinsky 2005; Oliver 1996; Barreto et al. 2006) and all mail voting (Gronke and Miller 2007; Gronke, Galanes-Rosenbaum, and Miller 2007; Kousser and Mullin 2007; Karp and Banducci 2000; Southwell and Burchett 2000), the impact of strategic action by campaigns and civic engagement groups on turnout (Mann 2009; Mann 2007; Mann 2006), effects on the composition of the electorate (Karp and Banducci 2001; Berinsky, Burns, and Traugott 2001; Berinsky 2005; Oliver 1996; Barreto et al. 2006; Neeley and Richardson 2001), the accuracy of counting mail ballots (CalTech/MIT Voting Technology Project 2001), the risk of fraud and coercion (CalTech/MIT Voting Technology Project 2001), and problems with the administration of mail voting (Alvarez et al. 2009). Researchers have yet to examine the role of election officials in promoting the use of mail voting.

A decision by election officials to encourage the use of mail balloting has significant consequences for the conduct of elections and campaigns. The promotion of mail balloting creates the potential need for shifting resource allocation; widespread usage of mail ballots requires different resources than Election Day polling place voting, including more investment on mail processing and security for ballots that arrive before Election Day. The extent of promotion of mail balloting may impact turnout, both level and composition, and will certainly affect the timing of when ballots are cast. Adoption of vote by mail is of particular interest for a specific portion of the population that tends to already vote by mail: uniformed and overseas voters. The commitment of election officials to promoting domestic mail balloting may overlap with administration of the mail balloting system for eligible uniformed and overseas citizens as established by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

Although other political actors – campaigns, parties, advocacy groups, and civic participation organizations – play a role in encouraging mail balloting (Mann 2009, Mann 2007 Mann 2006,

Gronke et al 2008), election officials are potentially highly influential actors in this area. Promotion activities range from public awareness campaigns in the media to mailing every registered voter in the county a mail ballot application. Some jurisdictions run major mail balloting promotion programs, others do no promotion, and a few may discourage mail voting. This study seeks to understand why and when voting by mail is promoted and an estimation of the effects of these efforts on voting behavior.

Research Questions

This study set out to answer a wide ranging set of questions about the role that local election officials play in promoting mail voting and related aspects of election administration. The results of the study are organized around each of the following nine categories in the following sections of the report.

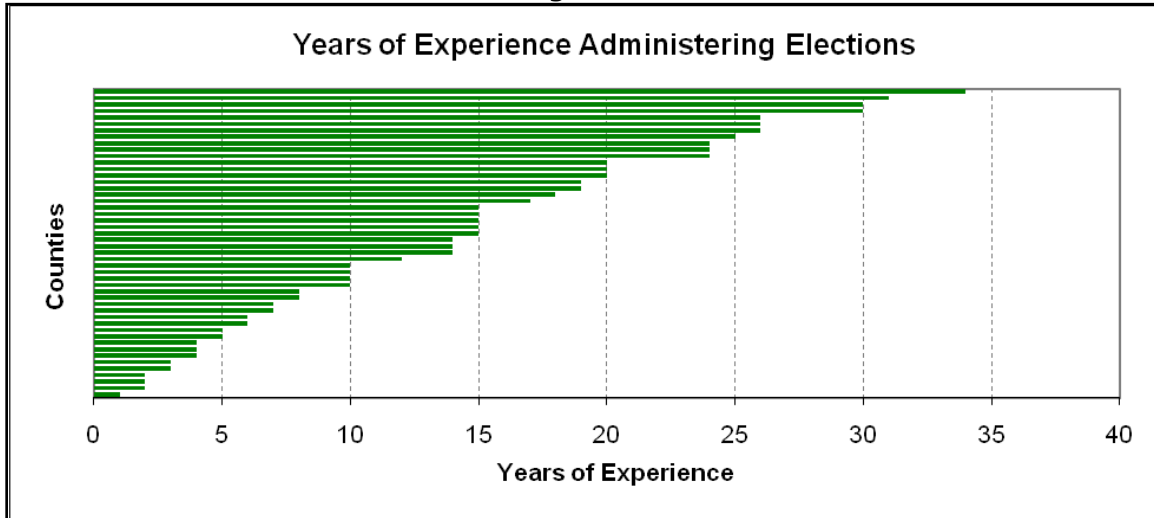
- 1) *Experience and Interest in Elections among Clerks:* How much experience do the Clerks bring to their supervision of elections? In Colorado, the county Clerk & Recorder has multiple responsibilities. Is election administration their primary interest or do their personal interests and priorities lie elsewhere?
- 2) *Election Officials' Knowledge of Voting Patterns:* Election administration in Colorado requires anticipating which method of voting (vote by mail, early in-person, or Election Day) will be used, by whom, and how many are likely to vote in order to appropriately allocate scarce budget resources. How well do the Clerks anticipate these patterns in voting?
- 3) *Motivations of Election Officials about Promoting Voting by Mail:* Do the Clerks encourage different methods of voting? How high a priority is this type of voter outreach among their responsibilities? Why do election officials choose to encourage, not encourage, or discourage mail voting?
- 4) *Resource Allocation:* What resources are available in budget, staff, and training for election administration? How much time, energy, and money do election officials spend on promoting mail voting? Are more election administration resources devoted to promoting mail balloting, early in-person voting, or polling place voting? Is the promotion of mail voting a supplement or a substitute for promoting polling place voting and/or early voting?
- 5) *Activities of Election Officials for Promoting Voting by Mail:* What techniques do election officials use to promote the use of mail ballots? What resources do election officials provide to the public? How are these materials provided (i.e. online, printed, available for pick-up, mailed to voters, etc)?
- 6) *Lessons Learned by Election Officials:* What lessons did the Clerks take away from administering the 2008 election? How did the rapid growth in the use of voting by mail affect election administration? How do pre-election concerns compare to a post-election review of difficulties and problems?
- 7) *Impacts on Voting Behavior:* Does promotion by election officials influence the rate of mail voting? Do voters gravitate to mail voting without encouragement from election officials? Do varying means of promotion by election officials contribute to differences in the adoption rate of mail voting across counties? Does promotion of mail voting affect the overall turnout rate?

- 8) *Composition of the Voters and Mail Voters:* Does the growth in mail voting change the composition of the electorate? What types of voters tend to vote by mail?
- 9) *Administration of UOCAVA in a Vote by Mail System:* How do local election officials react to administration of the UOCAVA system given the availability of voting by mail? What is the extent of interaction between local election officials and the federal government in implementing the UOCAVA system? How, when, and under what conditions do local election officials interact with potential UOCAVA voters? How do pre-election concerns compare to post-election reviews of the difficulties and problems associated with the system? What changes would county Clerks like to see with regard to the UOCAVA system?

1) Experience of Clerks

The Colorado County Clerks bring a wealth of experience to administering elections (Figure 2). This was the first Presidential General Election for only 7 of the Clerks surveyed. The most senior Clerk has been involved in administering every Presidential election since 1972. For a significant number of Clerks, the job is the culmination of a career path through the ranks in the Clerk's office. Many of the Clerks who came to the office from the outside bring administrative and management training and/or experience from corporate positions or other governmental bureaucracies.

Figure 2



The vertical axis is a list of the counties. In order to maintain the anonymity promised to the Clerks in the survey, we have not labeled the responses with county names. The responses are sorted by length of experience to make the graph easier to interpret.

The job description of a Colorado County Clerk extends beyond election administration. In addition to running elections, each Clerk is responsible for recording legal documents in the county and administering motor vehicle registration. The post-election survey asked if election administration or another area of responsibility under the Clerk and Recorder's Office was the primary personal interest of the Clerk. Three-quarters of the Clerks reported that their primary personal interest is election administration. Since numerous Clerks commented that they spend most of their time on election administration (whether it is their primary personal interest or not), there seems likely to be a selection effect of Clerks interested in election administration rather than the other responsibilities of the Clerk & Recorder.^{vi}

Discussion

County Clerks in Colorado tend to be experienced and interested in election administration. Although the office has other responsibilities, our surveys and interactions with the Clerks in Colorado indicate that they are personally most focused on election administration.

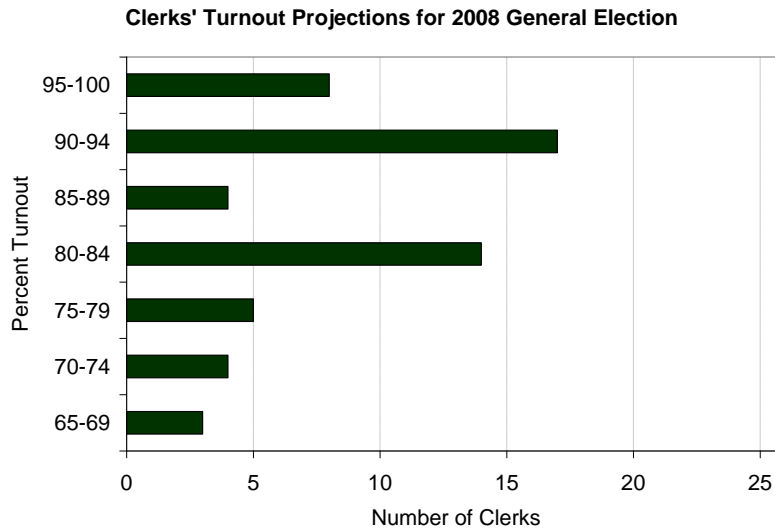
2) Election Officials' Knowledge of Voting Patterns

Projecting Turnout

In order to administer the 2008 General Election, the Clerks needed to have a good idea of how many voters were going to turn out and which methods of voting were going to be used to cast ballots.

In the pre-Election Survey, the Clerks expected very high turnout (Figure 3). Eight counties projected turnout between 95% and 100% and an additional 17 counties projected turnout between 90% and 95%. Within these answers, there appears to have been ambiguity between whether the Clerks were estimating turnout among all registered voters or among 'active' voters under Colorado law.^{vii} Under current Colorado election regulations, voters who do not vote in a general election or who have a voter information card, confirmation card, or mail ballot returned as undeliverable by the US Post Office are considered registered but inactive.^{viii}

Figure 3



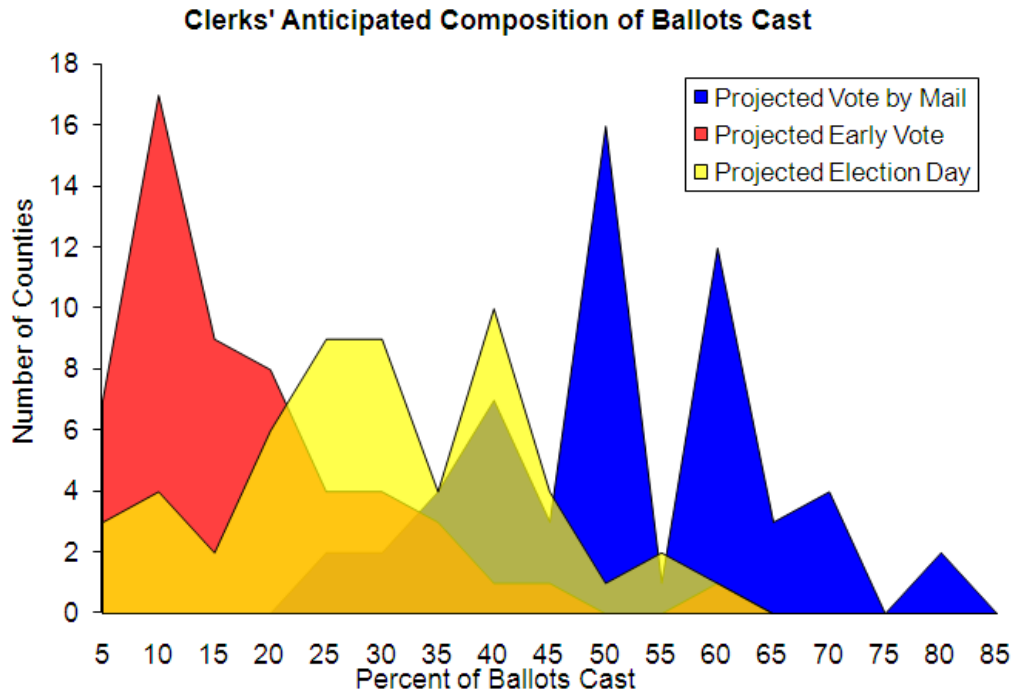
Due to this ambiguity, it is impossible to assess how accurate the Clerks' projections were. However, turnout among registered voters was quite high: According to the January 2009 voter file from the Secretary of State's office, the statewide turnout was 75% of all registered voters with a range from 67% (Denver) to 89% (San Juan). The turnout rates of metropolitan and rural counties are similarly distributed throughout this range (see Appendix C for turnout among registered voters by county in the 2008 General Election).

Anticipating Method of Voting

The pre-election survey also asked the Clerks to anticipate what proportion of ballots would be cast by mail, through early in-person voting, and on Election Day. There was some variation in the Clerks' projections of the proportions, but most Clerks in Colorado expected a majority – and sometimes a wide majority – of ballots to be cast by mail ballot. Early voting was not expected to see much use, and Election Day voting made up the balance.

It is important to keep in mind that at the time of the pre-election survey in mid October, Clerks already knew how many voters had signed up for mail voting and were beginning to administer the early voting system. Therefore, these were somewhat well-informed projections.

Figure 4



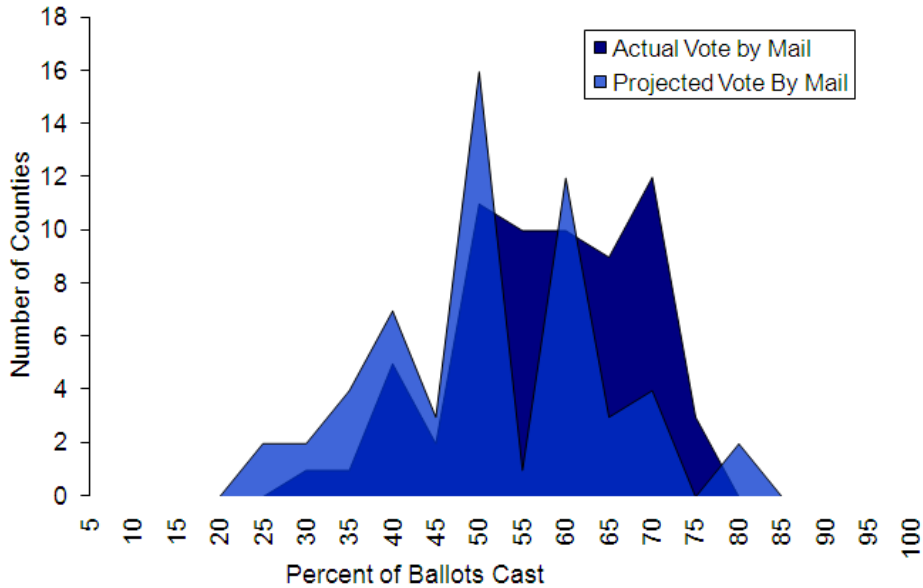
Accuracy of Mail Voting Projections

As shown in Figure 5, the share of ballots actually cast by mail in each county is quite similar to the projections of the Clerks in Figure 4. The vast majority of the counties saw half to two-thirds of their ballots cast by mail (see Appendix D for the composition of ballots cast by county). Smaller rural counties tended to have lower mail ballot use, but several small rural counties had very high usage making it difficult to discern a specific pattern. The analysis of the Clerks' role in promoting vote by mail below will explore the relationship between county characteristics and use of mail voting in more detail.

Growth in voting by mail occurred in every part of the state. In 2004, the statewide use of mail ballots was 29%, but in 2008 no county had less than 30% use of mail ballots. Only four counties saw less mail ballot use than the 2006 statewide figure of 37%. Forty-five of the 64 counties had a majority of ballots cast by mail, and 15 counties had two-thirds of their ballots cast by mail. Chafee County barely edged out Jefferson County for the highest use of mail ballots (75% to 73%).

Figure 5

Projected Vote by Mail Ballots vs. Actual Vote by Mail Ballots

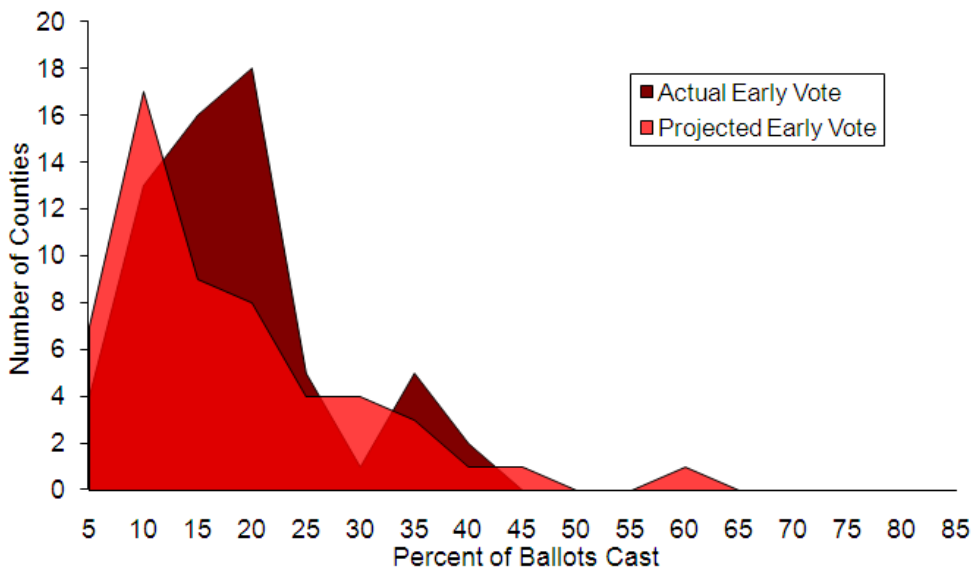


Accuracy of Early Voting Projections

The Clerks expected fairly low use of early in-person voting. Their expectations were generally accurate (Figure 6). More than three-quarters of the counties (51 of 64) had less than one-in-five of their ballots cast at early in-person sites. About a quarter of the counties had 10% or less of their ballots cast at early in-person sites, another quarter was between 10% and 15%, and a quarter fell between 15% and 20%. Statewide, only 15% of all ballots cast in the 2008 General Election were cast at early in-person vote sites. Only 6 counties saw at least one-third of ballots cast at early in-person sites (Teller, San Juan, Pitkin, Summit, Routt, and Lake).

Figure 6

Projected Early Voting vs. Actual Early Voting



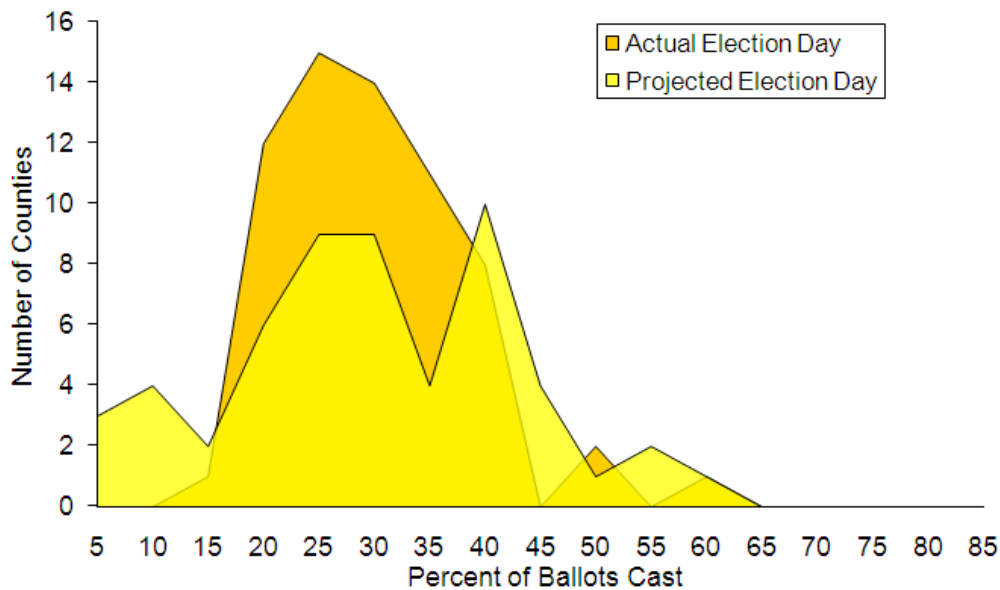
Accuracy of Election Day Voting Projections

The Clerks' projections for the share of ballots cast on Election Day were again quite close to the actual use of Election Day voting (Figure 7). If anything, the Clerks' slightly over-estimated the share of ballots cast through Election Day voting. Only 22% of all ballots cast in the 2008 General Election in Colorado were cast on Election Day.

Election Day remained the majority method of casting a ballot in only two small rural counties (Costilla – 59% & Crowley – 50%). In Kit Carson County, mail balloting just edged Election Day balloting by 48% to 47%. Only 14 other counties saw at least one-third of ballots cast on Election Day, including the large southern Front Range counties of El Paso (Colorado Springs) and Pueblo were in this group. The remaining large counties in the Denver metro area (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson), northern Front Range (Larimer and Weld), and Western Slope (Mesa) all had less than 20% of their ballots cast on Election Day 2008.

Figure 7

Projected Election Day Voting vs. Actual Election Day Voting



Demographic Disparities in Voting by Mail

The pre-election survey asked the Clerks whether they expected demographic differences in the use of mail balloting. Although many Clerks reported that they had not given differences in usage much thought and done no analysis of their voting records, the expectations they expressed were fairly consistent with the pattern of vote by mail use.

A majority of Clerks expected older voters to be more likely to use mail ballots (Figure 8-A). The difficulty elderly voters have getting to the polls was one of the original permitted reasons for voting by absentee mail ballot, so the expectation that this group would be more likely to use mail voting is unsurprising. Figure 8-B shows that older voters were more likely to vote by mail than younger voters in the 2008 General Election.

The 2007 permanent mail voting statute required that Colorado voter registration forms include an option for new registrants to check a box to sign up for permanent mail voting status without taking any further action. Several Clerks noted that many new registrants selected this option. Despite this apparent convenience for new registrants, almost half of the Clerks still expected

long-time registrants to be more likely than new registrants to vote by mail, one-third expected the same rate of use between the two groups, and only 16% expected new registrants to be more likely to vote by mail. In the 2008 General Election long-term registrants were slightly more likely to vote by mail (Figure 9-B).

Sixty percent of the Clerks expected people who vote frequently to be more likely to use mail ballots than people who rarely vote (Figure 10-A). This expectation seems to be based on frequent voters being more knowledgeable about the options for casting a ballot. Again, the Clerks' expectations were borne out in the 2008 General Election. The likelihood of voting by mail increased with each additional general election in which the voter had cast a ballot since 2000.^{ix} One-third of the voters who had not voted in a previous general election cast their ballots by mail. Among voters who turned out in every general election since 2000, just over two-thirds cast their ballots by mail in 2008 (Figure 10-B).

The likelihood of voting by mail increases more rapidly if voters had cast ballots by mail in past elections (Figure 10-C). As above, one-third of voters who had not voted in a previous general election cast their ballots by mail in 2008. Among voters who had cast a ballot by mail in one previous general election, two-thirds cast their ballots by mail in 2008. Among voters who cast a mail ballot in three elections, 93% cast their ballots by mail in 2008. A remarkable 96% of voters who had voted in all general elections since 2000 cast their ballots by mail in 2008.^x Since permanent mail voting status did not exist until the 2008 election cycle, these are voters who consistently sought to vote by mail in successive general elections. This pattern suggests that once voters begin using voting by mail, they are increasingly likely to do so in future elections.

With regard to gender, almost two-thirds of the Clerks expected no difference, with 11% expecting more mail ballot use by women and 9% expecting more men to use mail ballots (Figure 11-A). In this case, the Clerks were off the mark. Half of female registered voters in Colorado cast ballots by mail, but only 44% of male registered voters cast ballots by mail (Figure 11-B).

According to the post-election voter file as of January 2009, Colorado voter registration was exactly evenly divided, with Republicans, Democrats and unaffiliated voters each accounting for 33% of the electorate. When asked whether they expected a difference in use of mail ballots by party registration, a majority of the Clerks (54%) said that major party registrants would be more likely to vote by mail (Figure 12-A). The Clerks were also asked whether they thought Republicans or Democrats would be more likely to vote by mail. Three-fifths said they expected no partisan difference, one-fifth expected more Democrats to vote by mail, and about one-sixth expected more Republicans to vote by mail (Figure 12-B). This expectation likely reflects the relative strength of partisan campaign activity in the 2008 election, because Republicans were slightly more likely to vote by mail in previous general elections.

The actual turnout using mail ballots met the Clerks' expectations with regard to partisanship. As evident in Figure 12-C, the use of mail ballots was almost identical (52% of Democrats and 51% of Republicans) and significantly higher among major party voters than among unaffiliated voters (39%). The similar usage rates between the registered Democrats and Republicans indicates that either the candidates and parties on both sides were equally matched in recruiting people to vote by mail or that a significant portion of the growth in voting by mail was driven by non-partisan efforts. The lower usage rates by unaffiliated voters is also consistent with both their lower overall participation rates and the conjecture that candidates and parties were engaged in a mail voting arms race.

The expectations of the Clerks appear to be largely incorrect with regard to the use of mail ballots by race and ethnicity. In Figure 13-A, only 27% of the Clerks expected white voters to be

more likely to use mail ballots to vote. Thirty percent of the Clerks expected no difference and 14% expected minority voters to be more likely to use mail ballots to vote in the 2008 General Election. Figure 13-B and Figure 13-C show that as the percentage of Hispanics and African Americans increases the likelihood of turnout with a mail ballot decreases. These figures use Census data on the percentage of the population that is Hispanic or African American,^{xi} so they are an indirect measurement of use by minority voters and interpretations risk committing an ecological inference fallacy. This is the best available information to make this type of assessment because race and ethnicity are not recorded on the voter file records in Colorado.

The Clerks who expressed clear expectations about usage across income and education levels were correct, but the plurality of the Clerks reported that they expected no difference between voters with high and low levels of income and education (Figure 14-A). A quarter of the Clerks expected high income and high education voters to be more likely to turn out using a mail ballot. Only one Clerk expected low income and low education voters to be more likely to use a mail ballot. Figure 14-B and Figure 14-C show that as the median income and the percentage of the population with a bachelors degree increase, the rate of turnout by mail ballot also increases. This increasing mail ballot usage is consistent with overall patterns of turnout by income and education. This consistency with overall patterns of turnout by socio-economic group suggests that the convenience of voting by mail does not mitigate the socio-economic disparities in participation. Figure 14-B and Figure 14-C use Census data because individual income and education data is not available on the voter file.

Figure 8-A

Prediction of More Likely to Use Mail Voting by Age

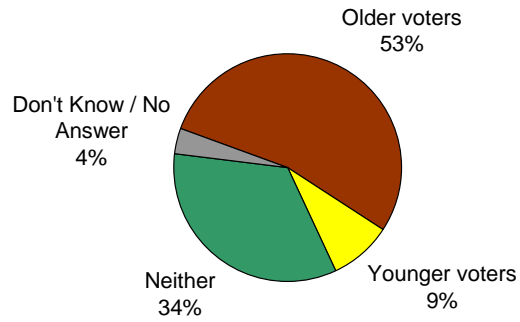


Figure 8-B

Turnout Using Mail Ballots by Age

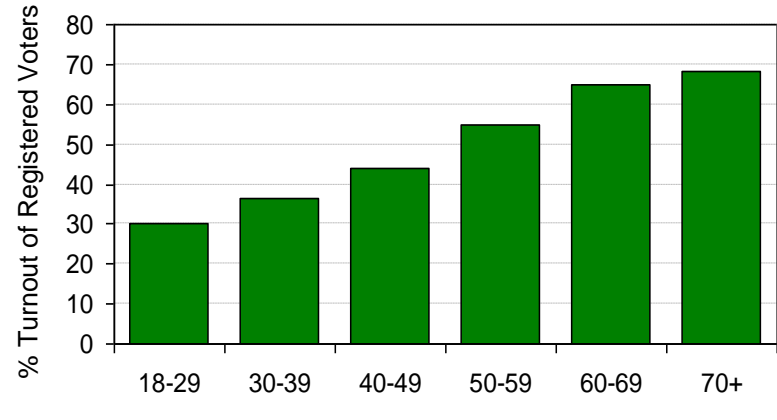


Figure 9-A

Prediction of More Likely to Use Mail Voting by Length of Registration

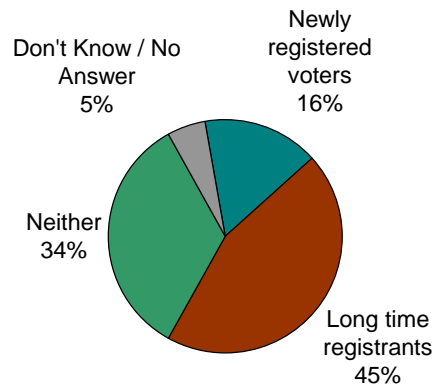


Figure 9-B

Use of Mail Ballots by Length of Registration

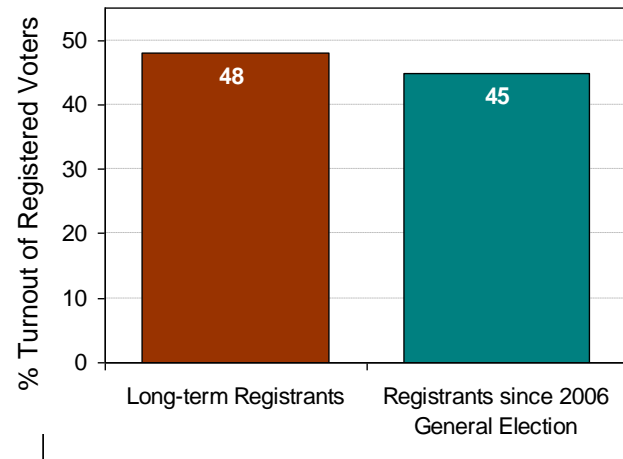


Figure 10-A

**Prediction of More Likely to Use Mail Voting
by Frequency of Voting**

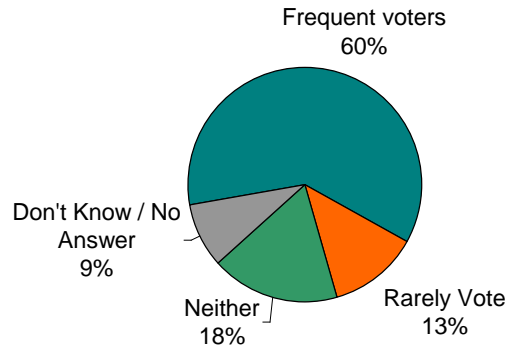


Figure 10-B

**Turnout Using Mail Ballots
by Count of Past General Elections Voted**

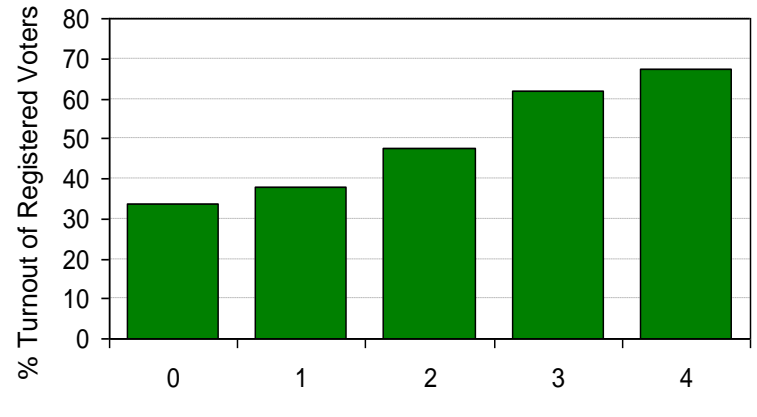


Figure 10-C

**Turnout Using Mail Ballots
by Count of Past General Elections
Using Voting by Mail**

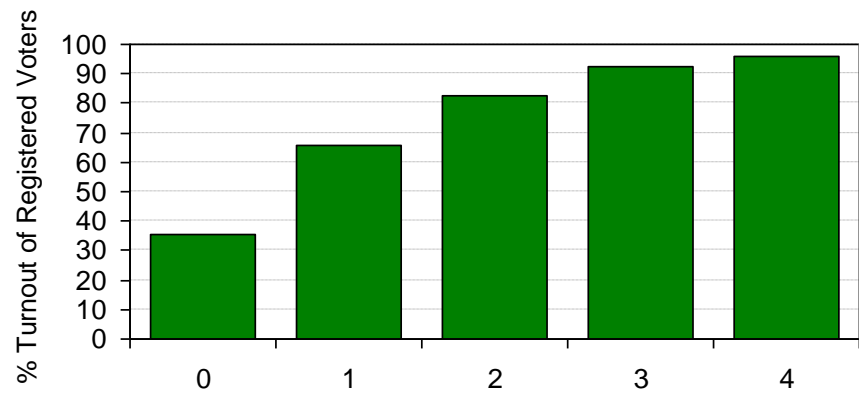


Figure 11-A

Prediction of Gender More Likely to Use Mail Voting

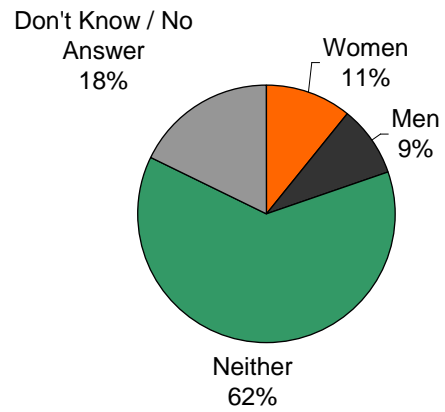


Figure 11-B

Use of Mail Ballots Among Registered Voters by Gender

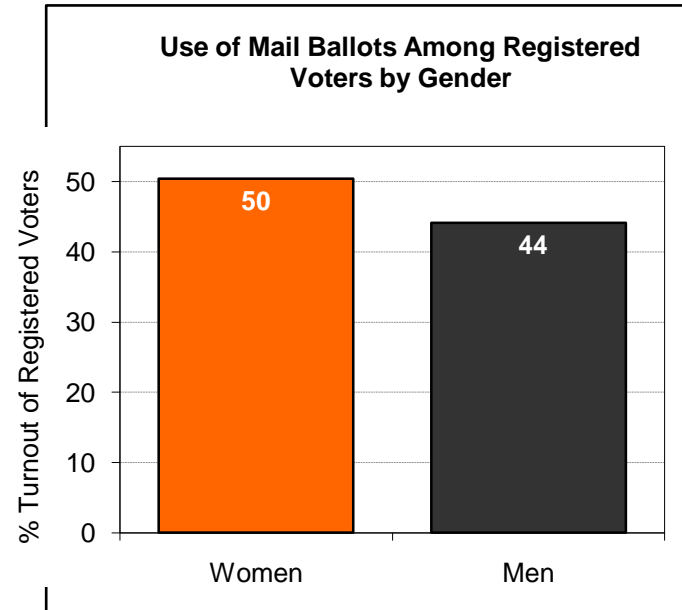


Figure 12-A

Prediction of Major Party or Unaffiliated More Likely to Use Mail Voting

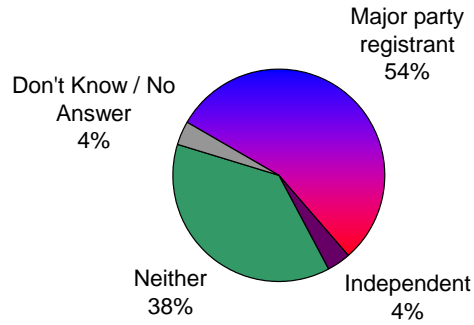


Figure 12-B

Prediction of Party More Likely to Use Mail Voting

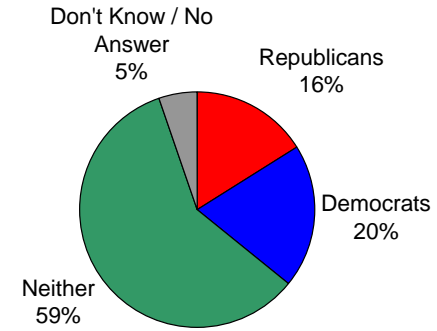


Figure 12-C

Turnout Using Mail Ballots by Major Parties

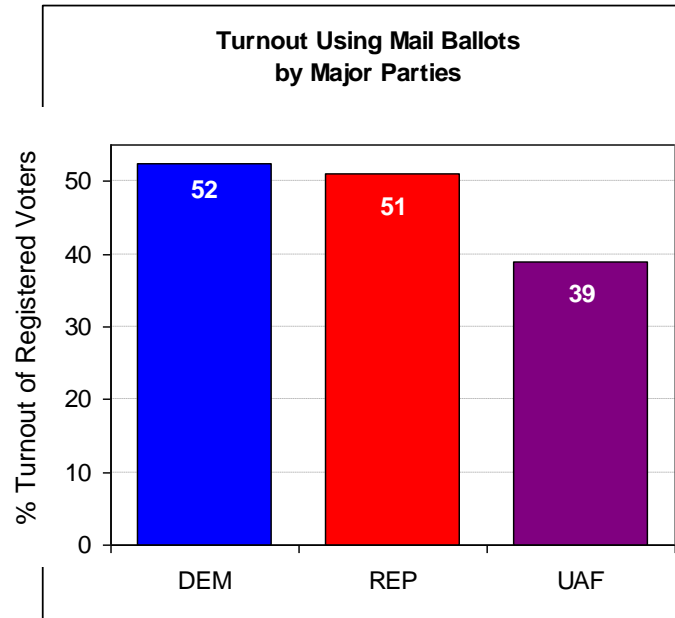


Figure 13-A
Prediction of More Likely to Use Mail Voting
by Race / Ethnicity

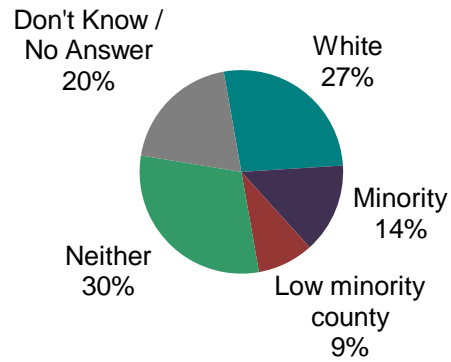


Figure 13-B

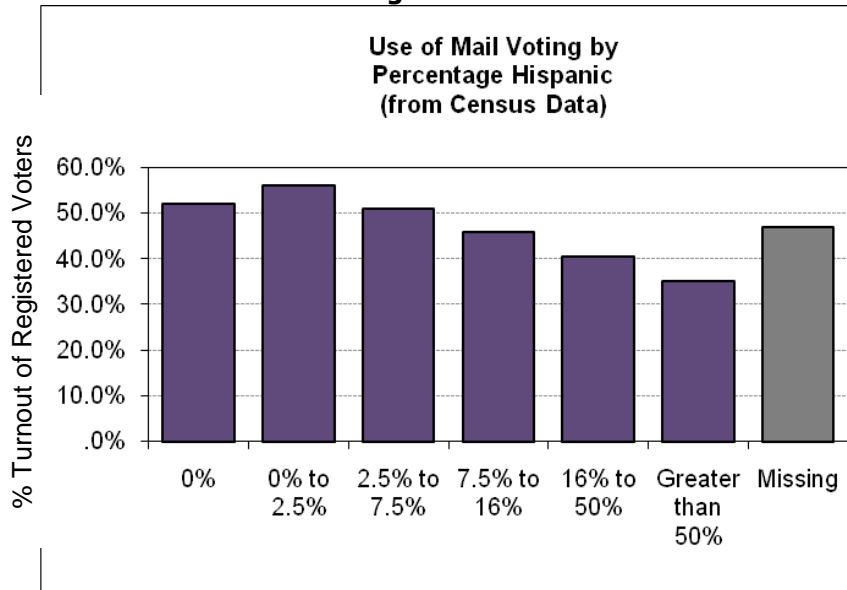


Figure 13-C

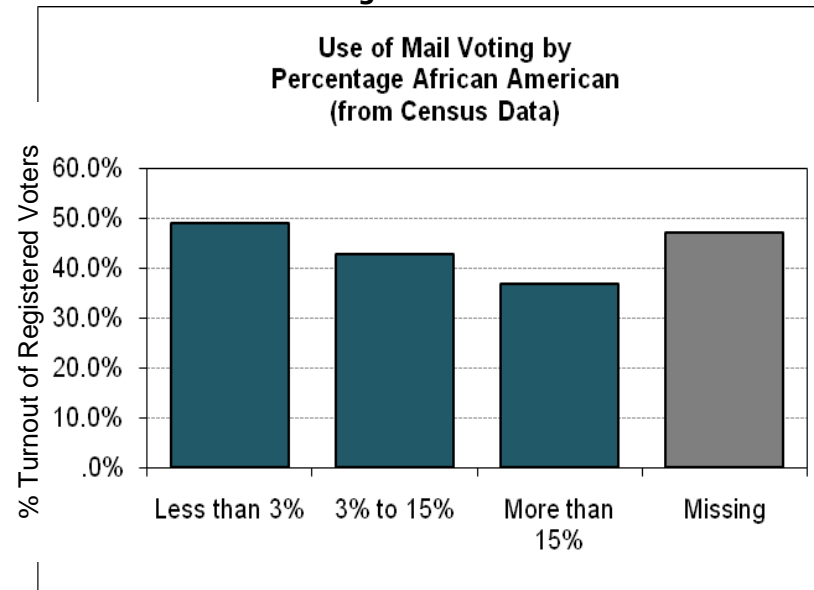


Figure 14-A

**Prediction of More Likely to Use Mail Voting
by Education & Income**

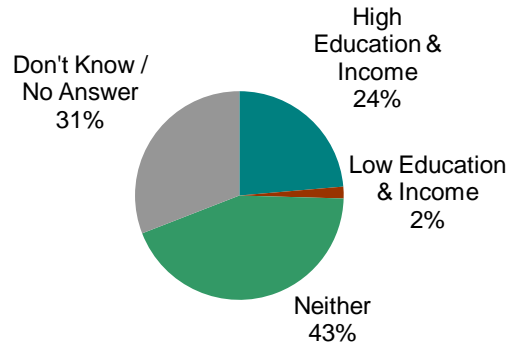


Figure 14-B

**Use of Mail Voting by Median Income
(from Census Data)**

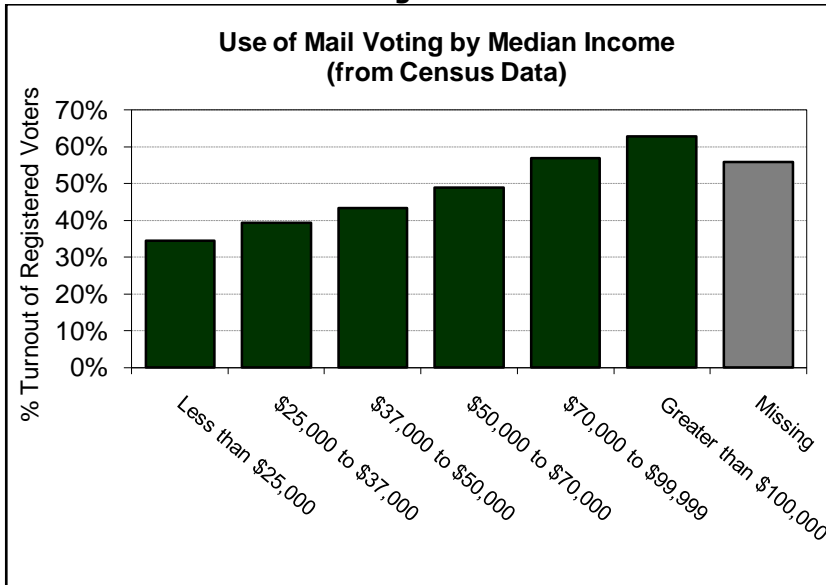
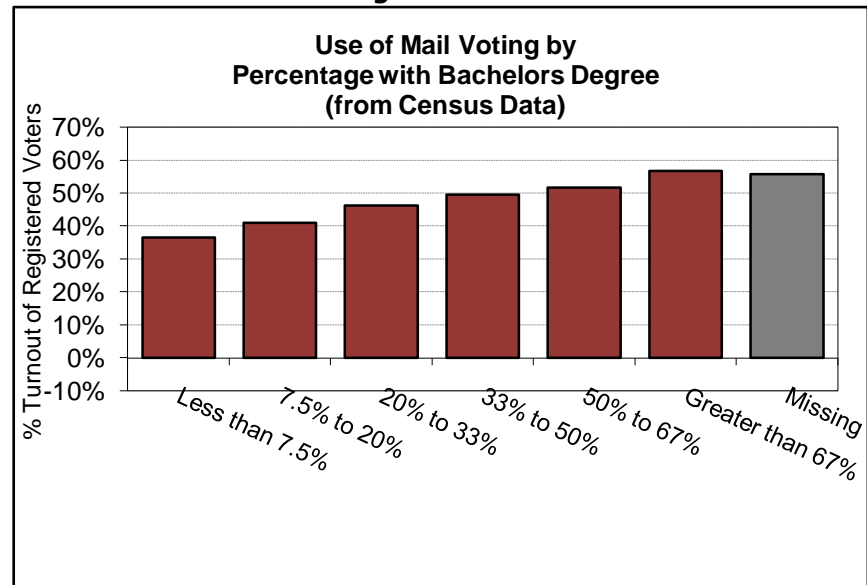


Figure 14-C

**Use of Mail Voting by
Percentage with Bachelors Degree
(from Census Data)**

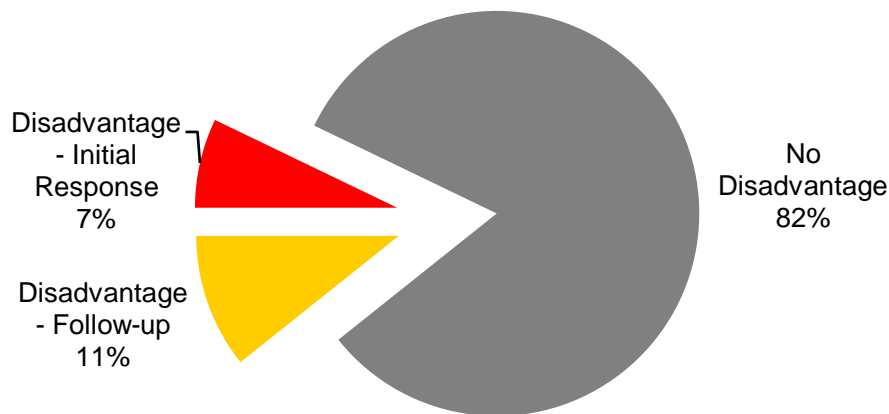


Demographic Disadvantage from Voting by Mail

Many voting rights organizations and critics of voting by mail offer a number of reasons why a vote by mail system might disadvantage certain demographic and socio-economic groups over others. These reasons include high residential mobility, lower reliability of mail delivery, less trust in the Post Office, less understanding of the procedures for voting by mail, and affordability of postage among those with lower socio-economic status.

At the end of the pre-election survey, after the questions about demographic disparities, the Clerks were asked if they saw any potential for advantages or disadvantages to mail-based voting (Figure 15). Only 4 Clerks mentioned disadvantaged groups of voters in the initial question. When pressed for a response, an additional 6 mentioned potentially disadvantaged groups.

Figure 15
Clerks' Concerns about Disadvantages from Voting by Mail



These responses should be interpreted cautiously, since Clerks were being asked to self-identify problems that could result in legal action about voting rights for potentially protected groups. A Clerk may have considered a potential disadvantage but been unwilling to share that in the survey.

Discussion

The Clerks appear to have anticipated the high levels of voter turnout in the 2008 General Election. More importantly, the Clerks were remarkably accurate in their pre-election projections about the proportion of ballots cast using each type of voting. Given the major change from the permanent mail voting statute, the Clerks were making projections about voting method without past voting patterns as a reference. The accuracy may be due in part to conducting the pre-election survey in mid-October when they already knew how many mail ballot requests had been received and were beginning to hold early voting.

With regard to potential demographic disparities in the use of voting by mail, most Clerks who responded with clear expectations seem to accurately assess most differences in the likelihood of voting by mail. Notably, many of the Clerks either did not have or declined to report expectations of differences.

Although critics of voting by mail express concerns about some types of voters being disadvantaged, the Clerks do not appear to share these concerns. The absence of expressed concern may reflect the Clerks' sensitivity to legal risk, but it seems more likely that it reflects a focus on the administration of elections according to statutory and regulatory requirements. Thus, it is very reasonable for the Clerks to focus on how to administer the process.

3) Motivations of Election Officials about Promoting Voting by Mail

Should Local Election Officials Promote Voting?

The public has a general expectation that election officials are responsible for promoting voter turnout through outreach and education (Konisky and Powell 2009). However, the public's expectation may not fit with the priorities of local election officials. In reviewing the research literature and media coverage of election administration, the research team identified three goals which election officials are expected to reach:

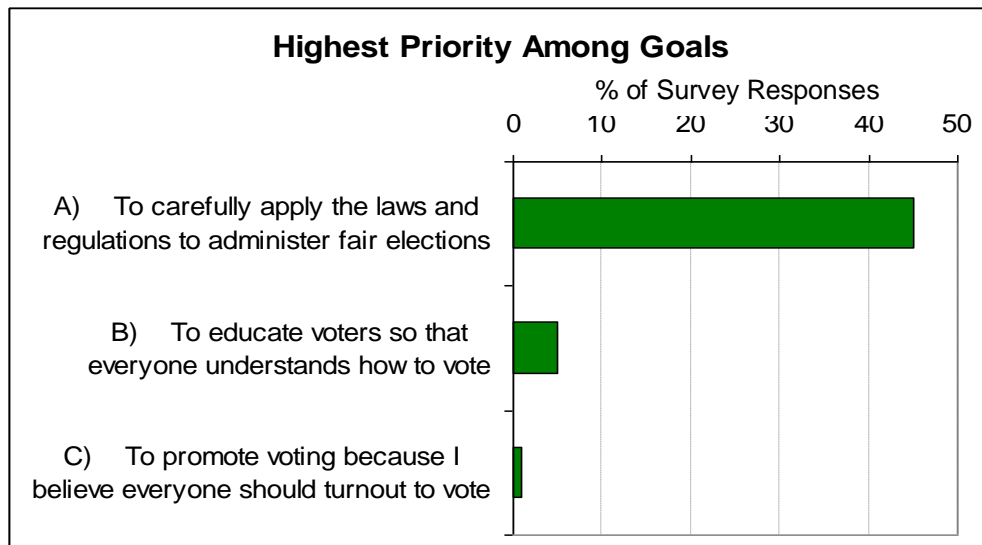
- a) To carefully apply the laws and regulations to administer fair elections
- b) To educate voters so that everyone understands how to vote
- c) To promote voting because everyone should turn out to vote

There was little consensus about which of these is the highest priority since the goals were usually addressed in isolation from one another. To get insight about how the Clerks prioritize among these goals, the post-election survey included a closed-choice question about which was the highest priority.

The Clerks were nearly unanimous in reporting that their highest priority was "[t]o carefully apply the laws and regulations to administer fair elections" (Figure 16). Only five county Clerks selected "educating voters so that everyone understands how to vote" and only one county reported that the highest priority was "to promote voting because everyone should turn out to vote".

Despite the lopsided response, the interviewers repeatedly heard that this was a difficult choice because all three goals are important. Thus, the response should not be interpreted to say that the Clerks think that voter education and mobilization are unimportant, just that they are less important than fulfilling election administration responsibilities.

Figure 16

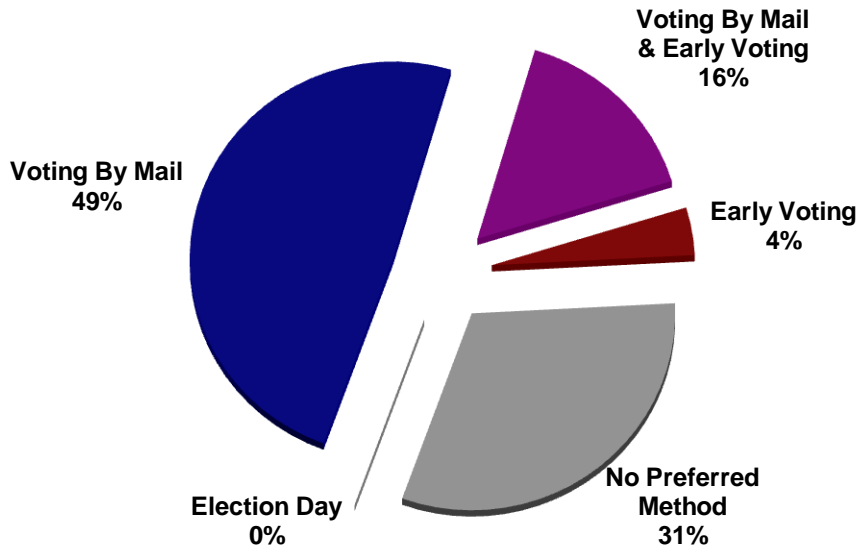


What Types of Voting Do Election Officials Promote?

A large majority of the Clerks had clear opinions about their preferred method of voting. When asked whether they encouraged voters to use a particular method of casting a ballot almost half of the counties (25 of 51) encouraged mail voting and an additional 8 counties reported

encouraging both mail voting and early in-person voting (Figure 17). Only two counties reported encouraging early in-person voting as the only preferred method of voting. No county reported encouraging Election Day voting as the preferred method of voting. The remaining one-third of the counties reported no preference when promoting voting.

Figure 17
Method of Voting Encouraged by County Clerk & Recorder



Does Past Mail Voting Prompt Promotion by Local Election Officials?

In promoting the use of voting by mail, local election officials may be acting independently to change the way elections are conducted or they may be responding to the demands of their voters for mail voting. Past levels of voting by mail in each county provide the Clerks with a signal about voters' favorability towards voting by mail. A positive signal in the form of high use of mail voting in a previous election cycle may make the Clerks more inclined to do more to encourage mail voting in subsequent elections in an effort to be responsive to apparent public desires.

The relationship between the Clerks' preference for encouraging mail voting and past use of mail ballots is weak. The correlations between encouraging mail voting and the percentage of ballots cast by mail in the 2006 and 2004 General Elections are positive, but small and not statistically significant (2006: 0.209, $p=0.141$; 2004: 0.135, $p=0.346$).

This result suggests that Clerks' decisions are influenced by factors other than voter preferences as measured by past usage. Past use of voting by mail may be a part of Clerks' motivations to encourage its use in 2008, but only a small part.

Reasons to Promote Voting by Mail and Early Voting

Both the pre- and post-election surveys asked the Clerks about the importance of different reasons to promote voting by mail and early in-person voting. The surveys framed these items as reasons to allocate resources towards promoting vote by mail in this election (pre-election survey) or future elections based on lessons learned in the 2008 election (post-election survey).

Voting by Mail

Generally, the Clerks considered each of the items as strong reasons to promote mail voting. Table 1 shows the mean response on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 means the factor is very important. Figures 18 and 19 on the following page illustrate that the opinions of the Clerks are concentrated at the high end of the range.

Based on feedback to the pre-election survey, the post-election survey added an item about the length of the ballot and split the statement that mail voting was “easier and less costly to administer” into separate statements on ease and cost of administration.

Table 1
Reasons Why Local Election Officials Promoted Mail Voting

	Pre-Election (Mean)	Post-Election (Mean)
More time to complete the ballot	--	9.1
Reduce Election Day problems	9.0	8.7
More convenient for voters	9.0	8.6
Less costly to administer	8.4*	8.4
Increase overall turnout	8.4	8.2
Easier to administer	8.4*	8.0
Avoid voting machine problems	6.7	7.2

** In the pre-Election survey these items were combined as one question.
“More time to complete the ballot added for the post-election survey.*

In the post-election survey, the newly added item on time to complete the ballot had the highest average rating. The counties were particularly sensitive to the ballot completion issue in the 2008 General Election because a large number of state ballot measures resulted in the longest ballot in Colorado state history. The prominence of this reason for promoting mail voting might not persist in other elections with shorter ballots.

Among the remaining items, the rank ordering stayed nearly identical in the pre-election and post-election surveys. The mean values in the post-election survey are marginally lower, but this appears consistent across almost all of the items so it may reflect the generally lower level of urgency in the post-election environment rather than a meaningful decline.

The split of ease and cost of administration reveals that Clerks place higher importance on the cost savings than the administrative ease. Unfortunately, the survey failed to capture whether this is because the difference in cost is larger than the difference in administrative burden or if they simply place a higher importance on saving taxpayer funds than reducing their own workload. It seems likely that both reasons play a role in the observed results and is worth exploring in future research.

It is noteworthy that an open-ended request in the post-election survey for other reasons to promote mail voting in the post-election survey garnered no additional responses. While there is a risk that the list of reasons biased the Clerks against adding more, the general loquaciousness of most respondents suggests that most of them were not reluctant to elaborate when they felt more explanation was warranted.

Figure 18
Distribution of Pre-Election Responses

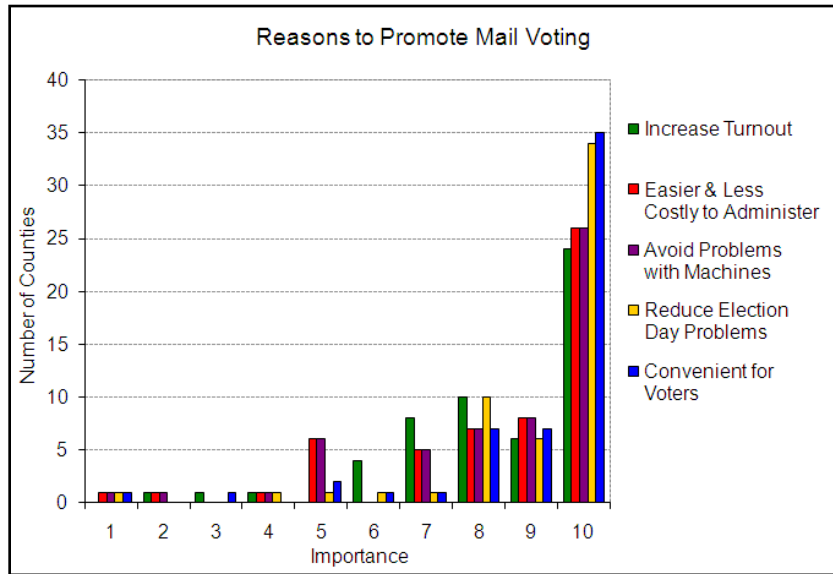
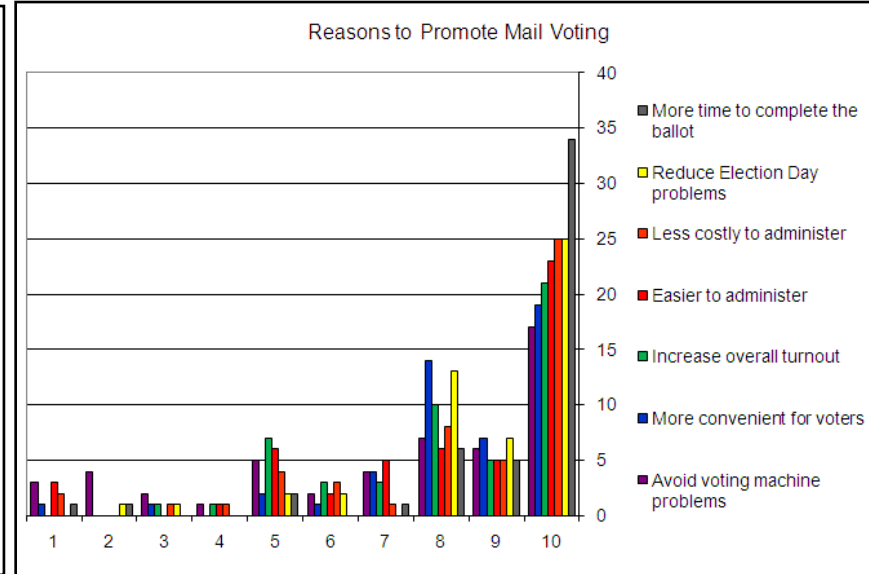


Figure 19
Distribution of Post-Election Responses



Early In-Person Voting

The Clerks were notably less enthusiastic about early in-person voting (Table 2), although opinions about early in-person voting are more dispersed than opinions on voting by mail (Figures 20 & 21). On average, only the convenience for voters was given much importance for early in-person voting. Early in-person voting was rated as having little importance for time to complete the ballot, ease of administration, cost of administration, or avoiding problems with voting machines.

The mean values about the importance of early in-person voting dropped more substantially between the pre-election survey and the post-election survey than for voting by mail. This may reflect a lack of urgency in the post-election context as above or it could be an indication of stronger preference for using voting by mail following the experience of the 2008 Election. The latter interpretation is supported by the comments of some Clerks about the declining importance and/or value of conducting early in-person voting.

Comments offered to supplement the numerical ratings in the table below suggest that supporters of early voting believe that having multiple options is important and/or that they have a cadre of voters who prefer to vote early in-person. Still, the impression from the responses is that early in-person voting generates less enthusiasm from the Clerks than voting by mail.

Table 2
Reasons Why Local Election Officials Promoted Early In-Person Voting

	Pre-Election (Mean)	Post-Election (Mean)
More convenient for voters	7.5	6.2
Reduce Election Day problems	6.9	5.5
Increase overall turnout	7.6	5.0
More time to complete the ballot	--	4.1
Easier to administer	5.4*	3.9
Avoid voting machine problems	4.5	3.3
Less costly to administer	5.4*	3.2

* In the pre-Election survey these items were combined as one question

Figure 20
Distribution of Pre-Election Responses

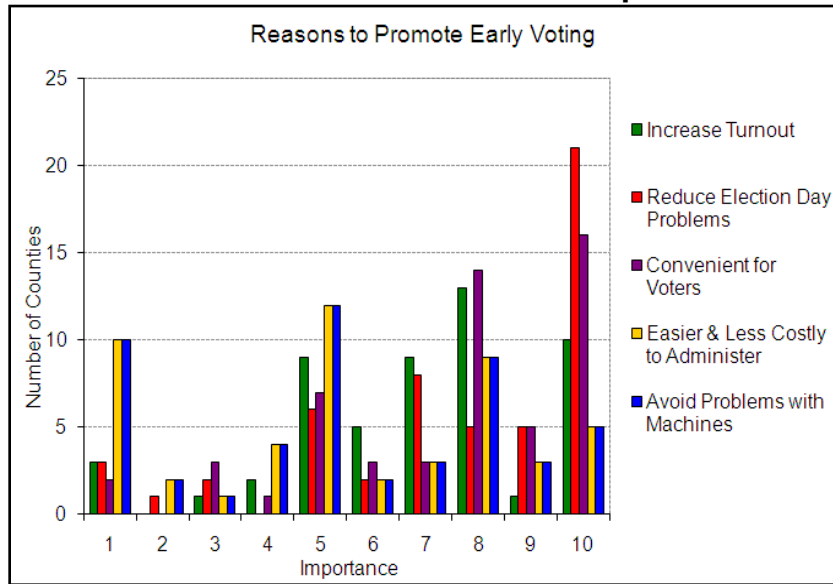
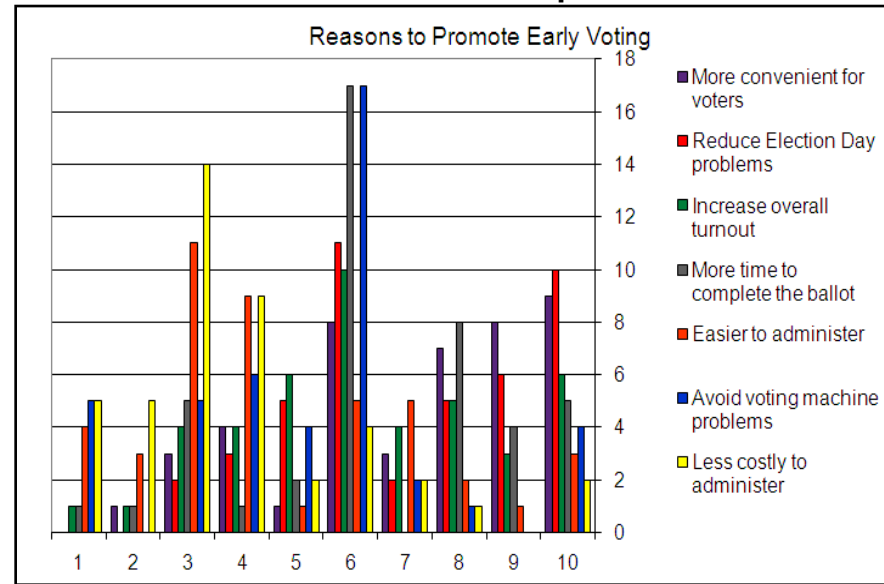


Figure 21
Distribution of Post-Election Responses



Discussion

The Clerks see their highest responsibility as the careful and fair administration of election regulations and statutes. Although they have some latitude in how they run an election, it is important to remember that they are members of the executive branch of the government in the truest sense. They have to implement elections laws created by other branches and levels of government. While Clerks may advise lawmakers during the policymaking process, Clerks are forced to execute whatever programs are created by other branches, even if they disagree with them.. It is valuable to view the Clerks as bureaucratic actors rather than policymakers in order to understand how they conceptualize their role in the electoral process in terms of what they can and should do.

The overwhelming response of the Clerks regarding their highest priority is noteworthy in light of the frequent expectation by civic participation groups that local election officials should play a role in voter education and promoting participation. Election officials prioritize careful application of laws and regulations and – based on the budgets for outreach discussed in Section 4 – have meager resources for voter education. This difference between the priorities and resources of elections administrators and the expectations of civic participation groups is likely a source of much of the friction between two groups whose ideals about high levels of participation in elections generally align.

The preference for encouraging voters to use mail ballots rather than other methods of voting was quite strong in 2008. Moreover, this preference is driven by much more than simple voter demand. Responsiveness to voter demand may be a small part of the Clerks' motivations, but other factors motivate the Clerks to encourage voters to cast ballots by mail. The experience of the 2008 election did little to change the Clerks' opinions about the importance or ranking of reasons to promote mail voting.

The advantages to the Clerks are clear in many of the highly rated reasons for encouraging mail voting (e.g. reduce Election Day problems, easier to administer, less costly to administer, avoid problems with machines). The Clerks' comments about the reasons for encouraging mail voting indicate that the reasons that we included as benefits to the voters also benefit the Clerks in administering the election. For example, providing more time to complete a very long ballot was good for voters, but it also reduced the potential for problems with long lines at the polls. Based on the additional comments of the Clerks in response to these questions, it appears that where voters may see more convenience in mail voting the Clerks see ballots handled by their own staff rather than volunteer election judges which gives them more confidence or comfort in the administration of the election.

Although the picture from this single set of surveys is not complete, the impression is that the Clerks are motivated to promote mail voting based on their own incentives concerning election administration. These incentives align with the reasons that voters are shifting to mail voting, but they are not the one and the same. Voter preferences appear to be only a small portion of what motivates the Clerks to favor mail voting over other methods.

4) Resource Allocation

Staff and Training

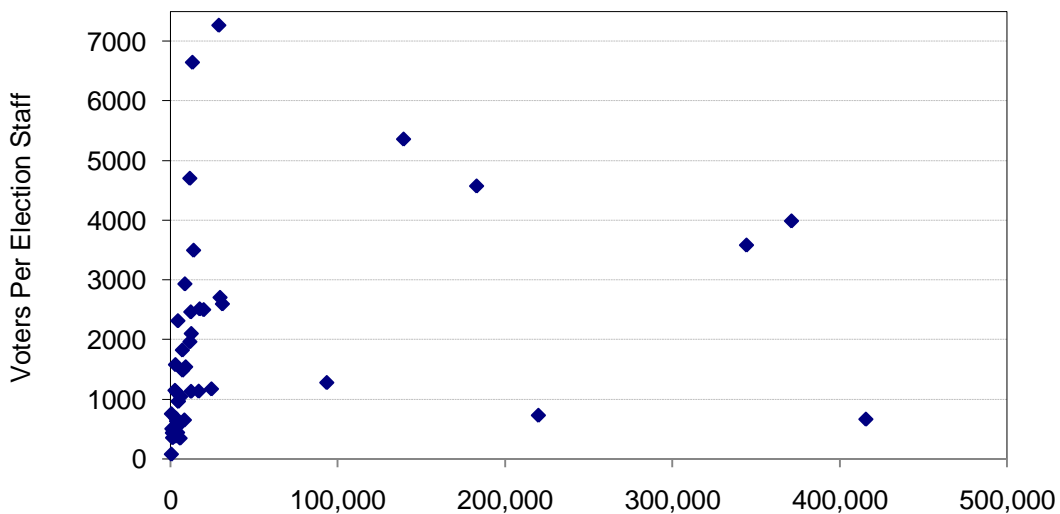
In the post-election survey, three-quarters of the Clerks reported no difficulty in finding staff with the skills and training to administer the General Election. Many commented that they already had a veteran staff with the necessary skills in the Clerk's office.

Eighty percent of the Clerks reported needing to hire additional temporary staff and/or borrow personnel from other county departments to administer the election and 60% reported that full-time staff members worked overtime between Labor Day and Election Day. Many Clerks commented that the time demands were higher in October than any other time because of the simultaneous onset of the early voting period and late surge in mail ballot requests.

The ratio of voters per election staff member in each Clerk's office provides another measure of the workload for the Clerks. The post-election survey gathered data on the total number of permanent staff in the elections division of each Clerk's office, the number of staff borrowed from other divisions of the Clerk's office and other county departments for election administration, and the number of temporary workers hired for election administration work. These questions did not include volunteers such as election judges.

Figures 22-24 shows the ratio of voters to staff involved in election administration. The charts reflect the total number of staff engaged in election administration, including borrowed and temporary staff. Figure 22 shows that 40% of the counties in the post-election survey kept the number of registered voters per election staff member below 1,000 and 60% kept the number of registered voters per staff member below 2,000. The large counties with more than 90,000 registered voters were somewhat more likely to have higher voter to staff ratios. Several outliers had much higher ratios, but they are so far from the other responses that these seem likely to be due to misinterpretation of the question, inaccurate data provided in response, or error in recording the response.

Figure 22
Ratio of Voters to Election Staff Member
(Includes Permanent Staff, Borrowed County Staff & Temporary Staff)



Note: Three counties are excluded from graph: the ratios are 12,081, 12,447, and 31,215.

The data presented in Figures 23 & 24 indicate no relationship between the staff ratio and average county income or the percent of residents with a college degree in the county.

Figure 23

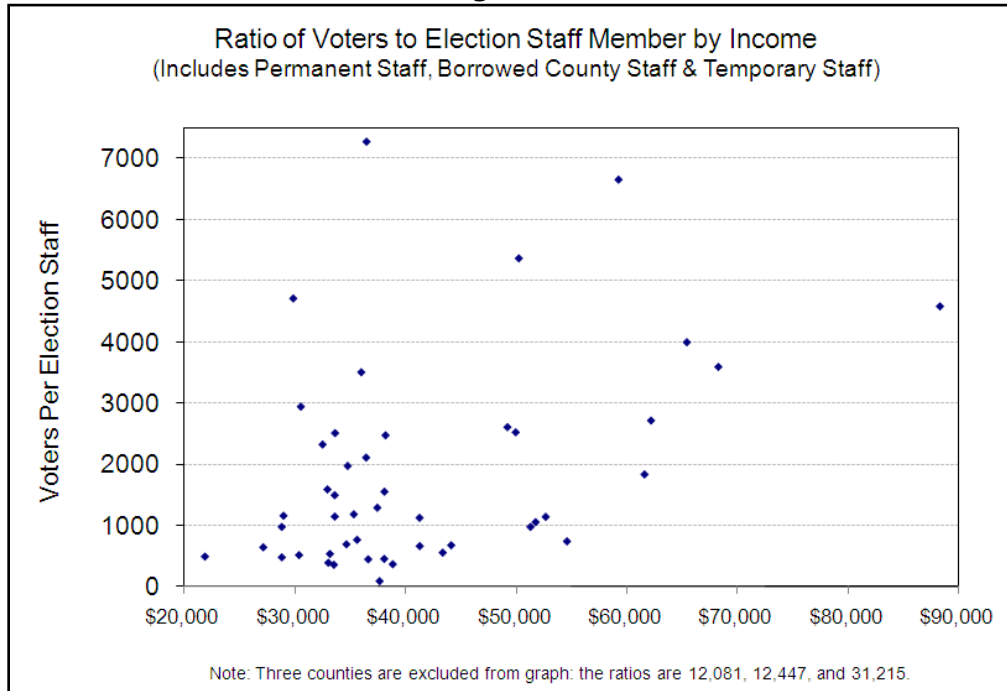
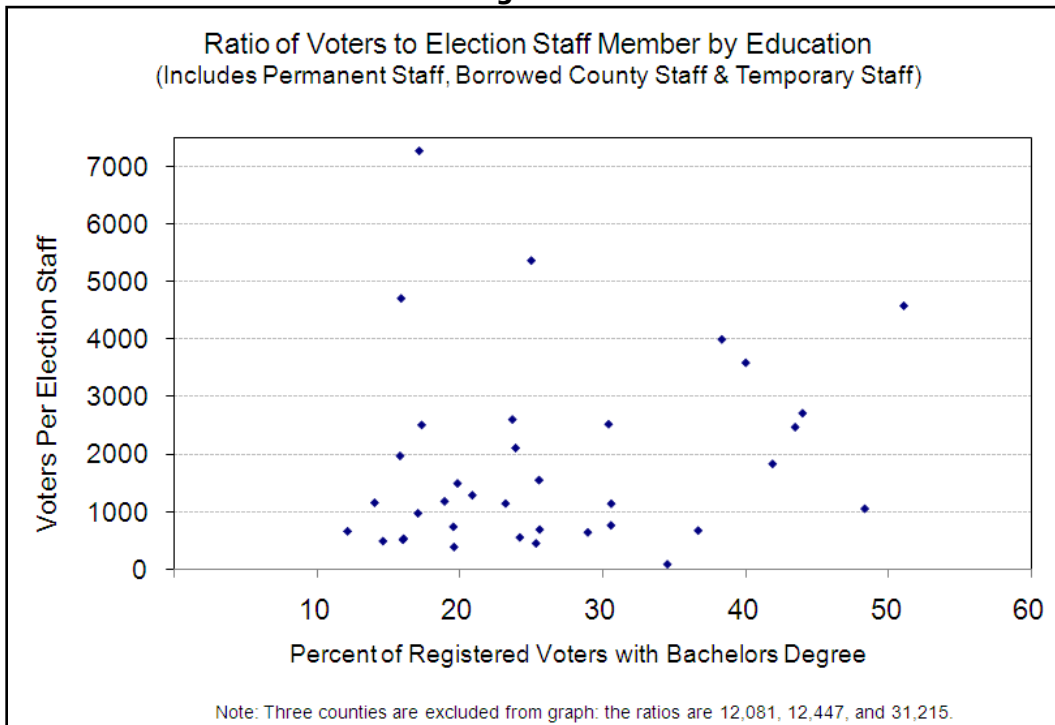


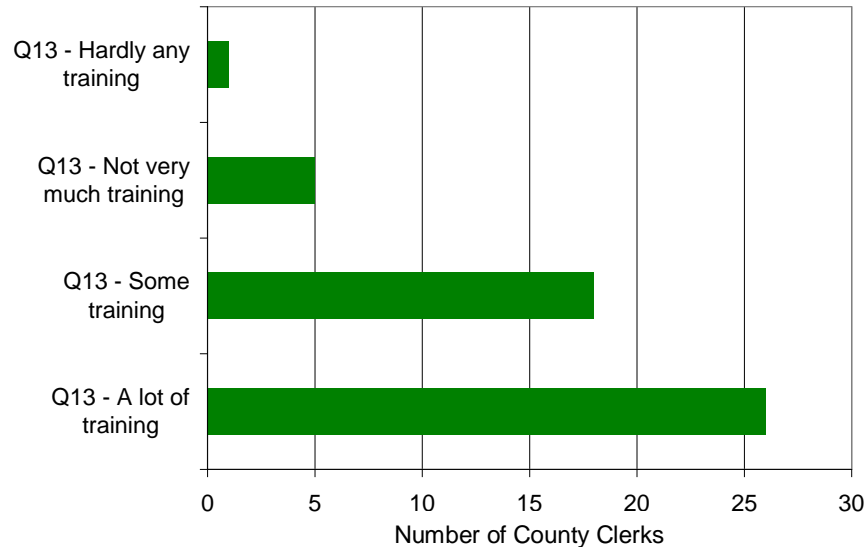
Figure 24



Despite reporting that they had no trouble finding staff with the necessary skills and training, the Clerks still conducted what they considered to be “a lot of training” for the 2008 General Election (Figure 25). The comments of the Clerks suggest that the training was needed in three areas: 1) training of temporary staff and staff borrowed from other county departments, 2) training of all staff on the new statewide voter registration SCORE system when it was implemented in 2008, and 3) the need to train large numbers of volunteer election judges for Election Day (and some early voting) polling places.^{xii}

Figure 25

Training Required For 2008 Election



Financial Resources

The post-election survey requested data on the Clerks’ budgets for administration and voter education in the 2008 election. It is important to note that we did not delve deeply into budgets and costs; these figures are approximate estimates of budgets for 2008 election rather than an exact financial accounting. Since the number of registered voters varies from 591 in San Juan County to 415,806 in the City and County of Denver, comparisons across counties require looking at the budget per registered voter. The budget per vote cast tracks closely with the budget per registered voter because turnout across the counties had a relatively narrow range.

Election Administration Budget

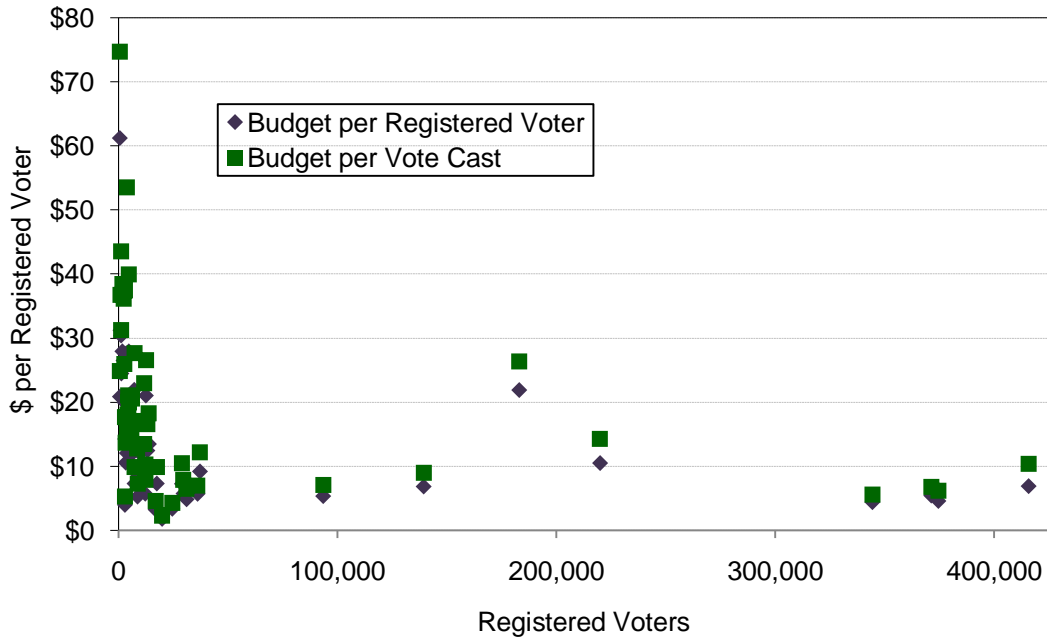
The chart below displays the budget per voter for the 2008 election in each county. The budget numbers reflect the total budget reported by the Clerks, including any supplements to their original budgets received in 2008.

Forty-five percent of the counties responding to the post-election survey spent less than \$10 per registered voter to administer the 2008 election (Figure 26). Three quarters of the counties spent less than \$20 per registered voter to administer the election. The highest budget per voter figures were reported in smaller counties.

Figure 26 shows the relationship between the election administration budget and the number of registered voters in each county. Figure 26 suggests that economies of scale may reduce the costs significantly among the small counties, but this effect disappears above about 20,000 registered voters. Excluding the counties with more than 20,000 registered voters reveals that

the election administration budget per registered voter declines by \$1.35 per 1000 additional voters ($p < 0.001$). There is no statistically significant relationship among the large counties ($p = 0.766$).^{xiii}

Figure 26
Election Administration Budget by County Size



Figures 27 & 28 show that there is no relationship between the budget per registered voter and either the average income or the average education level in each county.

Figure 27
Election Administration Budget by Income

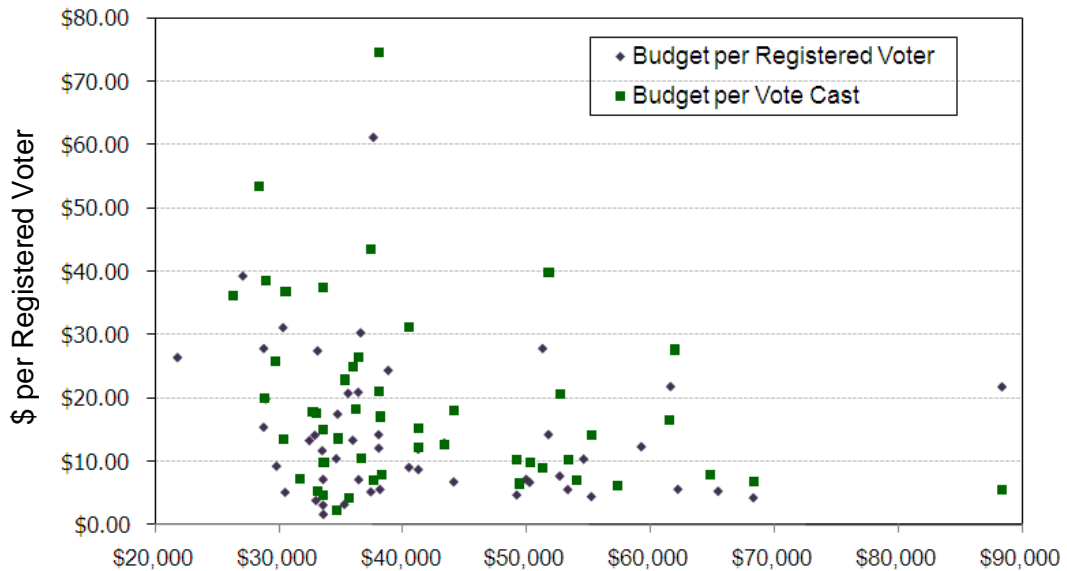
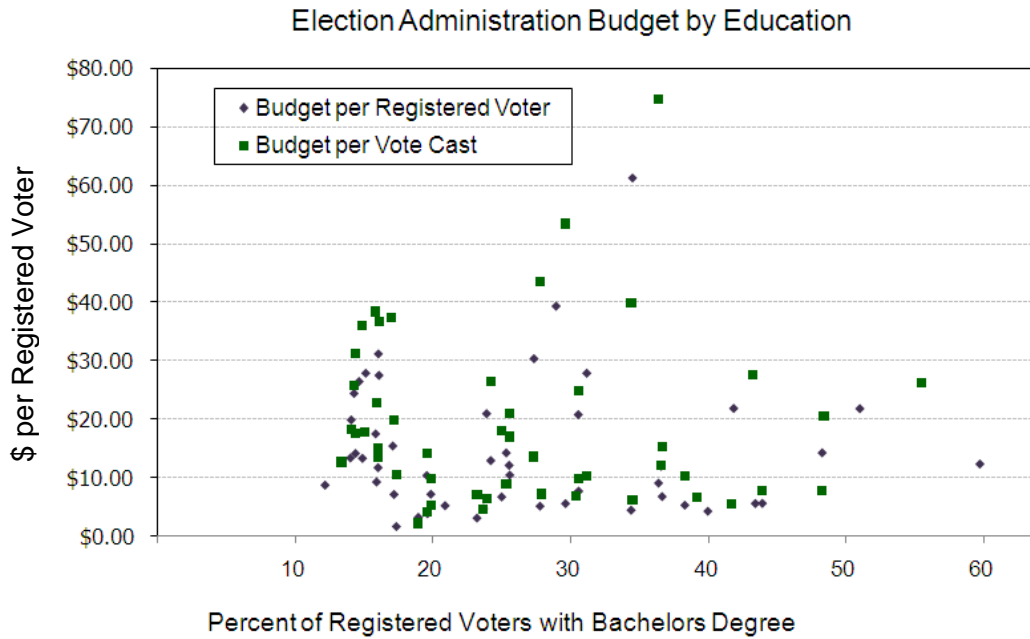


Figure 28



Voter Education Budget

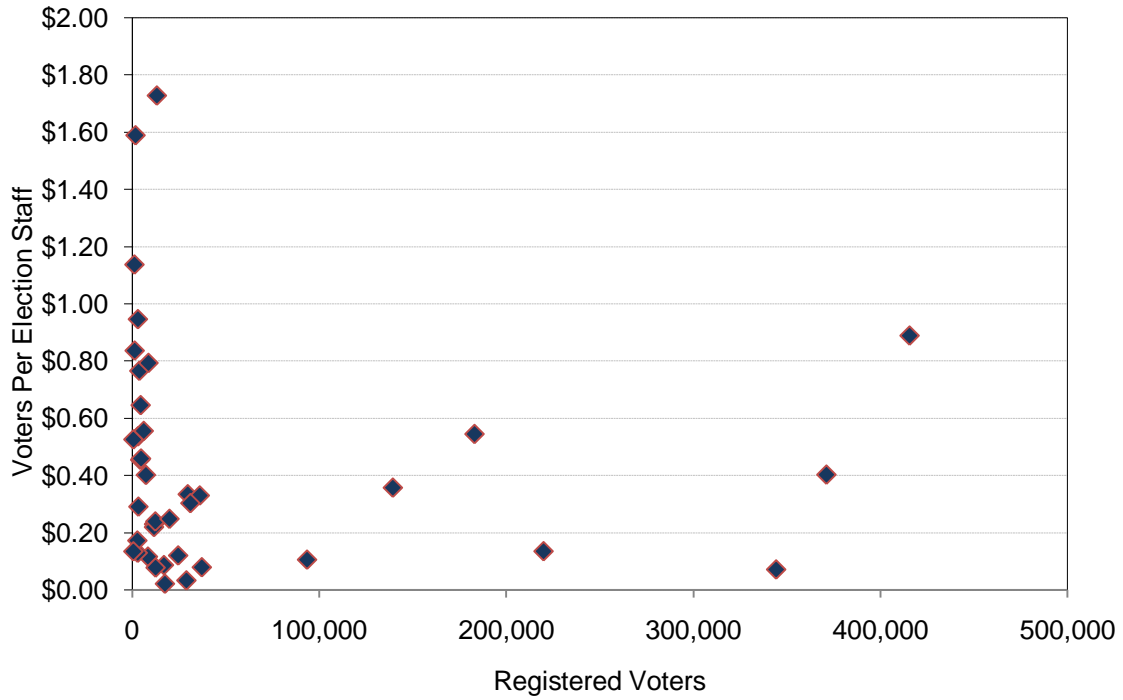
The Clerks’ budgets for voter education constitute a very small portion of the overall election administration budget. This budgeting is consistent with the Clerks’ focus on administration rather than promotion of voting.

Forty percent of the counties that provided data on their voter education budgets in the post-election survey had less than \$0.25 per registered voter to spend on voter education (Figure 29). Sixty percent of the counties had less than \$0.50 to spend on voter education. Only a handful of counties reported a voter education budget of more than \$1.00 per voter and these were all small counties.

Although the voter education budgets are uniformly small, there is some variation by county size. Figure 29 suggests that there are economies of scale in the voter education budgets in small counties similar to the relationship between election administration budget and county size. However, this relationship is not statistically significant for the voter education budget ($p=0.703$).

Figure 29

Voter Education Budget per Registered Voter



As in the charts in the previous section, Figures 30 to 31 show that the voter education budget per registered voter has no relationship with income or education.

Figure 30

Voter Education Budget per Registered Voter by Income

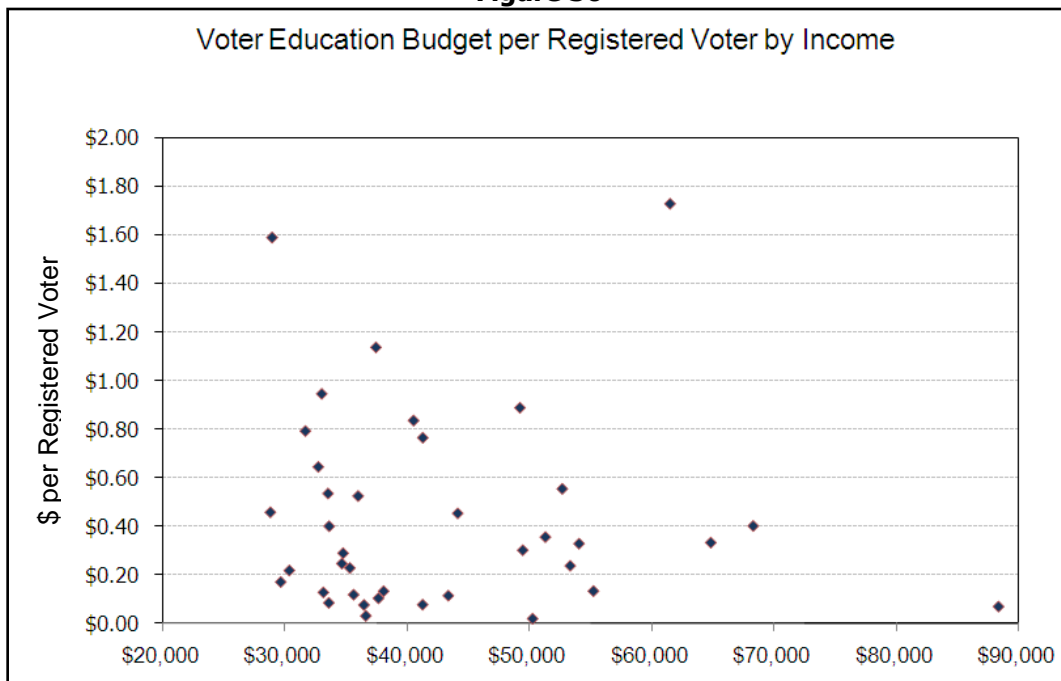
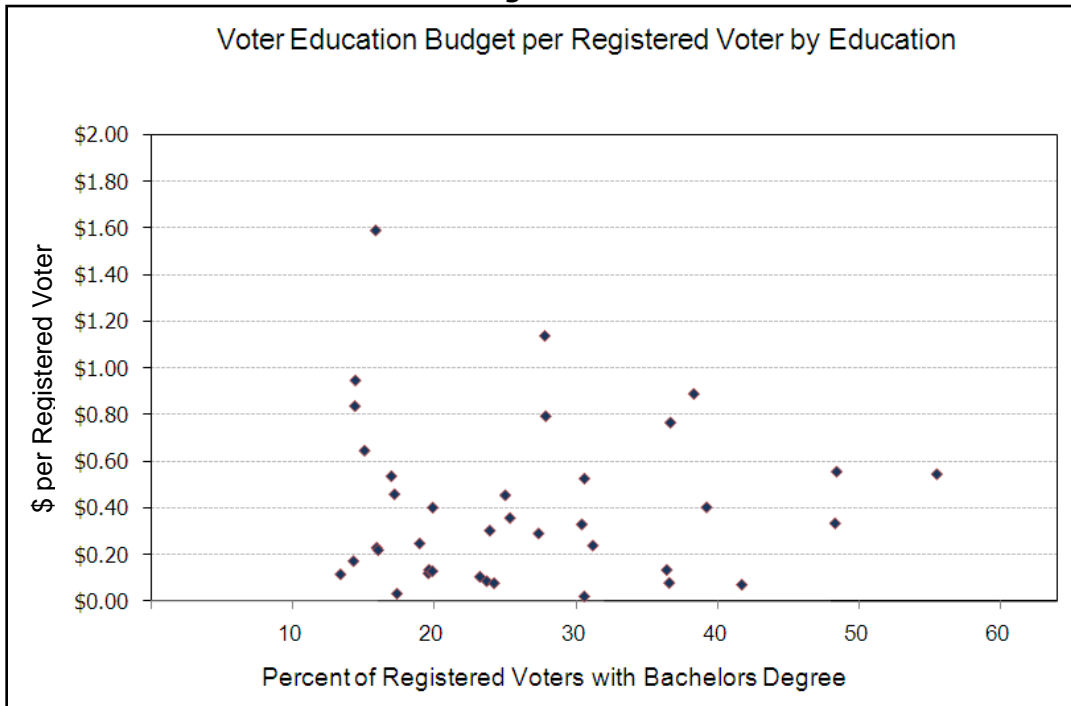
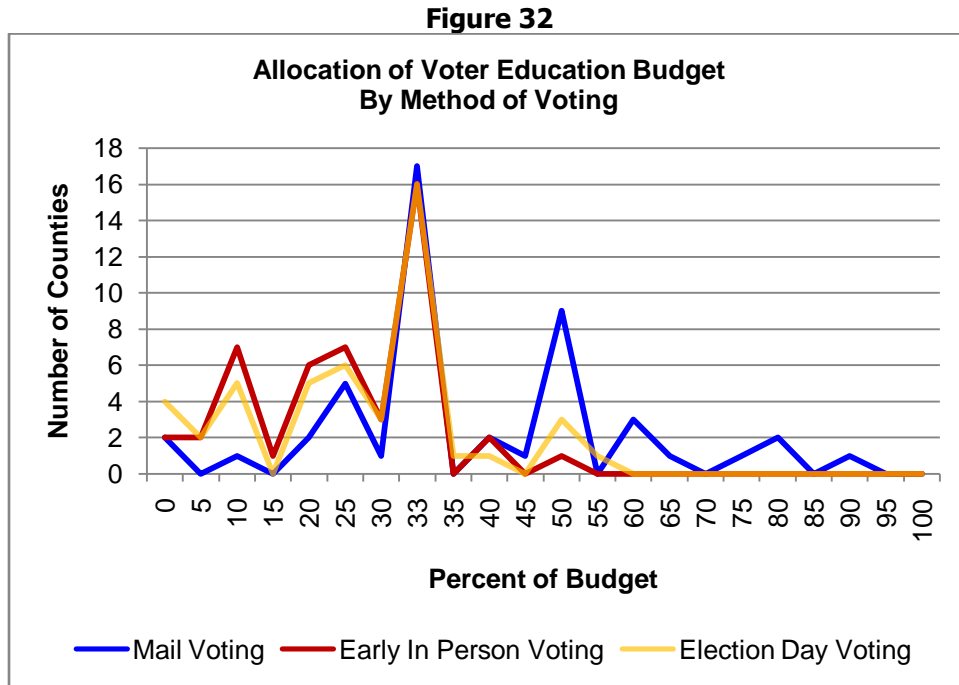


Figure 31



Allocation toward Promoting Various Methods of Voting

The post-election survey asked the Clerks what proportion of their voter education efforts were allocated to each method of voting. The most common response was that all three methods were promoted equally (Figure 32), usually in communications providing information about all options for voting. However, the chart below reveals that when disproportionate allocation occurred it was usually towards promoting mail voting.



Discussion

None of the Clerks characterized the resources for election administration or, especially, for voter education more than adequate and many said they needed supplements to their original 2008 budgets to administer the election. Running elections with three methods of voting already forces Clerks to stretch budgets and borrow staff. The small voter education budgets are consistent with this being a much lower priority for the Clerks and the policy makers who set their budgets. If this interpretation of their priorities is correct, simply increasing total election administration budgets is unlikely to even proportionally increase budgets for voter education. The Clerks seem likely to maintain something close to the current shares of the budget for voter education and implementation by spending most of the funds on aspects of implementation they believe are shortchanged and/or could be improved. Adding funds earmarked funds for voter education by fiscal policymakers at the county, state, or federal level seems like the most likely path to directly increase these budgets.

5) Activities of Election Officials for Promoting Voting by Mail

How Do the Clerks Conduct Voter Outreach?

In the post-election survey, the Clerks were asked to describe the activities intended to educate voters about each of the three domestic voting options: mail voting, early in-person voting, and Election Day voting. For each method of voting, the survey followed up with a question about what the Clerks felt was the most effective activity to educate voters about that particular method of voting. The Clerks were allowed to provide multiple activities, and they occasionally provided more than one activity as the most effective. The research team coded these open ended responses with a consistent set of codes.

Activities

Many Clerks reported using the same activities to educate voters regardless of the method of voting. Overall, newspapers and direct mailings to voters were the most commonly cited forms of voter outreach for all three methods of voting (Figures 33, 34 & 35). Radio, TV, press releases, and media interviews also received multiple mentions, perhaps warranting inclusion with newspapers as media outreach activities. Providing information on the web, responding to inquiries, and even speaking to civic groups were also mentioned as activities.

It should be noted that state law requires the Clerks to mail voters election notifications no later than 25 days prior to the election and ballot measure notices no later than 30 days prior to the election (Colorado Revised Statutes 1.5.206 & Colorado Constitution Article 10, Sec. 20(3)(b)), so every Clerk uses direct mailings in the run up to an election. Based on the Clerks comments in response to this question, budget constraints appear to have prevented any additional mailings beyond the mailings required by statute. Most Clerks who mentioned direct mail reported expanding beyond the information required in the notification mailings (e.g. by providing applications for mail ballots, dates and locations for early voting, location of polling places, or other information about how to vote).

Figure 33

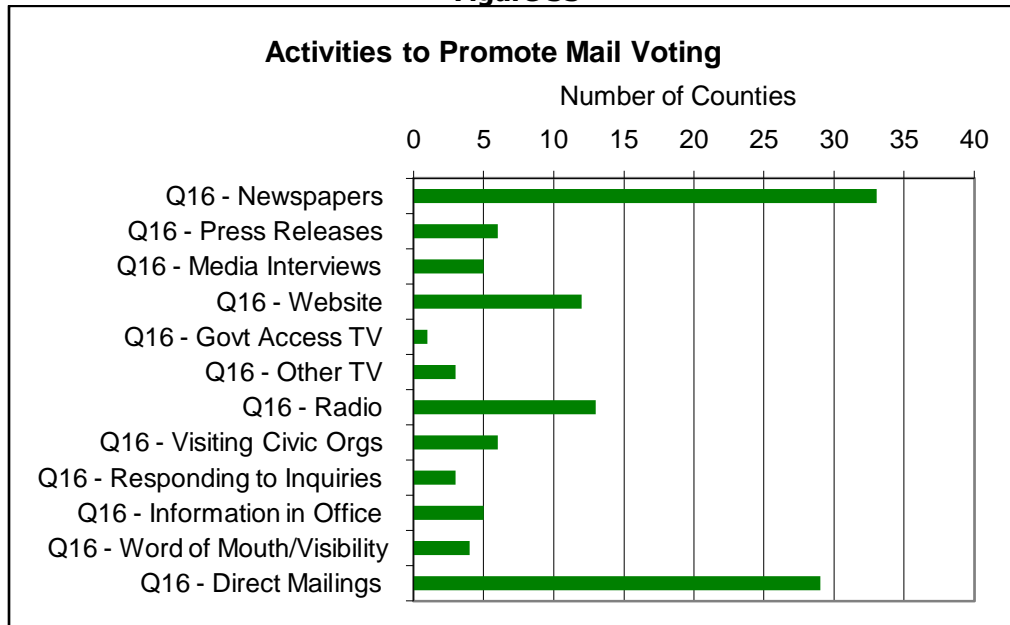


Figure 34

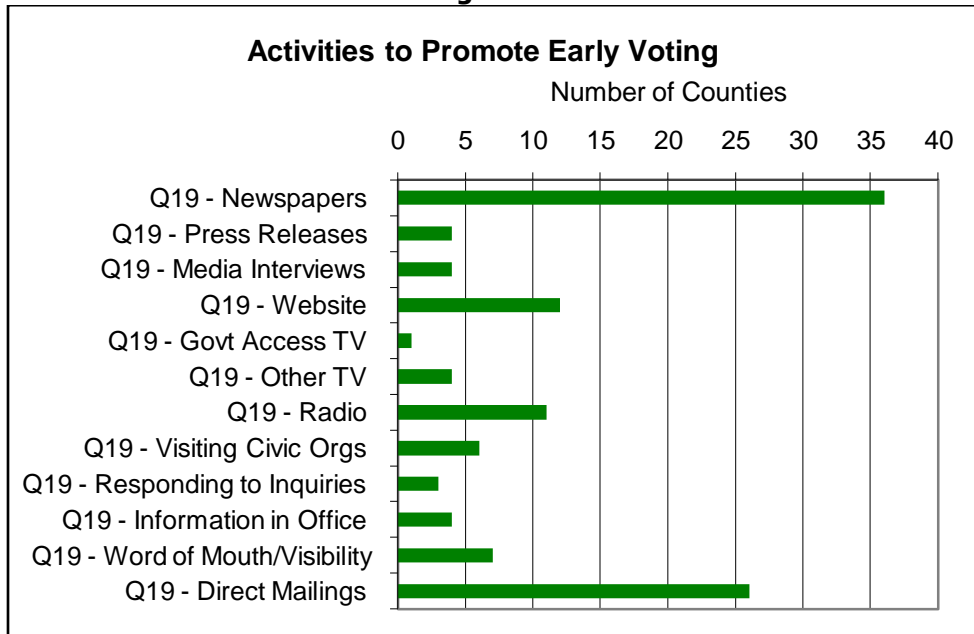
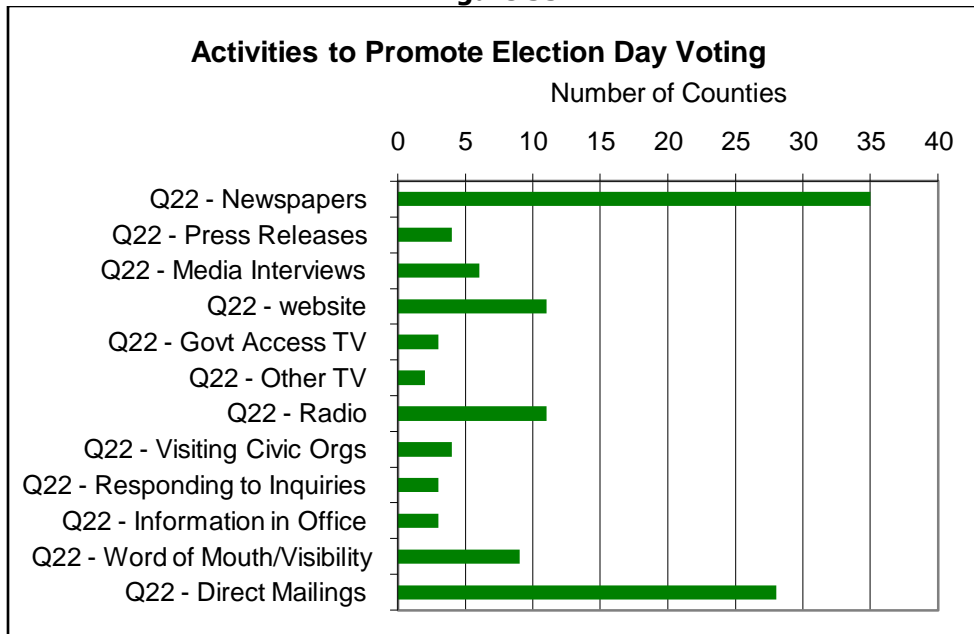


Figure 35



When queried about the most effective means of reaching out to voters for each method of voting, newspapers and direct mail were the dominant responses for all three methods (Figures 36, 37 & 38). Other factors received mention from only a handful of Clerks. For all three methods of voting, a plurality of Clerks felt that the newspaper was the most effective form of outreach to promote voting. Direct mail was considered the next most effective. The use of direct mail came up most frequently with regard to voting by mail. Many Clerks specified that their direct mail included an application to receive a mail ballot and to sign up for permanent mail voting status.

Figure 36

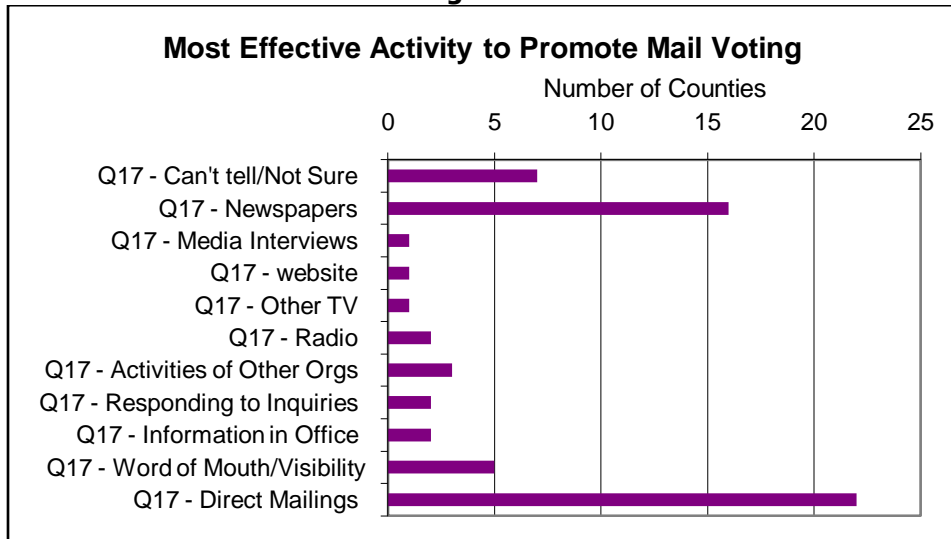


Figure 37

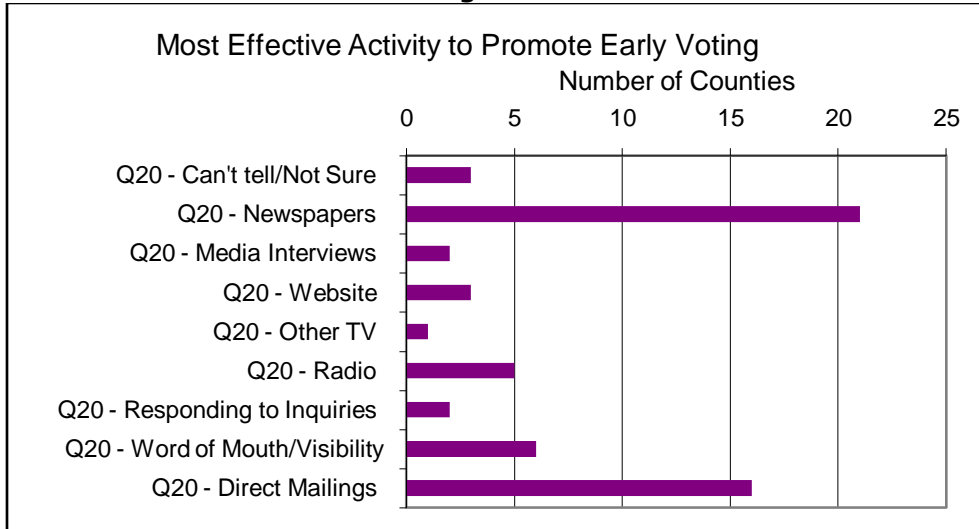
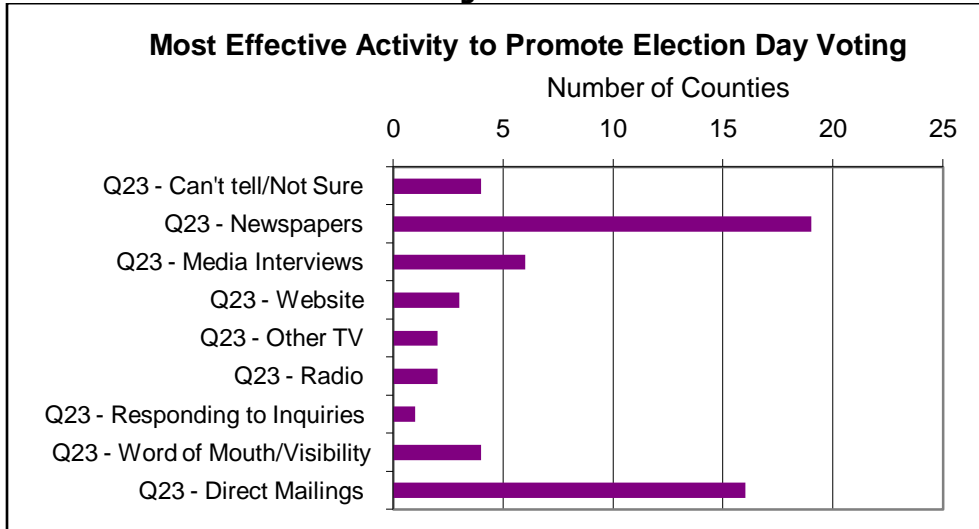
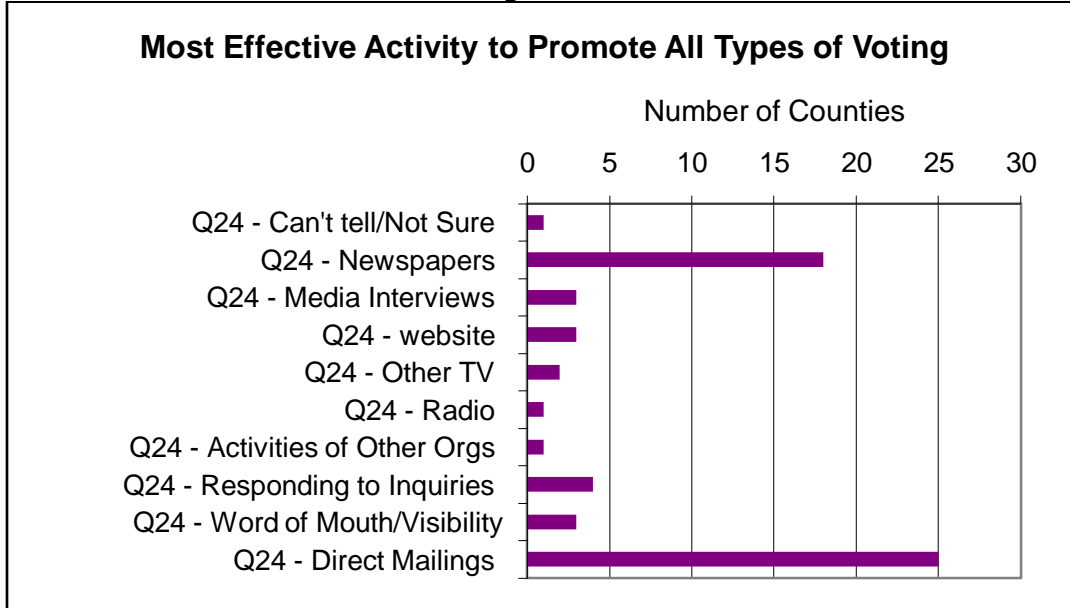


Figure 38



Interestingly, when asked to identify the overall most effective activity for promoting voting, fewer Clerks mentioned newspapers than had mentioned this activity as being effective for each of the types of voting (Figure 39). Instead, nearly half of the Clerks interviewed in the post-election survey cited direct mailings as the most effective way to promote any type of voting. Newspapers were mentioned by just over one-third of the Clerks, primarily Clerks in small rural communities where the community newspaper serves as the central source of local news. The prominence of direct mail appears related to the Clerks' experience of a link between sending mail ballot applications and the major surge in mail voting.

Figure 39



It must be noted that the survey cannot evaluate the accuracy of the Clerks' opinions about the effectiveness of different types of outreach in this particular election. It could be very valuable to see if they are "correct" in their assessments of different forms of outreach in future research.

Materials

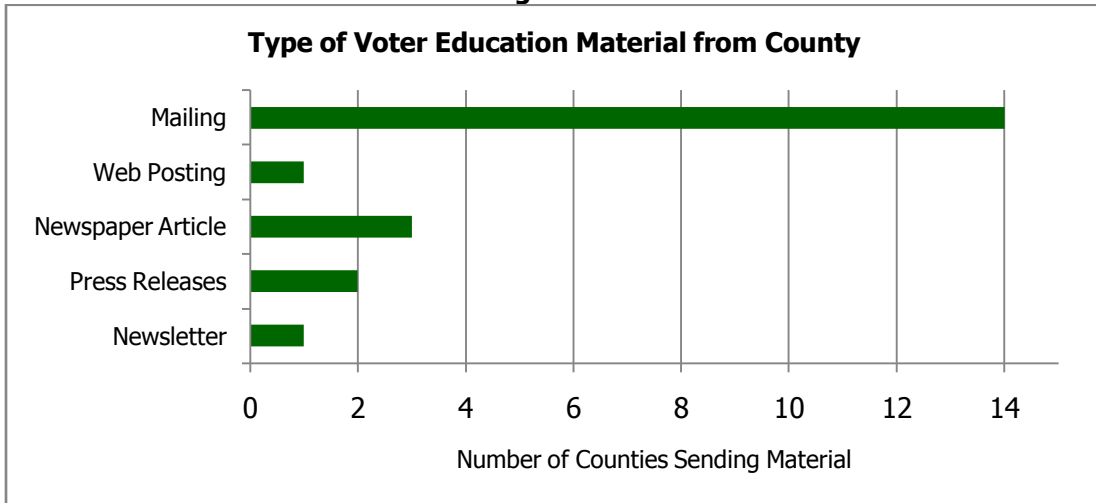
At the end of the post-election survey, the Clerks were asked to share the materials they used in their voter outreach efforts. Clerks were offered a Federal Express number so they could send the materials without paying postage. Despite wide agreement to send materials in the survey and a reminder at the June 2009 Colorado County Clerks Association meeting, the compliance was much lower than response to the surveys: only 15 counties mailed or emailed materials to the research team at the US Military Academy at West Point.

Furthermore, many of the counties which did respond appear to have provided the documents easily at hand (mailings, newspaper clips, etc) rather than a systematic collection of their voter education materials. While one county provided 38 documents including an impressively detailed plan for voter outreach, most counties provided just two or three newspaper clips or samples of mailings. Therefore, the sample should be considered potentially unrepresentative of the actual universe of promotional materials used by Clerks in the 2008 election. We can still assess the nature of the materials that we did receive and do so below.

Mailings were the most common materials collected from the Clerks (Figure 40). Given the frequency with which Clerks discussed outreach via the newspaper, there is a notable lack of

press clippings but this may be due to selection bias of the counties responding or what they included in the materials sent.

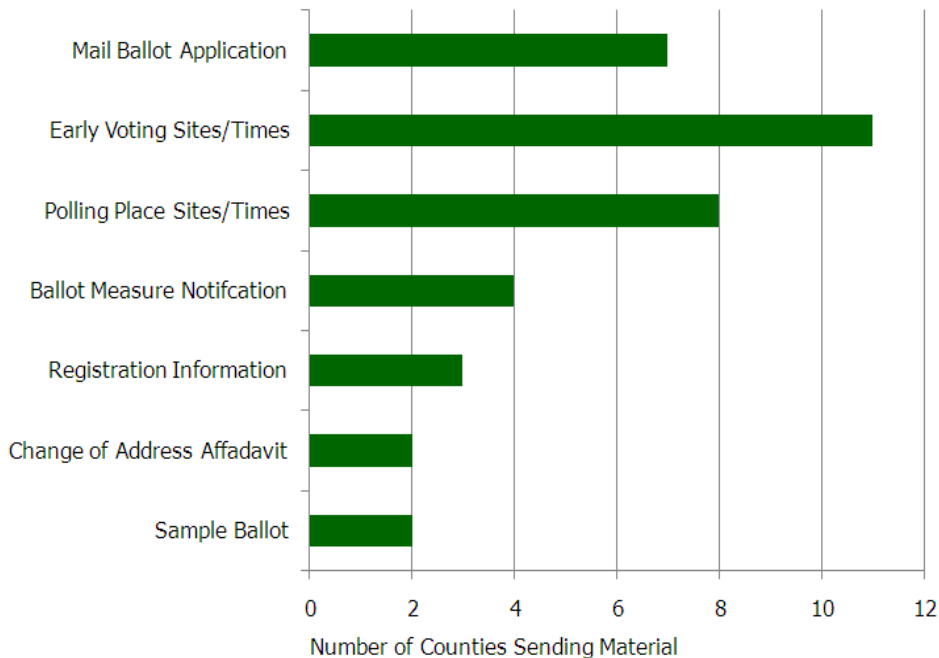
Figure 40



The materials provided by the Clerks were remarkably administrative (some might say clerical) in nature. There were few efforts to motivate people to participate. Only one county provided material that was coded as clearly encouraging turnout. The remainder provided information about the voting process that can be generally described as stating, “if you want to vote, this is what you need to do.” The most common information provided in the materials was a mail ballot application or sites/times for early voting and Election Day Voting (Figure 41).

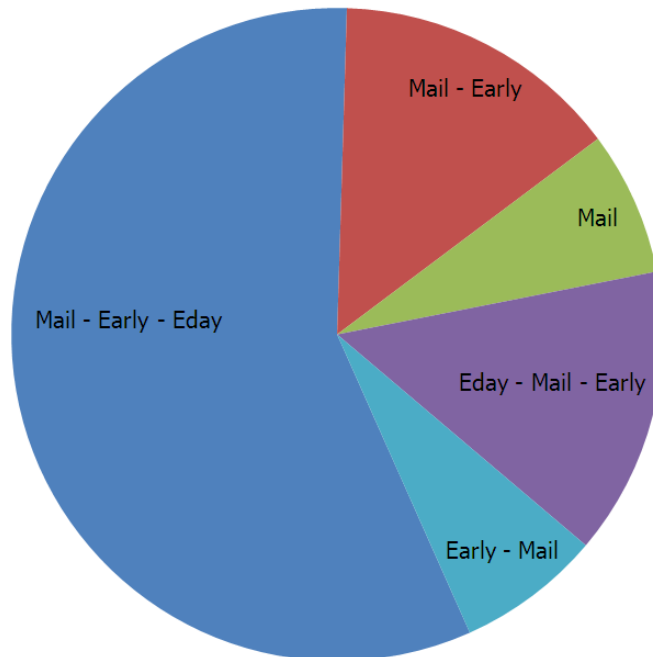
Figure 41

Content of Materials Sent by Counties



Consistent with their survey responses about the allocation of voter education efforts, the materials in all 15 counties covered mail voting, 13 counties covered early voting and 10 counties covered Election Day voting. However, mail voting was almost always the first method discussed (Figure 42). In the 11 counties where one method was clearly promoted as the preferred method of voting, mail voting was the preferred method in 9 counties. In the remaining 2 counties, mail voting and early voting were both clearly preferred to Election Day voting. Seven of the 15 counties had a mailing dedicated solely to mail voting. As above, this pattern may be due to selection bias in the materials received.

Figure 42
Order of Presenting Information about Voting Methods



The materials from 4 counties were coded as appearing unprofessional and unattractive, including poor or awkward grammar. The materials in 8 counties received a 4 or higher on a 5 point scale of professional preparation.

Discussion

The Clerks are consistent in their belief that direct mail and newspapers are the most effective ways to conduct voter education about methods of voting and use these two channels as the primary means of voter education.

Evidence from related research on voter mobilization suggests the Clerks are likely correct in their opinion about direct mail, at least with regard to mailings that include a vote by mail ballot application: Recent field experiments on mailing vote by mail applications indicate that this approach can be very effective at increasing turnout in mail voting and shifting voters who would otherwise vote in person to vote by mail (Mann 2009; Mann 2007; Mann 2006). Of particular relevance to this study, these experiments suggest that when the application appears to come from a government agency, it has a greater effect.

However, in general, direct mail encouraging citizens to vote on Election Day has shown very small effects when sent by both non-partisan organizations and partisan organizations (see Green

and Gerber 2008 for a review). It is possible that communication from local election officials about in-person voting has a more powerful impact. The influence of voter education mailings from the Clerks in comparison to other mobilizing organizations could be easily tested with regard to Election Day voting and in-person voting to verify whether their impression of effectiveness is correct.

There is little evidence to support or refute the Clerks' observation that newspapers are effective. Although a field experiment suggests that randomly sending newspapers to voters may increase overall turnout (see Green and Gerber 2008, pp129-30), there has been no test of whether information in newspapers has any effect on the voting behavior of existing newspaper readers.

The use of newspapers to communicate about voting is inevitable to large degree. Reporters from newspapers, radio, television, online, and other media are almost certain to call local election administrators as part of their coverage about upcoming elections, even if election administrators don't pro-actively reach out to the media. As public officials, the Clerks cannot decline or ignore these inquiries. Nor does it seem desirable for them to do so: the amount of time is no more than answering the direct inquiries of a voter, so if the news coverage helps at least one voter to participate in the election then it is worthwhile. However, if newspapers (and other media) are not having a significant impact because the information is going to a small set of newspaper readers who are already informed voters, then this news coverage may be giving local election officials a false sense of confidence about the dissemination of information.

6) Lessons Learned by Election Officials

Biggest Difficulties/Surprises Overall: Post-Election Survey

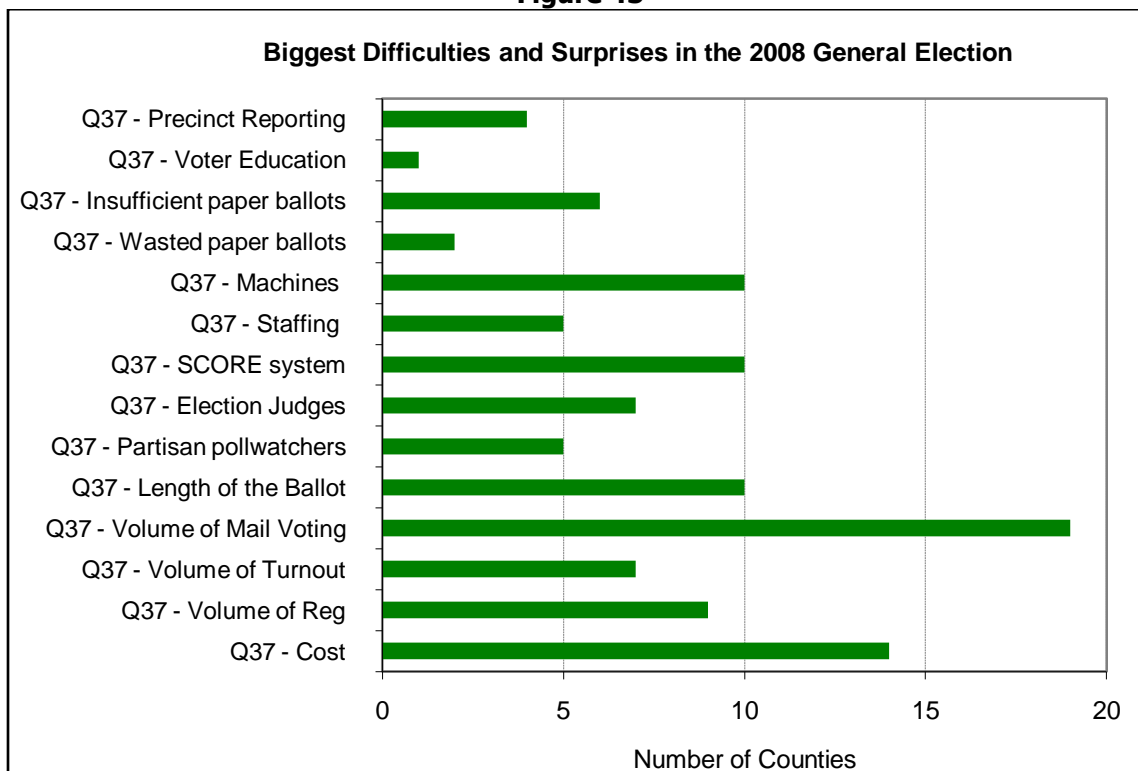
The post-election survey asked Clerks to identify the three biggest difficulties or surprises in administering the 2008 General Election. This question was open-ended allowing Clerks to identify what they felt were the most important issues that arose in administering the election.

By a wide margin, the high volume of mail voting was most frequently cited (Figure 43). Despite expecting an increase in mail voting following the 2007 law allowing for permanent mail voting status, the magnitude of the increase that occurred was a surprise to many Clerks. They also described it as a difficulty because they had trouble keeping pace with the applications for mail ballots. Additionally, several Clerks noted that vote by mail recruitment by numerous organizations generated many duplicate applications which they were nonetheless required to fully process. This duplication was a costly waste of staff time.

To put this in perspective, less than one year after the Secretary of State decertified every voting machine in Colorado in early 2008, the volume of mail voting was cited almost twice as often as problems with voting machines as the Clerk's biggest administrative difficulty. The volume of voting by mail also outstripped traditional concerns with the cost of administering elections. In fact, several Clerks cited the growth in mail voting as a primary driver behind their concerns about cost. Concerns about staff also seemed to revolve around the demands of handling mail ballot requests while simultaneously offering early in-person voting.

Introduction of the SCORE statewide voter registration system in the spring of 2008 was a challenge for a number of Clerks who were forced to master the new process in the midst of a very busy election season, although several who mentioned it as a problem also noted that it was surprising how well it worked. The requirement to report all results by precinct was a burden that did not sit well with a number of Clerks who found this made vote counting more complex and difficult. The record length of the ballot in 2008 also made election administration more difficult for Clerks because the length of time required to complete one's ballot had the potential to cause delays at in-person voting sites.

Figure 43



Pre-Election Concerns vs. Post-Election Difficulties/Surprises

As a follow-up to this post-election survey question, the Clerks were asked about the biggest difficulties or surprises with each method of voting: mail voting, early in-person voting, and Election Day voting. These voting method specific questions can be compared to the concerns the Clerks expressed about each method of voting in the pre-election survey. In both surveys, these were open-ended items so Clerks could provide multiple responses.

The post election survey question was deliberately designed to solicit items that the Clerks classified as both difficulties and surprises. The goal of the question was to collect the retrospective view of what the Clerks should have been concerned about to compare to what they were concerned about prior to the election. Asking the Clerks to name only difficulties would have omitted things which were unexpected but not difficult (e.g. low turnout on Election Day). Asking the Clerks only about surprises would have omitted things which were difficult but not unexpected (e.g. recruiting election judges, the volume of voting by mail, etc).

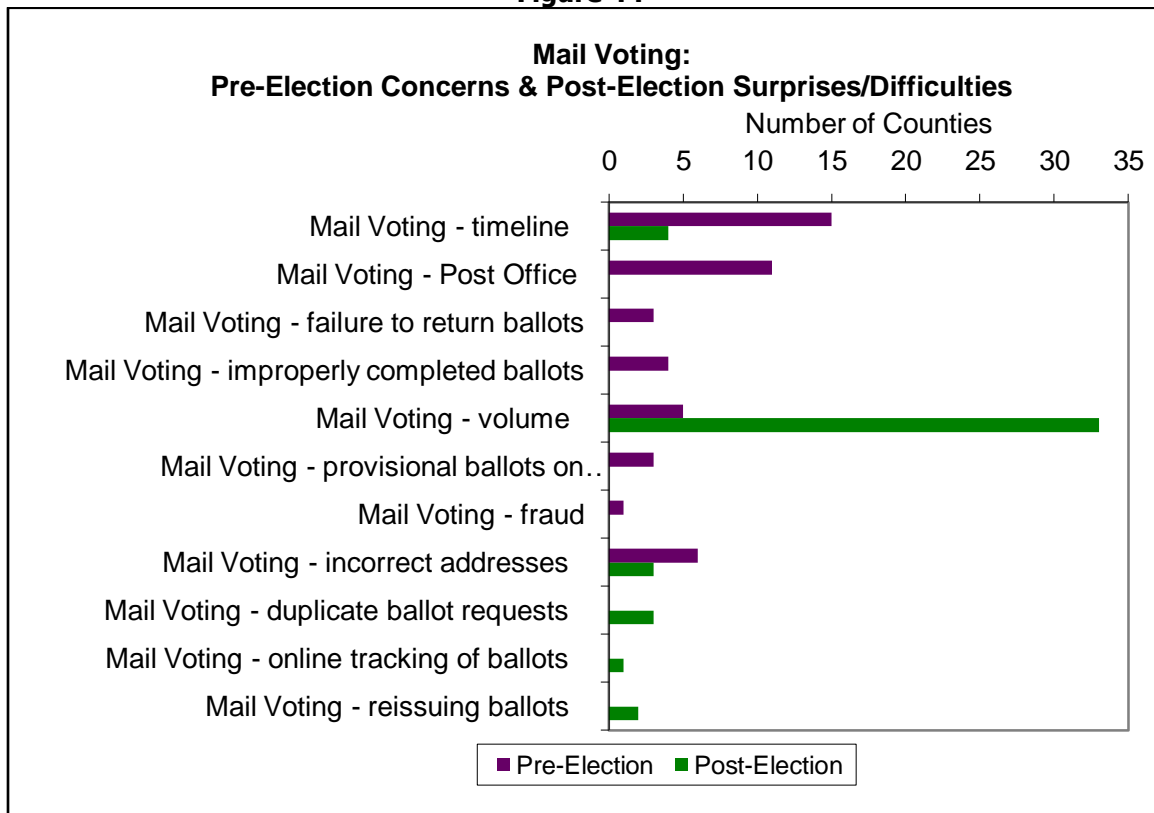
It is hard to untangle which items were difficulties and which were surprises, in part because many were both. Several examples illustrate how surprise and difficulty are often two sides of the same coin. Low voter turnout for early voting and Election Day was a surprise but hardly a difficulty for administering either form of voting. However, the Clerks often saw it as a difficulty because the cost of budget and time was difficult to justify in 2008 and will continue to be so in future elections. On the other hand, the high volume of voting by mail was no surprise to the Clerks, but it was still a significant difficulty because they had trouble keeping up with a workload that exceeded even their high expectations. Since the assessment of difficulty and surprise are so closely intertwined, it is difficult to discern any meaningful difference using this data.

Mail Voting

When asked to discuss their concerns about mail voting in the pre-election survey, the Clerks were most concerned about sending ballots to voters and having them returned (Figure 44). Clerks expressed concern that voters would not return ballots within the timeline, the Postal Service would not deliver ballots to or from voters in time, voters would fail to return ballots, voters would improperly complete ballots, or that addresses were incorrect on ballot mailings. A related concern was that voters would not complete mail ballots, but instead would go to their traditional polling places, necessitating the use of provisional ballots. A few Clerks expressed concern about handling the volume of ballots. Only one Clerk expressed concern about fraud from mail ballots.

In contrast, with the hindsight of the post-election survey, two-thirds of the Clerks cited the high volume of mail voting as the biggest difficulty or surprise. The timeline, addresses, duplicate ballot requests, reissuing ballots, and tracking of ballots were mentioned by a few Clerks. Several Clerks explained that the volume of mail ballots was problematic because it was often a three step process in the closing weeks of the campaign, precisely when the Clerks were busiest with running early voting and preparing for Election Day voting. Clerks were required to 1) quickly handle requests for ballots in order to 2) send ballots out in a timely fashion and 3) verify returned ballots in order to contact voters if problems arose.

Figure 44



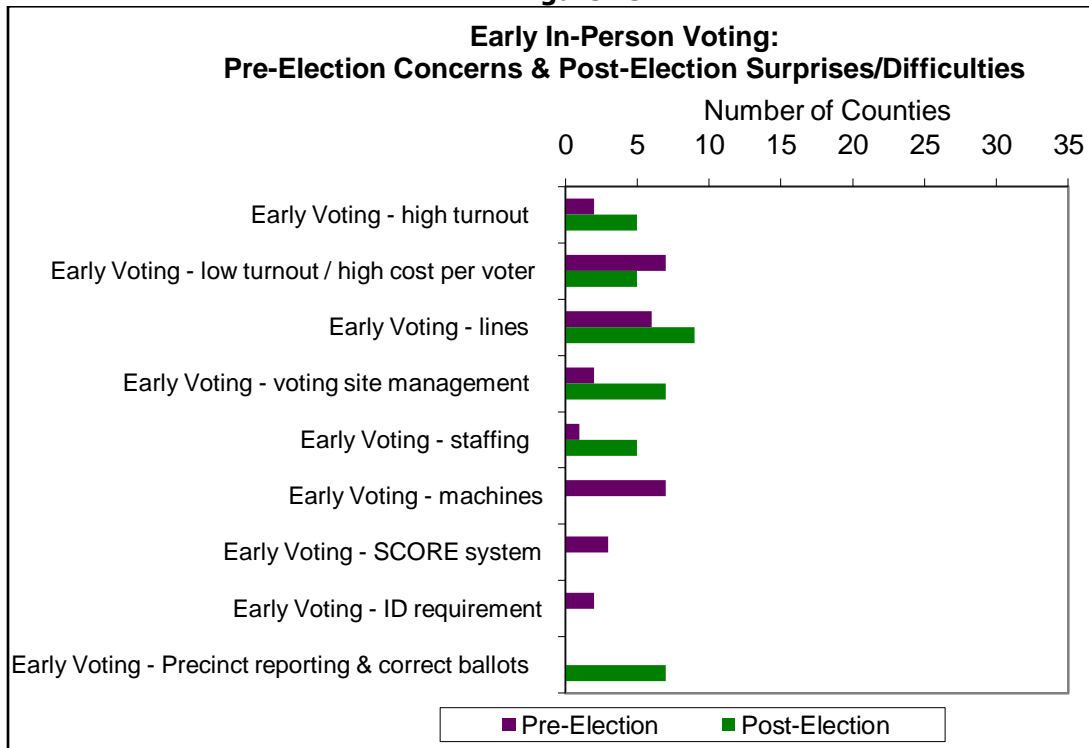
Early In-Person Voting

For early in-person voting, Clerks identified fewer concerns in the pre-election survey and difficulties/surprises in the post-election survey (Figure 45). Turnout for early voting and lines at early voting sites were prominent concerns in both surveys. Prior to the election, the Clerks were also concerned about voting machines and implementing the new SCORE system, but these disappeared after the election. Problems with finding, operating, and staffing early voting sites

as well as providing correct ballots and precinct level returns loomed larger in hindsight. Long lines were mentioned by more Clerks in the post-election survey than in the pre-election survey.

It is noteworthy that the 10 Clerks who cited early voter turnout as a surprise in the post-election survey were evenly split between counties where the early voting turnout was surprisingly high and counties where the turnout was surprisingly low. The low turnout counties generally attributed this phenomenon to a shift to mail voting in place of early in-person voting in previous elections. Several Clerks expressed concern before and after the election that low turnout makes early in-person voting very costly on a per voter basis.

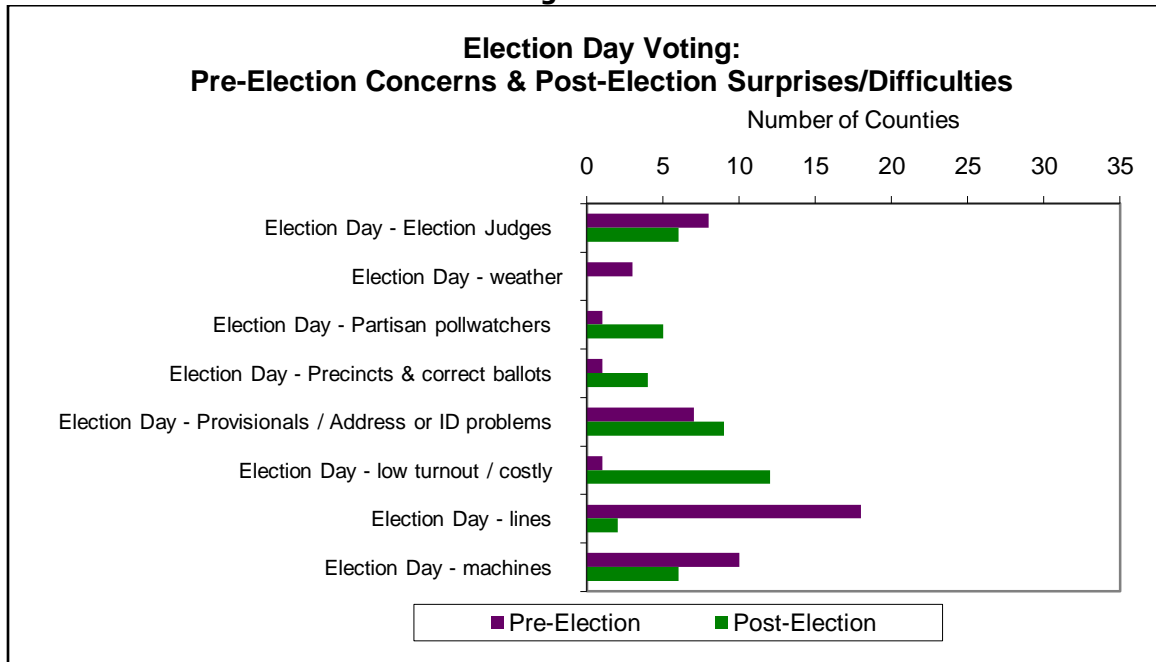
Figure 45



Election Day Voting

The Clerks had the traditional concerns about Election Day voting: long lines, performance of volunteer election judges, problems with voting machines, and the number of provisional ballots (Figure 46). The pre-election prominence of concerns about lines seems a bit ironic in retrospect since turnout on Election Day was low. Indeed, low turnout (and the resulting high cost per voter) on Election Day was the most frequently cited surprise in the post-election survey. In addition to the traditional concerns about Election Day administration, in the post-election survey five Clerks expressed concern about large numbers of aggressive partisan poll-watchers from both parties.

Figure 46



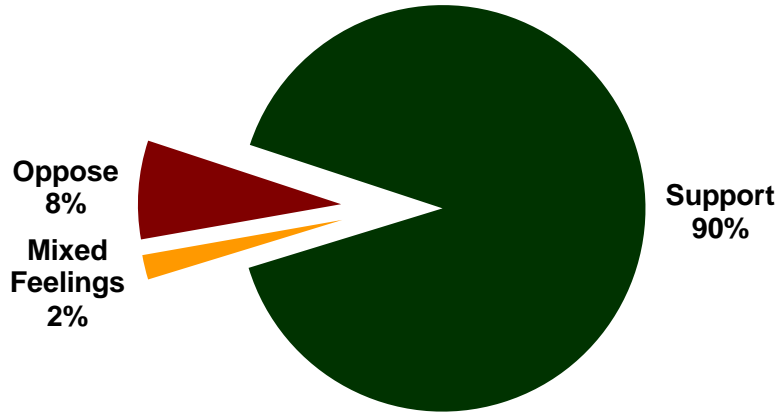
Support for Permanent Mail Voting Status

When asked about whether the 2007 law to allow permanent mail voting status was a good idea, the counties were nearly unanimous in their support in both surveys (Figures 47 & 48). Following their experience in the 2008 General Election and despite the difficulties with the volume of requests noted above, only 4 counties said it was not a good idea and one expressed mixed feelings.

**Figure 47
Pre-Election Survey: Support for
2007 Permanent Mail Voting Statute**



Figure 48
Post-Election Survey: Support for
2007 Permanent Mail Voting Statute

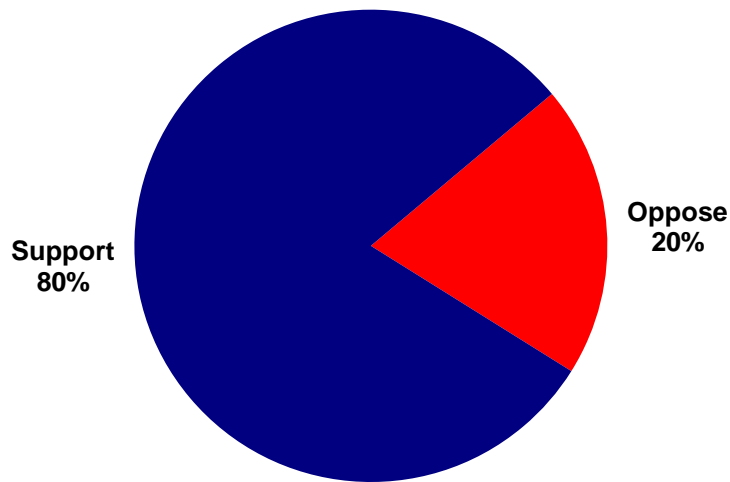


Given the overwhelming support in both surveys, only a handful of clerks changed their response between the two surveys. Among the seven clerks who responded to both surveys and changed their response, only one moved from support to opposition, one moved from support to mixed feelings, two moved from mixed feelings to support, and three changed from pre-election opposition to post-election support. Both clerks who moved away from support cited concerns stemming from voter confusion about the permanence of the vote by mail status leading to duplicate requests, attempts to cast in-person ballots, and other wasted effort by their offices. Although very small numbers, this suggests that experience with administering an election with permanent mail voting was a positive experience for nearly all of the clerks.

Support for Postal Voting

When asked about a proposal in the legislature to shift future elections to all mail voting, 80% of the Clerks expressed support (Figure 49). Several Clerks noted that it would be easier to administer an all mail election than to handle the processing of the high volume of individual ballot requests in the 2008 General Election. Postal voting requires preparation for a single mailing to all registered voters. In contrast, the optional vote by mail system required processing significant numbers of applications every day for several months.

**Figure 49
Support for Postal Voting
(Post-Election Survey)**



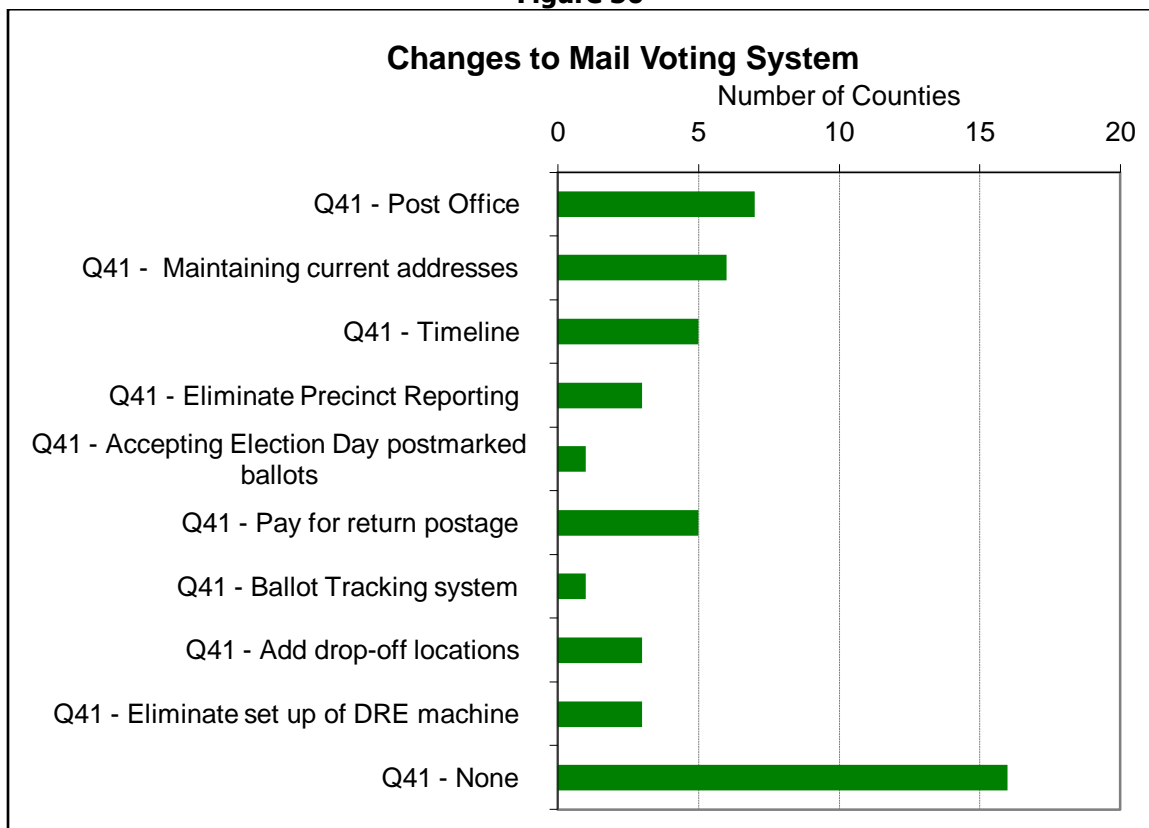
Opponents were concerned about limiting the options for methods of voting because voters have different preferences, especially in communities where the Clerks reported a strong preference for polling place voting (generally in smaller rural counties).

Supporters cited the cost savings, the convenience to voters, and greater control over administering the elections. Supporters did express some reservations about a full switch to postal voting, including supporting a legislative proposal to allow counties the option to conduct postal voting in elections and/or a proposal to retain multiple voting methods for statewide general elections. The proposal to switch to postal voting except in statewide general elections was the proposal under most serious consideration in the state legislature by the end of the survey period. After the completion of the survey, the state legislature passed a new statute for to allow the counties to choose postal voting except in general elections between partisan nominees (in practice, only even year general elections, recall elections, and vacancy elections are required to have a polling place option).

Suggested Changes to Mail Voting in Colorado

When asked to suggest changes to the mail voting system, the largest response was that it needed no major changes. Clerks with suggestions seemed focused on the transmission of ballots to and from voters rather than statutory or regulatory alterations (Figure 50). Concerns about Post Office delivery, maintaining current addresses, the timeline for mailing and returning ballots, and voter requests for pre-paid postage for returning ballots topped the list of desired topics to be addressed.

Figure 50



Discussion

Despite a dispersed set of concerns prior to the election, the volume of mail voting was the dominant surprise/difficulty as the Clerks reflected upon the 2008 election. The primary concern with the volume of mail voting is the need to handle requests in daily batches. Despite the strain on the Clerks from the volume of mail voting, support for the 2007 permanent mail voting statute remained overwhelming and eighty percent supported a potential shift to a full postal voting system.

This simultaneous concerns about and support for mail voting is likely reconciled by comments made by several Clerks. Mail ballots are handled by the Clerks' own staff, so they have greater confidence in this system than when the voting process is overseen by volunteer election judges at early vote sites and especially Election Day polling places. Several Clerks pointed out that shifting to full postal voting would have significant advantages because it eliminates the administrative burdens of fulfilling requests and dealing with early in-person and Election Day voting, and places all ballot processing in the hands of professional staff rather than volunteers.

7) Impacts on Voting Behavior

There is significant evidence that the Clerks' encouragement to vote by mail in the 2008 election increased the share of ballots cast by mail. However, there is no evidence that the shift to mail voting affected overall turnout.

Increase in Mail Voting

Analysis of voting in the 2008 General Election suggests that counties in which the Clerks' said they encouraged voting by mail was correlated with about a 6 percentage point higher share of ballots cast by mail ($p=0.06$). Although a substantial impact, 6 percentage points is still only about one-fifth of the growth in voting by mail between the 2006 and 2008 elections ($64\%-37\%=27$ percentage points). Therefore the Clerks have a significant impact, but other factors must be driving the remainder of the increase in the use of mail voting.

When a Clerk reports a preference for pre-Election Day voting either by mail or early in-person, rather than mail voting specifically, they do not appear to have any effect on the share of ballots cast by mail. There is no decrease in the usage of vote by mail in these counties.

The estimates of the effect of encouraging mail voting on the use of mail voting are based on a regression analysis of the Clerks' response in the post-election survey and the share of ballots cast by mail in each county based on the Colorado voter file. The share of ballots cast by mail in 2008 is dependent on other factors as well, so the regression controls for: the share of ballots cast by mail in 2006 and 2004 because past voting by mail is the strongest predictor of future use; the partisan composition of the county because areas with more partisans are likely to see more activity to mobilize voters by campaigns and political organizations; the number of registered voters in the county because smaller counties had lower rates of mail voting usage; the election administration budget to capture the resources available to the Clerks; and the proportion of newly registered voters because the state voter registration form allows a simultaneous request for permanent mail voting status. Full results of the OLS regressions are presented in Appendix E.

Further support for the possibility that the Clerks' actions are causing the increase in mail voting is found in looking at the specific activities the Clerks reported using to promote mail voting. The two activities cited by large numbers of Clerks as effective were outreach to newspapers and direct mailings. Counties which reported using these two activities to promote voting by mail had a higher share of ballots cast by mail by about seven percentage points from direct mailings ($p=0.01$) and eight percentage points from newspaper outreach ($p=0.06$). No other activities to promote mail voting had a statistically significant effect. These correlations between the activities many Clerks believed to be effective and higher shares of ballots cast by mail support the possibility that the Clerks are affecting voting behavior and suggest they correctly judged the impact of these activities.

The proportion of the voter education effort the Clerks reported allocating to promoting voting by mail rather than early voting or Election Day voting had only a weak and statistically insignificant relationship to the share of ballots cast by mail in the 2008 election. As seen above, the most commonly reported allocation of resources was an even division across the three methods of voting. Thus, the quality and character of Clerks' activities appear to have more of an influence than the quantity of their activities.

Increase in Turnout

Despite the apparent relationship between how voters cast their ballots and the Clerks' preferences for and activities used to promote voting by mail, there is no evidence of an effect on

turnout. The Clerks' preferences, their activities, and the proportion of their voter education effort allocated to mail voting were not significantly related to the rate of turnout.

Discussion

The correlation between the Clerks' preference for mail voting and the increase in the share of ballots cast by mail suggests that the Clerks' preference for voting by mail plays a significant role in the growth of this method of voting. The activities which many Clerks' believe to be most effective for educating voters about mail voting are also correlated with an increase in the share of ballots cast by mail. This further supports the idea that the Clerks' actions have an effect on the growth of voting by mail. On the other hand, this study is consistent with prior research in finding no evidence that a shift towards greater use of mail voting increases overall turnout, even when that shift appears to be generated – at least in part – by the Clerks.

One of the core questions in this study is whether local election officials play a role in the growth of mail voting. Local election officials are often overlooked by researchers who are more interested in the activities of parties, candidates, and other organizations and the influence these actors and actions have on voters' decision making and behavior. Election administration is treated as a black box which has little impact on the outcomes of the voting process. The evidence from this study indicates that local election officials in Colorado have a significant influence on the behavior of voters in terms of how (and whether they cast a ballot before Election Day).

Definitive recommendations about best practices would be best discerned using randomized field experiments in the future for clear measurement of the causal impact of each of the Clerks' outreach activities. Until those experiments can be carried out through the collaboration of researchers and Clerks, the evidence here strongly suggests that newspaper outreach and direct mail, especially for recruitment to sign up for mail voting, should be the first tools used for voter education.

8) Composition of Overall Turnout and Mail Voters

Did the demographic composition of voters who cast ballots by mail differ from years past or from the general voting population as the share of mail ballots increased? In the 2008 General Election, several significant shifts occurred in both the composition of the mail voter population and in overall turnout among the general population.

The Clerks rarely reported targeting any particular type of voter, so they are unlikely to have contributed directly to changes in the composition of the electorate. The few Clerks who reported targeting particular groups of voters for voter education in 2008 engaged in traditional activities such as presentations at senior centers and high school civics classes^{xiv} or outreach to newly registered voters.

Figures 51 to 64 show the demographic composition of voters in the last four General Elections (2002, 2004, 2006 & 2008) based on the January 2009 Colorado state voter file.^{xv} The even numbered figures show the composition of voters who cast ballots by mail and the odd numbered figures show the composition of all voters regardless of method used to cast a ballot.

Partisan Composition

The partisan share of mail voters (Figure 51) and all voters (Figure 52) exhibits no change in 2008 for Democrats, a decline in the share of Republicans, and a commensurate increase in the share of unaffiliated voters, with a slightly larger step between 2006 and 2008 than between the previous elections. Prior to 2008, the Republican share of mail voting was larger than its share of all voters but this partisan edge disappeared in 2008.

Figure 51

Composition of Mail Ballot Voters by Party

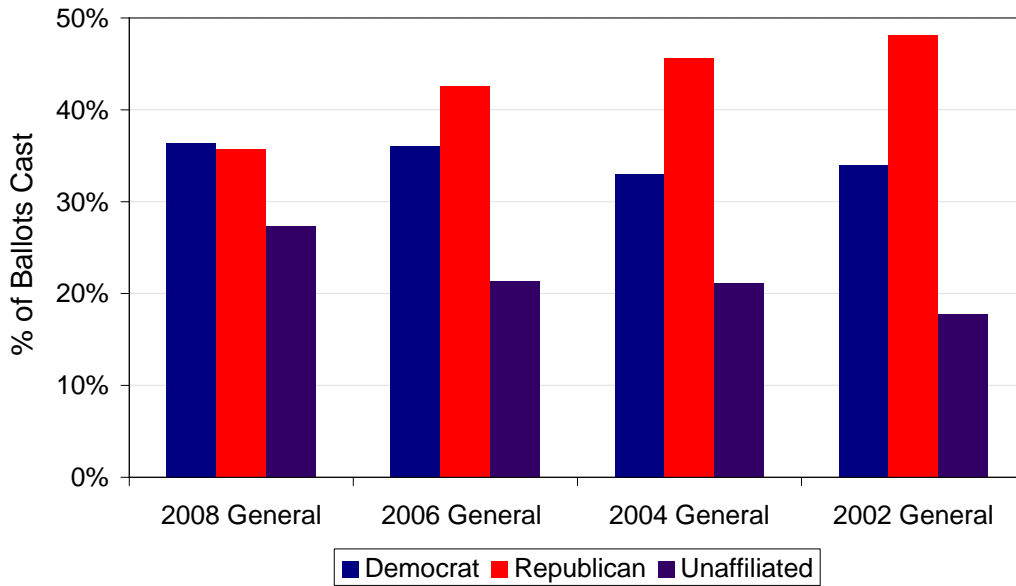
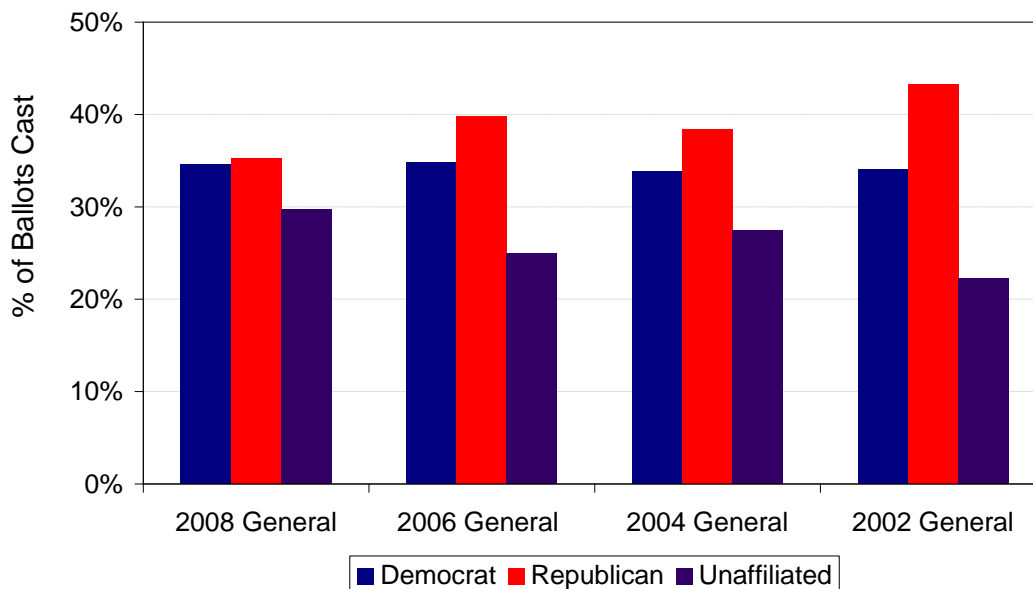


Figure 52

Composition of All Voters by Party



Age

The age distribution of mail voters (Figure 53) and all voters (Figure 54) shows a clear break from prior elections. From 2002 through 2006, older voters made up the largest share of voters and were the primary users of mail ballots. However, in 2008 the share of younger age brackets in turnout and mail voting dramatically increased.

Figure 53

Composition of Mail Ballot Voters by Age

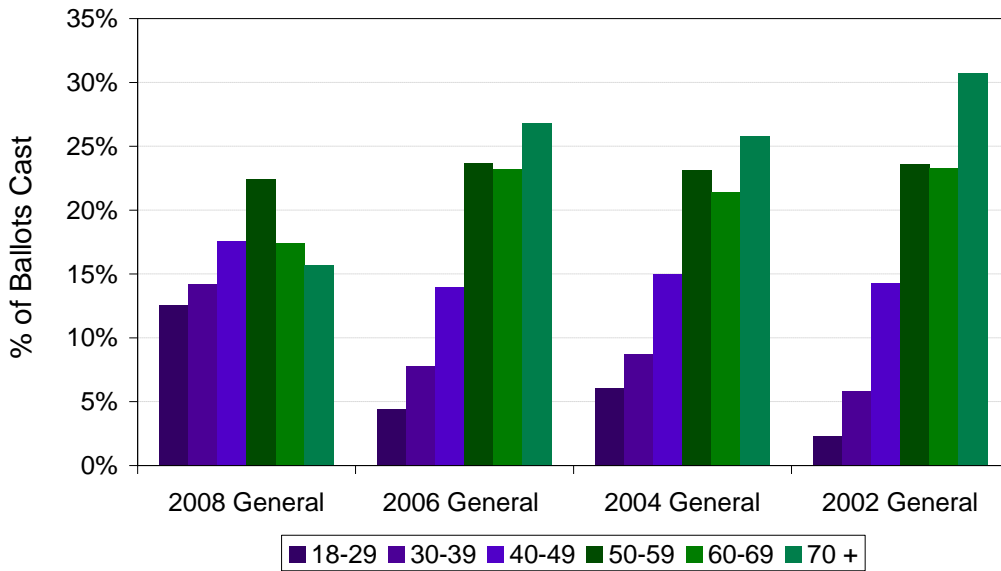
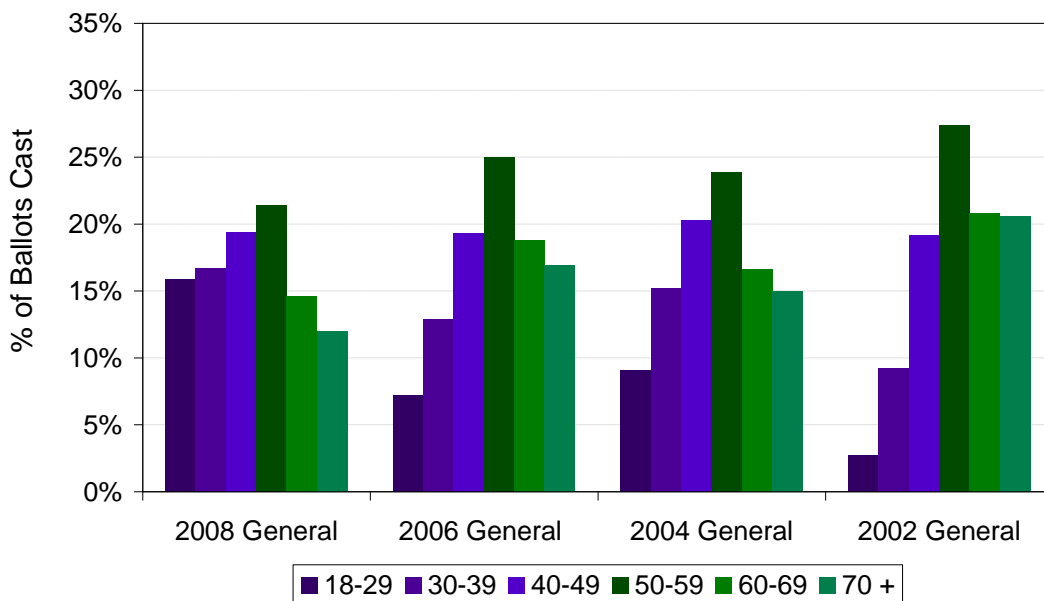


Figure 54

Composition of All Voters by Age



Gender

The gender balance among mail voters (Figure 55) and all voters (Figure 56) is stable across all four general elections in the chart below. Women make up about 55% of the voters who cast their ballots by mail and about 53% of all ballots cast. With regard to gender, mail voters and all voters are quite similar and the growth of mail voting in 2008 does not appear to alter this pattern.

Figure 55

Composition of Mail Ballot Voters by Gender

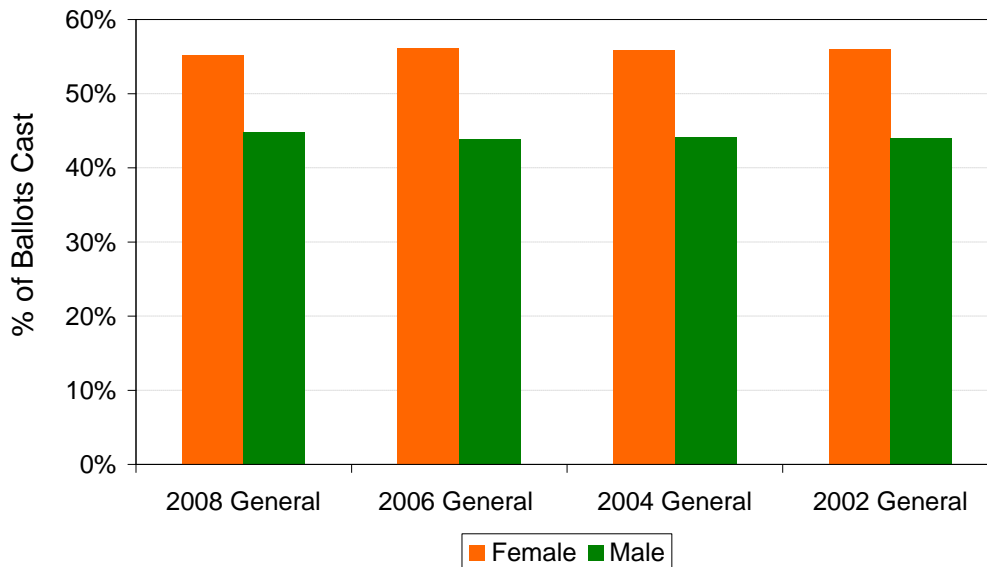
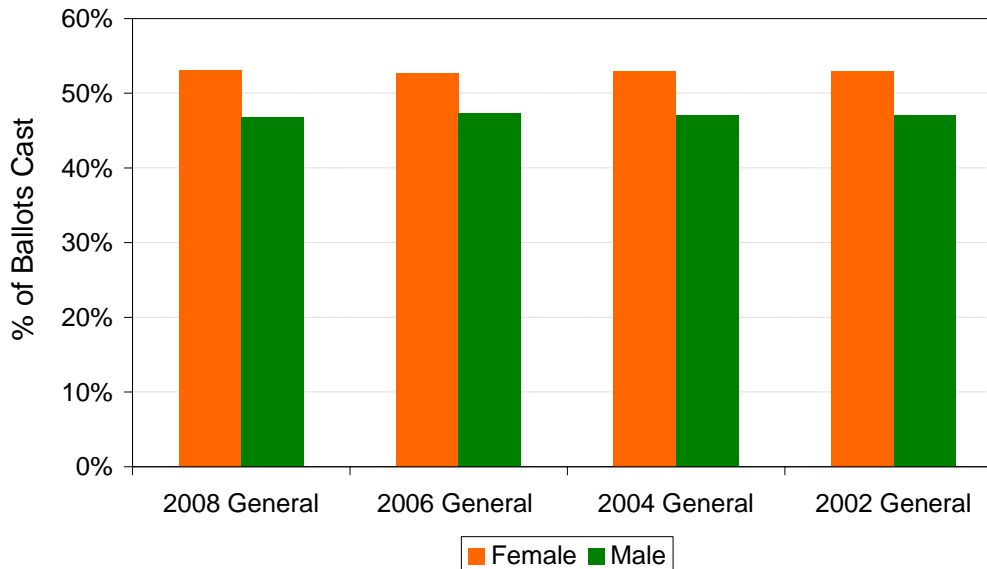


Figure 56

Composition of All Voters by Gender



Race & Ethnicity

In order to assess the composition of the electorate by race and ethnicity, the only available data in Colorado are the racial and ethnic composition of the Census block in which the voter lives. The Census race and ethnicity data are not the same as measuring individual characteristics of the voter, but they do provide a useful sense of the relationship between participation and race and ethnicity.

The charts below use categories which are set at approximately the 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 95th percentiles for each characteristic among all registered voters in Colorado as of January 2009. Since the African American population in Colorado is small, the charts for African Americans are not presented below, but they are nearly identical to the charts for non-white/non-Hispanic voters.

Similar to the gender composition above, the composition of mail voters (Figure 57) and all voters (Figure 58) is nearly identical when voters are categorized by percentage non-white / non-Hispanic according the Census. This stability occurs despite the substantial increase in the use of voting by mail and fluctuations in turnout. Looking more specifically at the composition by percentage Hispanic of mail voters (Figure 59) and all voters (Figure 60), the same stable pattern appears across the four most recent General Elections.

Figure 57

Composition of Mail Ballot Voters by Percentage Non-White / Non-Hispanic (from Census Data)

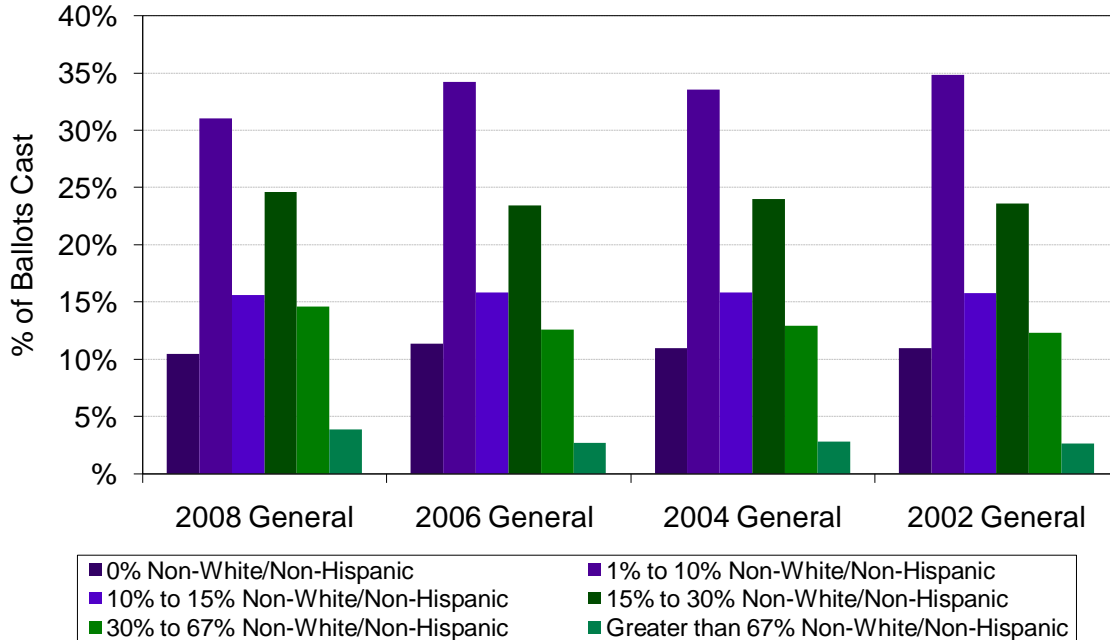


Figure 58
Composition of All Voters by
Percentage Non-White / Non-Hispanic
from Census Data

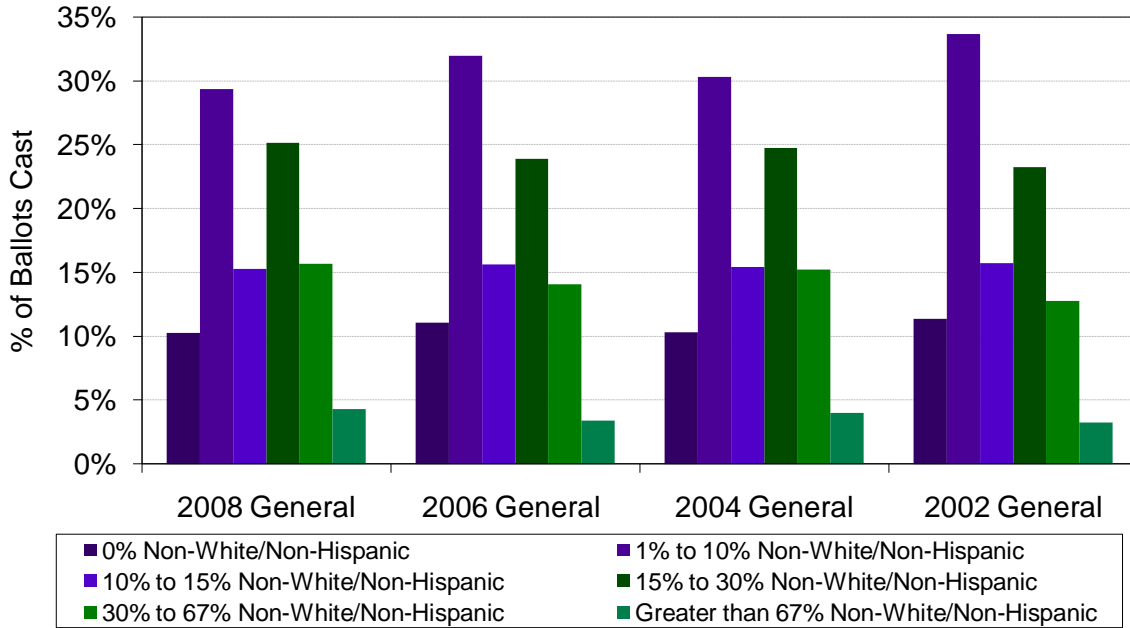


Figure 59
Composition of Mail Ballot Voters by
Percentage Hispanic from Census Data

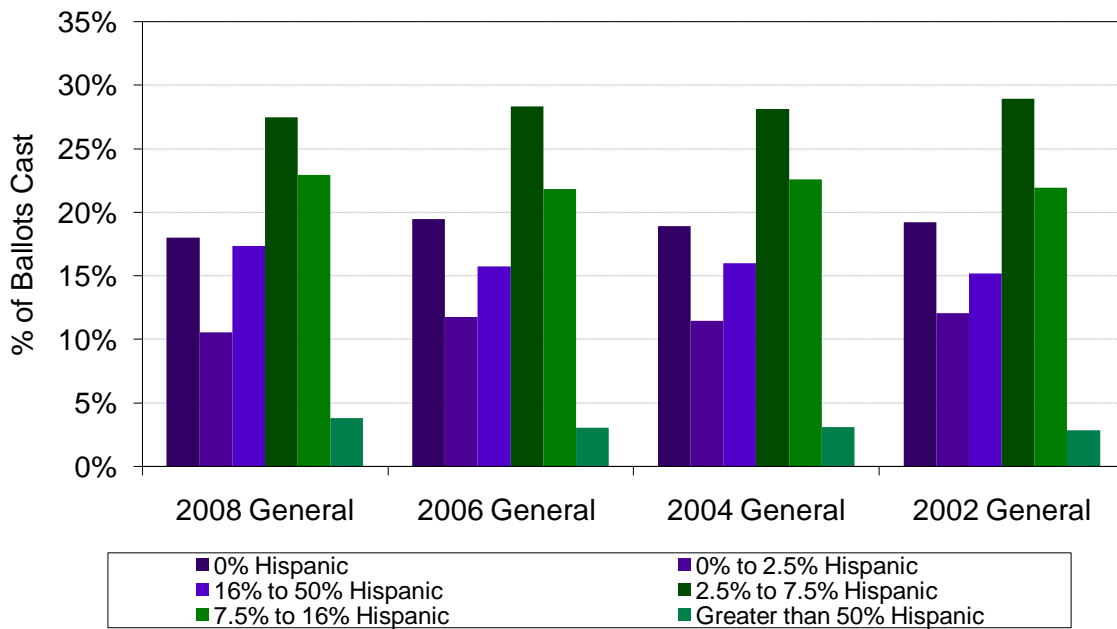
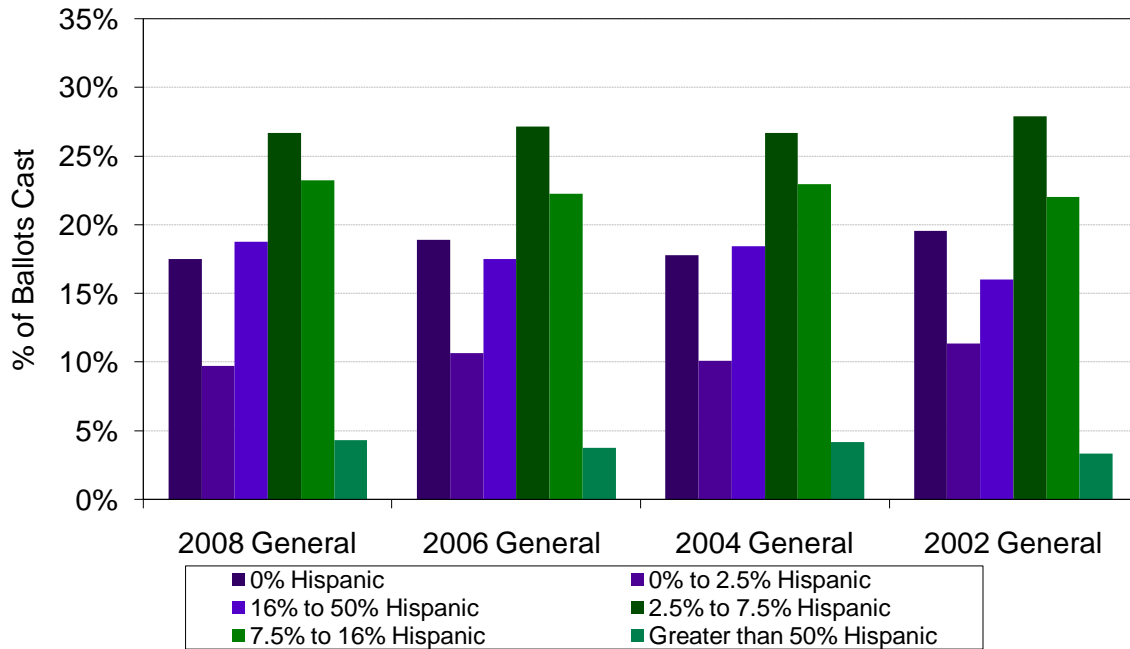


Figure 60
Composition of All Voters by
Percentage Hispanic from Census Data



Income

The composition by median income from the Census for mail voters (Figure 61) and all voters (Figure 62) is also extremely similar across the four most recent General Elections.

Figure 61
Composition of Mail Ballot Voters by
Median Income
(from Census Data)

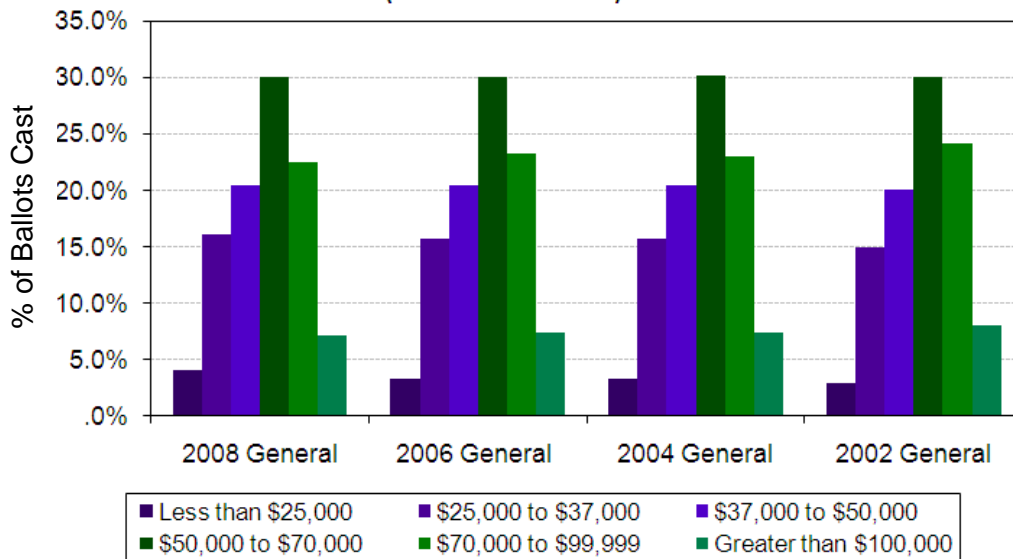
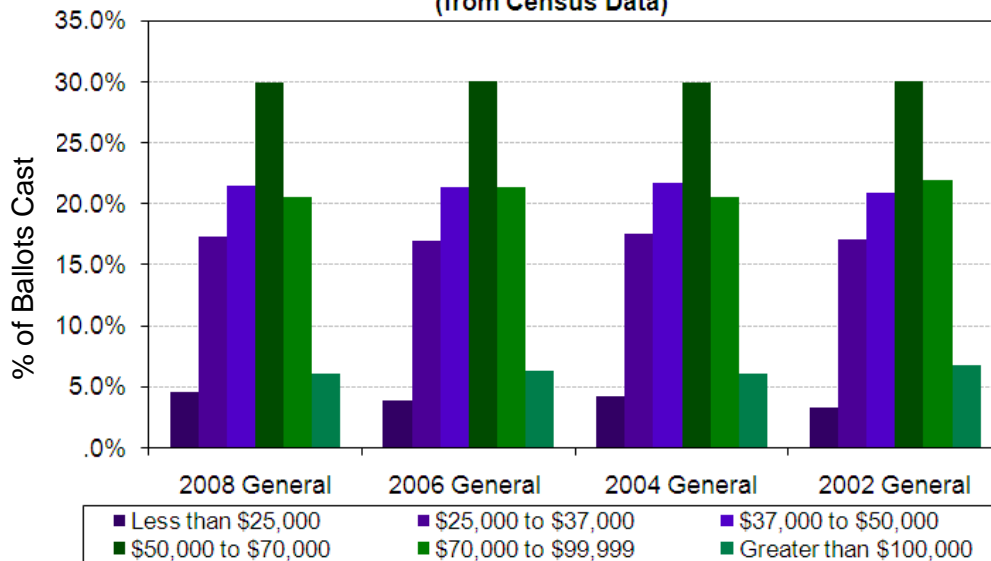


Figure 62

Composition of All Voters by Median Income (from Census Data)



Education

The composition by the percentage of residents with a Bachelors degree from the Census for mail voters (Figure 63) and all voters (Figure 64) is again very similar across the four most recent General Elections.

Figure 63

Composition of Mail Ballot Voters by Percentage with Bachelors Degree (from Census Data)

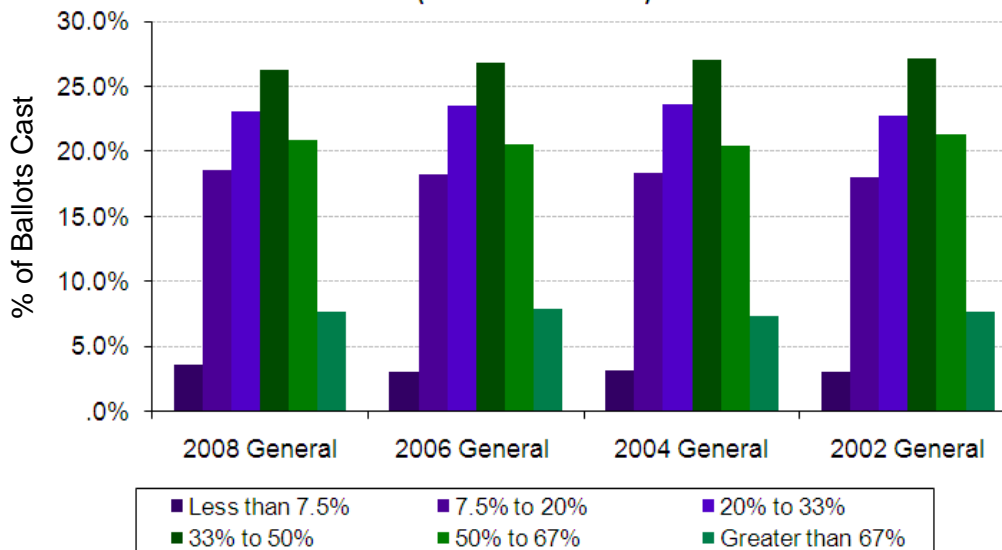
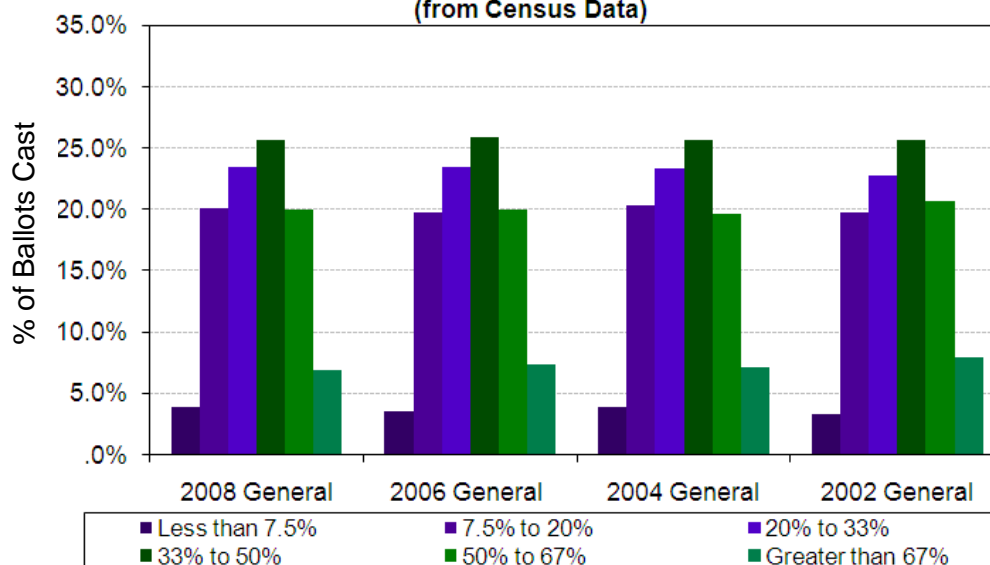


Figure 64

**Composition of All Voters by
Percentage with Bachelors Degree
(from Census Data)**



Discussion

The changes in some characteristics and stability of other characteristics in the composition of those who cast ballots by mail and all voters in the last four General Elections were very closely linked. The 2008 General Election was distinct in terms of the age and partisan composition of the electorate. However, with other characteristics including gender, race and ethnicity, income, and education there was little difference between 2008 and previous General Elections. These differences could be due to a variety of factors endogenous and exogenous (e.g. election-specific factors) to the implementation of the permanent vote by mail status program. More research must be done to parse out the existence and magnitude of each of these factors in influencing demographic shifts in the usage of mail voting.

The shifts in the composition of the voters in the 2008 and the composition of those who cast ballots by mail are noteworthy and interesting, but the survey responses of the Clerks are too crude to determine what role they may have played in the shifts – particularly in the absence of strong indications that the Clerks targeted particular groups for voter education.

Many forces were at work in shaping the composition of the 2008 electorate, so it is impossible to determine how much the shifts observed in characteristics like age and party registration were a product of political characteristics of the election or a product of permanent mail voting and the actions of the Clerks to promote mail voting.

9) Administration of UOCAVA in a Vote by Mail System

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986 requires that states allow members of the Armed Forces and their families as well as other United States citizens living overseas to register and vote by absentee ballot in federal elections. The Secretary of Defense is responsible for administration of the UOCAVA system and delegates this role to the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP). While overseen by the federal government, states shoulder the bulk of responsibility in coordinating registration and the transmission and submission of ballots with UOCAVA voters living out of district or overseas. Much like the rest of election administration, the UOCAVA system is highly decentralized with the means and, arguably, the success of administering UOCAVA varying across states and counties. In most cases, the FVAP acts a conduit facilitating initial voter interaction with local election administrators. These officials must then ensure that UOCAVA voters receive and return their ballots in time to be counted in federal elections. Colorado is a unique location in which to examine the UOCAVA system in light of the concurrent widespread use of vote by mail for federal elections.

Interacting with Federal Government on UOCAVA

The UOCAVA system is overseen by the federal government, specifically the Departments of Defense and State, but requires implementation by local jurisdictions. The surveys attempted to determine the extent of the relationship between the federal overseers and local implementers of the system. In the pre-election survey, the Clerks reported little to no contact with the federal government about the UOCAVA system leading up to the 2008 General Election. However, 83% reported feeling adequately prepared to administer the UOCAVA system. Several Clerks noted that UOCAVA trainers attended a meeting of the Colorado County Clerks Association, they received emails about UOCAVA, and they could contact the Secretary of State's office with questions about UOCAVA. Thus, while there was little interaction with the federal overseers of the program, local Clerks did not feel there was a problem with their preparation for administering this system.

Interacting with Potential UOCAVA Voters

Although the survey questions referred to UOCAVA eligible voters, the responses from the Clerks across several questions create a concern that they focus on only self-identified UOCAVA voters. There appears to be little to no outreach to the pool of UOCAVA eligible voters who do not self-identify to the Clerks. This is not to say that UOCAVA voters constitute an ignored population, far from it. Clerks are willing to go to great lengths to serve voters who self-identify as UOCAVA voters, but they do not seem to be aware of UOCAVA eligible voters who do not take the initiative to contact the Clerk.

When asked how many UOCAVA voters were in their respective counties, the Clerks responded with impressively precise numbers. In both the pre- and post-election surveys, the cadets conducting the surveys remarked at the precision of Clerks' ability to account for and detail the precise numbers of UOCAVA voters under their jurisdictions. In large counties the responses tended to be round estimates but in small counties they were often exact numbers (and even an enumeration of the individual UOCAVA voters). Most Clerks appeared to more easily recall or estimate the number of UOCAVA voters than the election administration budget numbers. The study's close association with the United States Military Academy might drive some of this specificity on the part of the Clerks.

Despite the ability to cite specific numbers of UOCAVA voters in their counties, several Clerks volunteered their surprise at the number of UOCAVA voters in this election. Further, it seemed that very few Clerks had considered whether UOCAVA eligible voters used standard mail ballots

rather than the UOCAVA ballots. The responses to these different questions suggest that the Clerks have little ex ante knowledge of the population of UOCAVA voters.

The most readily identifiable set of UOCAVA-eligible voters are members of the military posted overseas. These voters are only a portion of UOCAVA-eligible voters, but they usually receive special attention since it current includes all military personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The mailing addresses for these voters have AA, AE, or AP as the state. These codes route the mail from the US Postal Service to the appropriate geographic branch of the Department of Defense mail system for overseas delivery (see Appendix F for counts by county).^{xvi}

Several Clerks reported a surge in the number of UOCAVA voters in the 2008 General Election. This response may be another indication of the lack of ex ante knowledge of the size of the UOCAVA-eligible population in many counties. However, looking at the subset of UOCAVA-eligible voters defined by a military APO mailing address for overseas postings, there is little evidence of a surge in UOCAVA: 56% of the voters with APO mailing addresses voted in 2008 while 50% voted in the 2004 election. In the 2006 federal mid-term election only 20% of the voters with APO addresses cast ballots, so there seems to be a major surge in UOCAVA participation in Presidential elections.

Administering UOCAVA and Voting by Mail

Colorado provides a valuable opportunity to investigate administration of the UOCAVA system due to the concurrent availability of permanent vote by mail. At the outset of this study, we were agnostic as to whether these systems would complement one another as similar means of facilitating voting prior to Election Day or compete against each other in the allocation of time and resources.

On the whole, the Clerks were content to administer both the UOCAVA system and the regular mail voting system as available options, although there appears to be a mild preference for promoting the mail voting system over UOCAVA. Forty percent of the Clerks reported no preference between the two systems of voting, usually because usage of multiple systems provides voters more options for casting their ballots. Another forty percent of the Clerks reported that they preferred promoting the use of the regular mail voting system, primarily because it was easier to administer as part the standard system. The remaining 20 percent of the Clerks suggested they preferred promoting the UOCAVA system.

The reasons for these preferences were varied. Several Clerks indicated that the responsibility for promoting UOCAVA ought to lay with federal agencies, specifically the Department of Defense, instead of the counties. Another reason cited for using the regular voting by mail process is the protection of UOCAVA voters' ballot secrecy, which is often compromised when using the UOCAVA system.

The process outlined by UOCAVA does not anticipate integrating with a widespread optional voting by mail system such as that in Colorado in 2008. As Congress considers revisions to UOCAVA, there is a clear need to carefully consider how UOCAVA could be integrated with the regular vote by mail process to eliminate redundancy and overlap of the systems and to protect ballot secrecy.

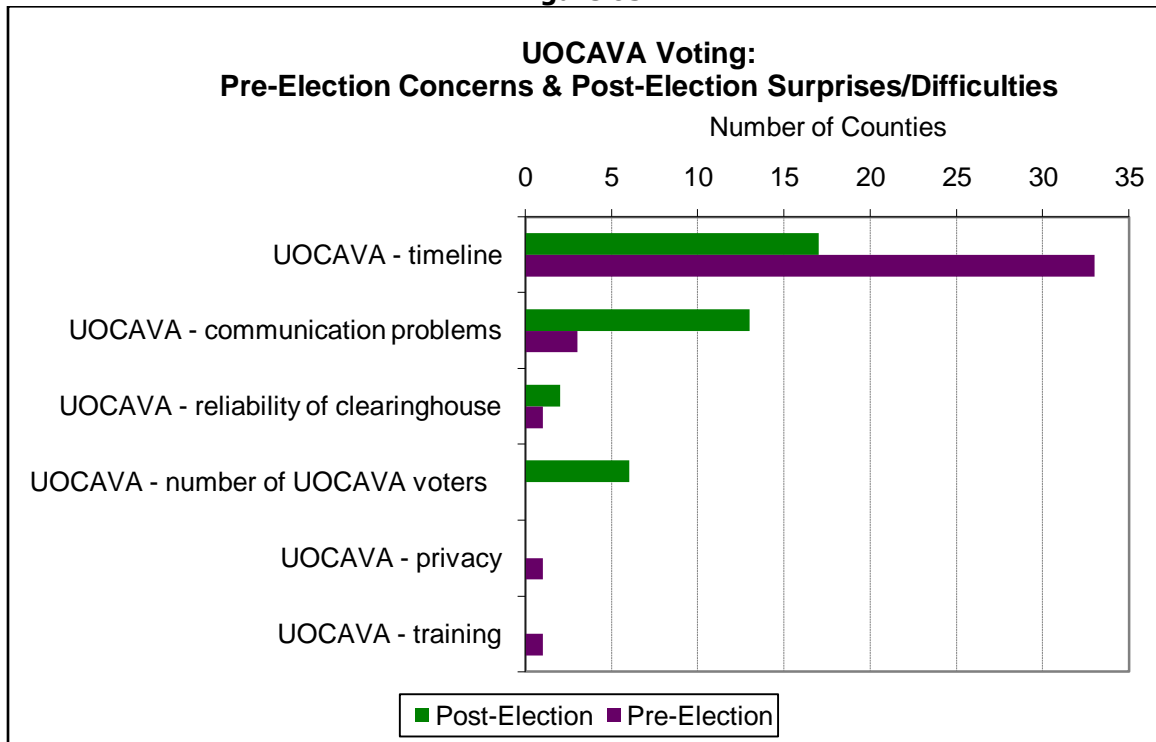
Pre-election Concerns vs. Post-election Difficulties/Surprises

As with the other methods of casting a ballot in Colorado, Clerks anticipated specific difficulties associated with administration of the UOCAVA system in the pre-election survey. Overall, Clerks' anticipated concerns over administration of UOCAVA ballots were borne out during the election

season, although the specific reasons for these difficulties may have differed. In the pre-election survey, Clerks were almost exclusively focused on the timeline for the transmission and subsequent submission of ballots for UOCAVA voters. Sixty percent of the Clerks surveyed cited the timeline for ballot transmission. This accounts for 85% of Clerks who reported having any type of concern about administering UOCAVA.

The post-survey asked an open-ended question about the biggest difficulties or surprises with UOCAVA administration. The Clerks again cited the timeline as the primary difficulty incurred, but fewer Clerks found it to be a problem in retrospect. Difficulties communicating with UOCAVA voters were a more prominent concern in the post-election survey (Figure 65).

Figure 65



One qualitative difference between the pre-election survey and the post-election survey appeared with regard to communication problems. In the pre-election survey, concerns about communication with voters seemed to center on the reliability of the federal clearinghouse. In the post-election survey, Clerks told stories of their difficulties communicating directly with voters and the clearinghouse was only mentioned twice. It is unclear whether communication with the federal clearinghouse improved or if that concern was simply superseded by the more urgent need to effectively contact voters.

Recommended Changes to the UOCAVA System

The post-election survey queried the Colorado Clerks about recommendations for improvements to the UOCAVA system (Figure 66). A majority of the recommendations stem from the time constraints associated with transmitting and submitting ballots to voters across the world.

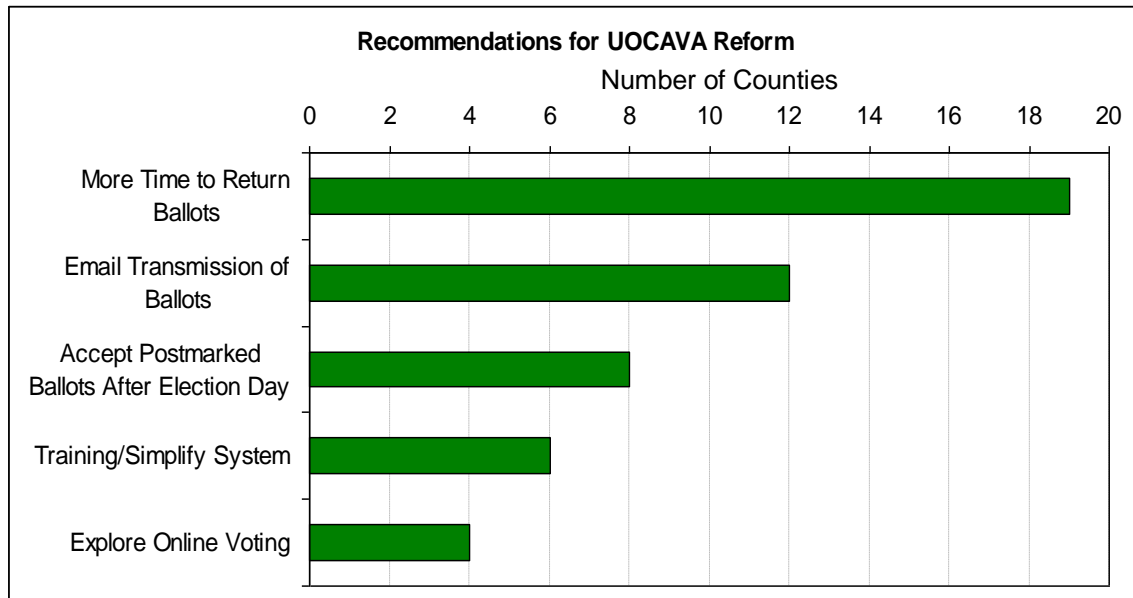
The most common recommendation was allowing more time for ballots to be submitted (37%), with a more specific recommendation to allow UOCAVA ballots postmarked on Election Day to be counted as long as they are received before the deadline for resolving provisional ballots (15%). To address this issue, the Colorado legislature acted in 2009 (with the Clerks’ strong support) to

allow UOCAVA ballots to be counted if postmarked on Election Day and received within seven days of the election (i.e. the time period allowed for processing provisional ballots).

Going even farther, almost a quarter of the Clerks wanted to allow email transmission of ballots since they believed this to be more reliable and faster process for transmitting ballots around the world. Four Clerks mentioned the idea of exploring the usage of online voting to expedite the voting process.

Other recommendations focused on the administrative tasks associated with the UOCAVA system. Six Clerks mentioned the desire for additional training on administering UOCAVA and/or simplifying the system. Two counties with significant numbers of UOCAVA voters recommended greater education about the need for UOCAVA voters to update the Clerk's office on their locations if they move since UOCAVA requests are only valid for two general elections, according to these Clerks. This problem is similar to the concern expressed by a significant number of Clerks about keeping domestic addresses current for permanent mail voters in Colorado.

Figure 66



The post-election survey specifically probed Clerks about recommendations to ensure equal access to voting opportunities for military and overseas citizens. The responses were strikingly similar: Email transmission for all military and overseas voters was mentioned by one-third of the Clerks responding to the post-election survey, allowing more time was mentioned by a quarter of the Clerks, and internet voting was raised by another quarter of the clerks. Almost a fifth of the Clerks recommended increased education of military and overseas voters about the UOCAVA process and the need for UOCAVA-eligible voters to make their request for ballots as early as possible, again pointing to the difficulties in overcoming the time constraints in the voting process.

Discussion

On the surface, the clerks appear to have a positive assessment of the UOCAVA system, but looking more carefully reveals areas of concern and in need of improvement. The Clerks exhibit confidence and willingness to meet to the needs of military and overseas voters. Aside from the time it takes to transmit and return ballots, the Colorado County Clerks had few complaints

concerning administration of the UOCAVA system. In many ways, the UOCAVA system is similar to the vote by mail process but with greater difficulties moving ballots across longer distances and usually outside the US Postal System.

A careful look at the full set UOCAVA questions reveals a gap in the UOCAVA system. There is a disconnect between the federal government and local jurisdictions in the administration of the UOCAVA system, specifically with regard to tracking citizens eligible to vote using UOCAVA balloting procedures. Clerks seem very committed to giving UOCAVA voters every opportunity to vote and see facilitating the UOCAVA process by whatever means necessary as their main responsibility to these voters. However, UOCAVA-eligible voters must self-identify to the Clerks to receive the special voting procedures. While the presence of the UOCAVA system eases the burden of voting for these citizens, it does not facilitate outreach to potential users from the local level.

Further research should investigate the feasibility of increased coordination between the Departments of Defense and State, which track military personnel and their dependents and overseas citizens, and local election officials charged with administering UOCAVA ballots. Working with the Departments of Defense and State, researchers may also be able to match extant voter files with rosters of personnel stationed out of district or stationed or living overseas. Such an exploration might serve as a useful pilot program to provide lists of UOCAVA eligible voters to local election officials.

Future research might also examine efforts made at the federal level to inform UOCAVA-eligible citizens about the balloting options available to them and the importance of starting the voting process as early as possible. Bridging the gap between the Clerks' willingness to extend themselves for UOCAVA voters and the lack of awareness among UOCAVA voters might go a long way towards improving the effectiveness of the UOCAVA system for military and overseas citizens.

Finally, we do not know if the positive assessment of UOCAVA and willingness to work with UOCAVA voters is due to already working with a similar system for mail voting. Future research ought to consider whether the administration of UOCAVA is similar across states with different voting laws. Vastly different state election regimes may cause different reactions to the burdens of UOCAVA. In particular, local election officials accustomed to high volumes of mail balloting may find administration of UOCAVA easier than those who are not set up to handle requests for mail ballots on a daily basis.

Appendix A – Pre-Election Survey Methodology

The primary goal of the pre-election survey was to gather information about the plans and expectations of the County Clerks in Colorado concerning voting by mail. Since Clerks were deeply engaged in administering voting for the 2008 general election by the time this project was approved and launched, Jefferson County Clerk Pam Anderson guided the research team towards fielding only questions that we needed answered prior to the election. We aimed for a survey instrument that took less than 10 minutes to complete over the phone.

The focused survey appears to have been a wise decision since we completed surveys with 56 of the 64 counties despite fielding it only two weeks prior to Election Day. Anecdotal feedback indicates that Clerk Anderson's outreach to her colleagues assuring them of the brevity of the survey as well as word of mouth about the brevity of the survey among the Clerks assisted in gaining their cooperation. It should be noted that the sponsorship of the survey by the US Military Academy at West Point was also a considerable help in gaining the cooperation of these local officials.

The pre-election survey was narrowed to questions covering expectations of turnout level and composition; how expectations shaped investment in promoting vote by mail and early in-person voting; expectations for UOCAVA voting; and feelings about the state statute passed in 2007 to allow voters to sign up for permanent vote by mail status (see Appendix A-1 for the survey questionnaire). After discussion with other scholars and local election officials, as well as within our research team, the research team determined that other questions would not be biased by waiting until after the election when Clerks would be more likely to cooperate with a longer survey.

Pre-Election Survey Methodology

The pre-election survey was conducted by telephone from October 21 to October 24, 2008. The survey was initially developed in early October and finalized between the official launch of this project on October 13th and the beginning of fielding on October 21st.

The interviews were conducted primarily by seven cadets enrolled in a Campaigns and Elections seminar at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY under the supervision of Professor Rachel Sondheimer. The majority of the surveys were completed in calling sessions between the hours of 10:00 am and 1:00 pm MDT using phone banks established in faculty offices within the Department of Social Sciences.

Administering the survey during the lunch hour was suboptimal but this was necessary due to the cadet daily academic schedule. To ensure that this timing did not influence our participation rate, if Clerks were not available we set up appointments to complete the survey at another time. A small number of surveys were completed on Monday, October 27, 2008 based on appointments scheduled the prior week. Surveys completed outside of the primary calling hours were administered by the cadets or the primary investigators Rachel Sondheimer and Christopher Mann based on availability at the scheduled time.

A week prior to the survey going into the field, the cadets were trained to administer the survey. In addition to reviewing the questionnaire and procedures, the cadets conducted mock interviews with graduate students from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government playing the role of election officials. Using participant feedback after the practice session, we refined the survey instrument and constructed a list of frequently asked questions and guidelines for administering the survey (see Appendix A-2).

Each survey took between 10 and 20 minutes to complete with each county Clerk, depending on the loquaciousness of the Clerk in responding to the items. All responses were recorded, including volunteered information for closed ended response questions.

In order to maximize participation, the cadets identified themselves as calling from West Point. There was some risk that having cadets introduce themselves as such had the possibility of influencing responses, especially with regard to the questions about UOCAVA voting. However, the research team determined that getting responses from Clerks busy administering vote by mail and early in-person voting was more beneficial than the risk of bias on these questions. Fortunately, analysis of the county Clerks' views on UOCAVA voting in the pre-election survey showed little evidence that the West Point affiliation biased commentary on UOCAVA. The Clerks were generally cautious about criticizing the statutes under which elections are administered, so they seemed no more and no less cautious in commenting on UOCAVA to West Point affiliated researchers.

Responses were recorded electronically in real-time as the surveys were conducted using a simple form. The each response was compiled and coded by both Christopher Mann and Rachel Sondheimer to ensure accuracy.

Appendix A-1 – Pre-Election Survey Instrument
Pre-Election Survey
Role of Election Officials in Promoting Mail Voting in Colorado
Make Voting Work Initiative
Pew Charitable Trusts & JEHT Foundation
Final Version – October 20, 2008

Name of Clerk:
Phone Number:
County of Clerk:
Name of Cadet Completing Survey:

Pre-Election Survey:
Role of Election Officials in Promoting Mail Voting in Colorado

Hi, this is Cadet _____ of the US Military Academy at West Point. Can I speak to Clerk **Nancy Doty**? [**If not available:** Is the senior staff person handling elections and voting available?
Record Name: _____]

[**IF NOT AVAILABLE:** Will she/he be available if I call back in an hour? **IF NO:** Will she/he be available between 10 and 1 Mountain time on Thursday?]

Record data and time to recontact _____

As part of research for the Make Voting Work Initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts, we are conducting a 10 minute survey of every county Clerk in Colorado about the upcoming election. The goal of our academic research is to identify best practices in election administration to help local election officials in Colorado and around the country in future elections. You should have received an email from Jefferson County Clerk Pam Anderson about the survey.

We know you are very busy, so we will try to get through the questions as quickly as possible.

[**IF BUSY:** Would it be better if I call back in an hour? **IF NO:** Is there a good time between 10 and 1 Mountain time on Thursday?]

Record data and time to recontact _____

We will start with some basic information about this fall's election.

- 1) What proportion of people registered in your county do you expect to vote in this election?

- 2) When the votes are counted, what proportion of voters do you expect to vote through the mail, early in-person, and on election day
 - A) Mail voting _____% [**Prompt:** What proportion of voters do you think will vote by mail]

 - B) Early in-person voting _____% [**Prompt:** What proportion of voters do you think will vote early in person]

C) Election Day voting _____% **[Prompt:** What proportion of voters do you think will vote in person Election Day]

[Flip a coin for order of next two questions] Local election officials have many reasons to promote mail voting and early in-person voting.

3) **[HEADS]** I am going to read several reasons why some local election officials say they are promoting mail voting. Please tell me how important it is to your decision on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means that this reason was not at all important in your decisions about allocating resources and 10 means it was extremely important in allocating resources.

- Mail voting will help increase overall turnout
- Mail voting will reduce the risk of long lines, not enough ballots, or other problems on Election Day
- Mail voting is more convenient for voters
- Mail voting is easier and less costly to administer
- Mail voting avoids problems with voting machines
- Are there any other reasons that were important in your decision to promote mail voting?
[If yes, what are they?]

4) **[TAILS]** I am going to read several reasons why some local election officials say they are promoting early in-person voting. Please tell me how important it is to your decision on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means that this reason was not at all important in your decisions about allocating resources and 10 means it was extremely important in allocating resources.

- Early in-person voting will help increase overall turnout
- Early in-person voting will reduce the risk of long lines, not enough ballots, or other problems on Election Day
- Early in-person voting is more convenient for voters
- Early in-person voting is easier and less costly to administer
- Early in-person voting avoids problems with voting machines
- Are there any other reasons that were important in your decision to promote early in-person voting?
[If yes, what are they?]

In the past, different types of voters have cast their ballots in different ways.

5) For the 2008 election, do you think that mail voting will be used more by:
- Older voter or younger voters?
[If asked: Voters over 35 or voters under 35]

- People who have been registered for a long time or newly registered voters
- People who vote frequently or people who rarely vote
[If asked: Voters who vote in every general election or voters who vote only in Presidential elections]
- Voters registered with a major party or independents?
- Voters registered as Democrats or Republicans?
- Men or women?
- Voters with high levels of education and income or voters with low levels of education and income?
[If asked: College education vs non-college education]
- White voters or minority voters?

As you know, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) is a separate system to provide mail ballots to members of the military living away from Colorado and citizens living abroad.

- 6) How many UOCAVA ballots do you think will be cast in your county in this election?
[In raw numbers/counts, not percentages]
- 7) How many UOCAVA eligible voters do you think will use standard mail voting ballots rather than the UOCAVA process to cast their ballot in this election?
[In raw numbers/counts, not percentages]
- 8) How does promotion of the UOCAVA program differ from promotion of no excuse vote by mail?
- 9) If given a choice, which program do you prefer to promote to registrants eligible for both?

We're almost finished, just a few short questions left.

- 10) Running elections is very complicated. What problems are you most worried about occurring or have already occurred in each type of voting:
 - UOCAVA voting? [Prompt: What worries you most about UOCAVA voting?]
 - Mail voting?
 - Early voting?
 - Election Day voting?
- 11) Do you think that the law to allow permanent mail voting status passed in 2007 was a good idea?

12) Do you see the no excuse mail voting system as disadvantaging any particular groups of people? If so, whom? [**If not disadvantaging anyone:** Who does no-excuse mail voting help the least?]

As part of our study, we will collect samples of material you used to promote mail voting, UOCAVA voting, early in person voting and Election Day Voting after the election.

Thank you for your time and your hard work to make voting work for every voter.

Appendix A-2 – Pre-Election Survey Instructions

Guidelines for Pre-Election Survey

Prior to Administering the Survey

Before arriving on Tuesday

- Read over the survey – if you have any questions, ASK
- Practice administering the survey
- Make sure that you have access and editing rights to the Survey SharePoint Site
<http://usma-portal/dean/departments/soc/490A/Colorado/default.aspx>
- Go over all of the documents (not in the survey folders) under Shared Documents including:

Guidelines for Pre-Election Survey
Pre-Election Survey Frequently Asked Questions

On Tuesday

- BRING YOUR LAPTOP and make sure it is Internet Accessible
- Go over the Pre-Election FAQ
- Have at least one print version of the survey available in case something happens to your computer
- You will be sitting at a desk in an office on the second floor of Lincoln Hall but will be using your own computer
 - Be respectful of your borrowed desk!!!!
 - Please see me if you have any problems
- All phone calls will be made using my Long Distance Pin
 - This will be provided to you on Tuesday

Administering the Survey

Guidelines for using the surveys on the SharePoint Web Site

- All of the surveys can be found under the "Shared Documents" Link
- At the outset, all surveys will be in the "Uncontacted Surveys" Folder
 - The name of each survey is the name of the county that you are calling
- You will be given a list of ~10 names – On the first day, start by calling each of the names on your list
 - If you call someone on your list and they say to contact them at another time, write that time on your list in addition to in the survey itself
 - If/when you exhaust this list, come see me
- When you open a survey to call a county Clerk, BEFORE DIALING THE NUMBER save that survey to the "Contacted Incomplete Survey" Folder.
 - Add your name to the name of the file.
 - Once you have saved the file in the new location, delete it from the previous location "Uncontacted Surveys" Folder
- Dial the number and begin the survey
 - If you are unable to complete the survey at that time, enter the reasons why (as much information as possible) and resave to the "Contacted Incomplete Surveys" Folder
- Once a survey is complete, save the survey in the "Completed Surveys" folder
 - Download the completed survey to your desktop
 - Email a copy of the completed survey to Rachel.sondheimer@usma.edu
 - Once you have completed ALL of these steps, delete previous survey from the "Contacted Incomplete Surveys" folder

Survey Tips

- Have your survey FAQ sheet with you to answer any questions asked by the interviewee

- Be courteous and clear at all times
 - Remember, we need to resurvey these people after the election
 - Need to maintain our relationships
- Do not stray from the script
- Do not try to answer questions for them
- Do not explain what you think the question means...just read from the script
- Write down everything they say, even if it is unsolicited comment on close-ended question (but still make sure they answer the question)
- Write down everything – you may think you will remember something but you will not, write it down before moving on

Frequently Asked Question

Have this FAQ printed out or open on your laptop when you administer the survey. Do not deviate from or elaborate on these answers.

What is the project?

- This is an academic research project involving scholars at West Point and Yale University. We are participating as part of our class on elections. The research is funded by the Make Voting Work Initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts (a large foundation). The goal is to learn more about election administration to help local election officials in future elections.

What is Pew's Make Voting Work Initiative?

- The initiative examines the most pressing elections problems, and undertakes and evaluates pilot projects and experiments designed to address issues identified during elections—under the stress of real-world conditions. This research will inform our efforts to identify effective solutions—policies, practices and technologies—that address the key challenges facing the election process.

When will research report be released?

- This survey is just the first phase of the research. The plan is to have a preliminary report on this phase completed by the end of the year. There will be a post-election survey and an analysis of voter turnout in the 2008 election. The report on these phases of the research will be available in early summer 2009.

What else are you doing to study this?

- See "When will research report be released" above.

Questions about West Point

- Feel free to answer any questions you feel comfortable answering, but tell the person you can only answer the questions after completing survey

Appendix B – Post-Election Survey Methodology

The primary goal of the post-election survey was to gather information about actual activities and post-election impressions of the County Clerks in Colorado concerning voting by mail. With the guidance of Jefferson County Clerk Pam Anderson, the research team developed a phone survey questionnaire covering background about election administration, voter education outreach activities, and impressions of the administration of the 2008 General Election. The survey instrument took 20-25 minutes to complete over the phone on average, although some Clerks spent considerably longer in providing very thorough answers to the survey questions (see Appendix B-1 for the questionnaire).

Despite slow initial response, we were able to successfully complete the survey with 51 of the 64 counties. Clerk Anderson's outreach to her colleagues assisted in gaining the cooperation of many of the Clerks, just as it had with the pre-election survey. It should be noted that the sponsorship of the survey by the US Military Academy at West Point was again a considerable help in gaining the cooperation of these local election officials. The cadets and primary investigators made every effort to conduct the surveys with the county Clerk and Recorder, unless specifically directed by the Clerk to conduct the survey with the county elections director or elections manager.

The post-election survey covered a number of topics: staffing, training, experience, and budget for election administration; voter education outreach activities and their division among methods of voting; impressions of vote by mail and early in-person voting; experience with and suggestions about the UOCAVA voting process; feelings about the state statute passed in 2007 to allow voters to sign up for permanent vote by mail status; and views on the Colorado legislative debates about a shift to all mail voting for future elections. The survey did not seek to collect data which can be gathered directly from the voter file including turnout, use of each method of voting, number of active voters, etc. Soliciting this information would have been an unnecessary burden on the Clerks when this empirical information can be calculated directly from the public voter file.

Pre-Election Survey Methodology

The post-election survey was conducted by telephone from February 19th to March 16th, 2009. The post-election survey was developed in January 2009 based on the pre-election survey compilation report, questions cut from the pre-election survey due to constraints on its length, and consultation within our research team, with Clerk Anderson, and with other scholars.

The interviews were conducted primarily by cadets at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY under the supervision of Dr. Rachel Sondheimer of the Department of Social Sciences. Several of the cadet interviewers had previous experience in conducting the pre-election survey interviews, but this was the first experience conducting telephone survey interviews for many of the cadets. All cadets and the project co-directors Rachel Sondheimer and Christopher Mann completed Army mandated Internal Review Board ethics training prior to starting the interviews. The project co-directors also conducted surveys when cadets were not available to do so.

A week prior to the survey going into the field, the cadets were trained to administer the survey. In addition to reviewing the questionnaire and procedures, the cadets conducted mock interviews. Using feedback after the practice session, we refined the survey instrument.

In order to maximize the participation rate, the post-election surveys were scheduled using an on-line scheduling service (see Appendix B-2). As in the pre-election survey, we identified the survey as affiliated with the US Military Academy at West Point. Jefferson County Clerk Pam Anderson sent an initial email to each Clerk on February 18, 2009 (see Appendix B-3) asking them to schedule a convenient time to complete the survey. Dr. Rachel Sondheimer sent follow-up emails to Clerks who had not yet scheduled a time to complete the survey on February 24, 2009 and March 10, 2009 (see Appendix B-4). During their scheduled interviewing shifts, the cadets also made cold calls to attempt to reach Clerks who had not yet scheduled an appointment. Finally, project co-director Christopher Mann called each of the Clerks who had not responded by March 4th to schedule a time to complete the survey.

Each survey took between 20 and 50 minutes to complete with each county Clerk, depending on the loquaciousness of the Clerk in responding to open-ended questions. The vast majority of the surveys were completed in 20 to 25 minutes. All responses were recorded, including volunteered information for closed ended response questions. Responses were recorded electronically in real-time as the surveys were conducted using a simple Microsoft Excel form.

Appendix B-1: Post-Election Survey Instrument
Post-Election Survey
Role of Election Officials in Promoting Mail Voting in Colorado
Make Voting Work Initiative

Hi, this is Cadet _____ of the US Military Academy at West Point. Can I speak to Clerk _____? We scheduled an appointment to complete a survey about the administration of the 2008 general election. [If not available: Is the senior staff person handling elections and voting available?

Record Name: _____]

If No One Available: Can you please have him/her call Christopher Mann 202-295-7834 to set up another time for us to conduct the interview?

As part of research for the Pew Charitable Trusts Make Voting Work Initiative, we are conducting a 20 minute survey of every county Clerk in Colorado about the administration of the 2008 election. The goal of our research is to identify best practices in election administration to help local election officials in Colorado and around the country in future elections.

This is the second part of the survey you participated in last fall. We know you are very busy, so we will try to get through the questions as quickly as possible.

[IF BUSY: Can I reschedule at a time that is more convenient for you?]

Record date and time to re-contact _____

We will start with some basic information about administering last fall's election.

1) How many years of experience do you have administering elections, including your time as Clerk and any previous experience working in the Clerk's office?

2) What was your budget for administering the 2008 general election? (If unable to answer, ask: I don't need to know exactly. Approximately how much was your budget?)

3) For administering the 2008 General Election, did you find your original budget to be adequate or did you require supplements to your original budget?

- Required Supplementer
 Adequate Budget

[If supplements were required] How much supplemental funding was needed?

[If budget was adequate] Could you have administered the 2008 General Election with a smaller budget? If so, how much would you have required to best administer the 2008 General Election?

4) How much total funding did you have for educating voters about mail voting, early in-person voting, and Election Day voting?

5) How much of this funding was provided by the county?

6) How much of this funding was provided by state or federal funding and reimbursements?

7) How much was through grants, donations, and other non-governmental sources?

8) How many total full time staff members work in the entire Clerk & Recorder Department, including you?

9) How many full-time staff members were involved in administering the 2008 General Election, including you?

10) Did you hire temporary office staff, utilize other county personnel, or take on any volunteers in your office to help administer the 2008 General Election, not including election judges? If so, how many of each?

11) How many hours a week, on average, did these staff members spend on administering the 2008 General Election between Labor Day and Election Day?

12) Did you have difficulty finding staff with the training and skills to administer the 2008 elections?
 Yes - had difficulty
 No Difficulty

Comments:

13) Would you say that in order to administer the elections in 2008 you had to do a lot of training of your staff, some training, not very much training, or hardly any training at all?
 A lot of training
 Some training
 Not very much training
 Hardly any training

Comments:

14) As the county Clerk and Recorder you are responsible for many important functions other than administering elections. Would you say that your primary personal interest is another area of your responsibilities as Clerk or is your primary personal interest election administration?
 Another area
 Election Administration

15) What proportion of the voter education effort by your office was allocated to informing voters about mail voting?

[Prompt: We don't need an exact dollar amount, just an estimate of what percentage of your voter education efforts was dedicated to informing voters about mail voting.]

16) What did you do to educate voters about mail voting?

[Prompt: For example, some Clerks mailed information to voters, sent out press releases, or put information on their websites.]

17) What did you find was the most effective way of educating voters about mail voting?

18) What proportion of the voter education effort by your office was allocated to informing voters about early in-person voting?

19) What did you do to educate voters about early in-person voting?

20) What did you find was the most effective way of educating voters about early in-person voting?

21) What proportion of the voter education effort by your office was allocated to informing voters about Election Day voting?

22) What did you do to educate voters about Election Day voting?

23) What did you find was the most effective way of educating voters about Election Day voting?

24) Thinking about everything you did to educate voters about mail voting, early voting and Election Day voting, what do you think was the most effective approach?

25) Did you target any particular groups for voter education in the 2008 General Election, such as newly registered voters, young voters, older voters, or other types of voters? **[If Yes: What groups did you target?]**

Yes

No

26) In the 2008 General Election, did you encourage voters to cast their ballots by mail, at early vote sites, on Election Day, or did you not encourage voters to use any particular method of voting?

Mail Voting
 Early Voting
 Election Day voting
 No particular method
 Refused / Don't Know

27) Local election officials had many different goals in administering the 2008 General Election. I'm going to read three benchmarks that other local election officials list as their goals. Please tell me which one of these three is the highest priority for you:

- A) To carefully apply the laws and regulations to administer fair elections
- B) To educate voters so that everyone understands how to vote
- C) To promote voting because I believe everyone should turnout to vote
- D) **[DO NOT READ]** Refused/Don't Know
- E) **[DO NOT READ]** Other

A
 B
 C
 D
 E

[Flip a coin for order of next two questions]

28) [HEADS] I am going to read several reasons why some local election officials said they encouraged voters to use mail voting in the 2008 General Election. Based on your experience in the 2008 General Election, please tell me how important each reason would be to your decision for future elections. Please use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means that this reason would be of no importance in your decisions about allocating resources in future elections and 10 means it would be extremely important in allocating resources in future elections.

- Mail voting will help increase overall turnout
- Mail voting will reduce the risk of long lines, not enough ballots, or other problems on Election Day
- Mail voting is more convenient for voters
- Mail voting gives voters more time to complete the ballot
- Mail voting is easier to administer
- Mail voting is less costly to administer
- Mail voting avoids problems with voting machines
- Are there any other reasons that were important in your decision to promote mail voting?
[If yes, what are they?]

Yes
 No

[Redacted header bar]

29) [TAILS] I am going to read several reasons why some local election officials said they encouraged voters to use early in-person voting in the 2008 General Election. Based on your experience in the 2008 General Election, please tell me how important each reason would be to your decision for future elections. Please use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means that this reason would be of no importance in your decisions about allocating resources in future elections and 10 means it would be extremely important in allocating resources in future elections.

- Early in-person voting will help increase overall turnout
- Early in-person voting will reduce the risk of long lines, not enough ballots, or other problems on Election Day
- Early in-person voting is more convenient for voters
- Early in-person voting gives voters more time to complete the ballot
- Early in-person voting is easier to administer
- Early in-person voting is less costly to administer
- Early in-person voting minimizes problems with voting machines
- Are there any other reasons that were important in your decision to promote early in-person voting? Yes No

[If yes, what are they?]

[Redacted text area]

As you know, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) is a separate system to provide mail ballots to members of the military living away from Colorado and citizens living abroad. We would like to ask a few questions about your experience with the UOCAVA system because the federal government is considering ways to improve it.

30) In the time leading up to the 2008 General Election, how much contact did you have with the federal government and/or Department of Defense with regard to administration of the UOCAVA system?

[Redacted text area]

31) Do you feel like you were adequately prepared to deal with administration of the UOCAVA system? Yes No

32) How many UOCAVA ballots were cast in your county in this election? [In raw numbers/counts, not percentages]

33) Did voters eligible to use a UOCAVA ballot use standard mail voting ballots instead? If so, how many? [*In raw numbers/counts, not percentages*]

34) Based on your experience in 2008, what would you recommend to the federal government to improve the UOCAVA voting system as they consider making changes for future elections?

35) Please describe what you see as your role as a county Clerk in administering the UOCAVA system.

36) In your professional opinion, what do you think is the best way to ensure equal opportunity for military and overseas citizens to vote in general elections?

We're almost finished, just a few short questions left.

37) We know that running elections is very complicated and full of surprises. What were the three biggest difficulties or surprises in administering the 2008 General Election?

38) The 2008 General Election was especially complicated because voters could cast ballots in at least four different ways: mail voting, early voting, Election Day voting, and UOCAVA voting. Now I'd like to ask what the biggest difficulties or surprises were for each method of voting, starting with mail voting.

[If respondent says they already answered: I am sorry to ask you to repeat some of your answers, but we are trying to understand the difficulties or surprises in each type of voting]

- What were the biggest difficulties or surprises with mail voting?

- What were the biggest difficulties or surprises with UOCAVA voting?

- What were the biggest difficulties or surprises with early in-person voting?

- Finally, what were the biggest difficulties or surprises with Election Day voting?

39) After your experience with the 2008 election, do you think that the law to allow permanent mail voting status passed in 2007 was a good idea?

Yes
 No

Comments:

40) The Colorado Legislature is considering proposals to require all future elections to be conducted by mail voting. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea? Why?

Good Idea
 Bad Idea

41) What changes do you think should be made in the mail voting system to make it easier to administer elections?

42) As part of our study, would you be willing to send us material that you used to educate and inform voters during the 2008 election? We will provide you with a Federal Express account number so you can send any printed materials to us at no cost to you.

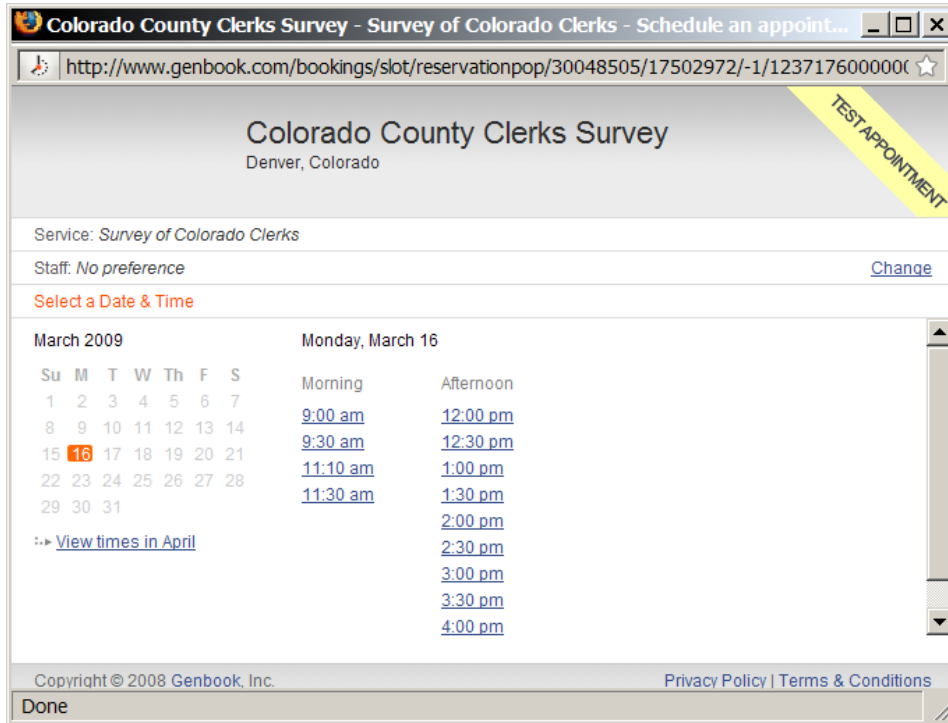
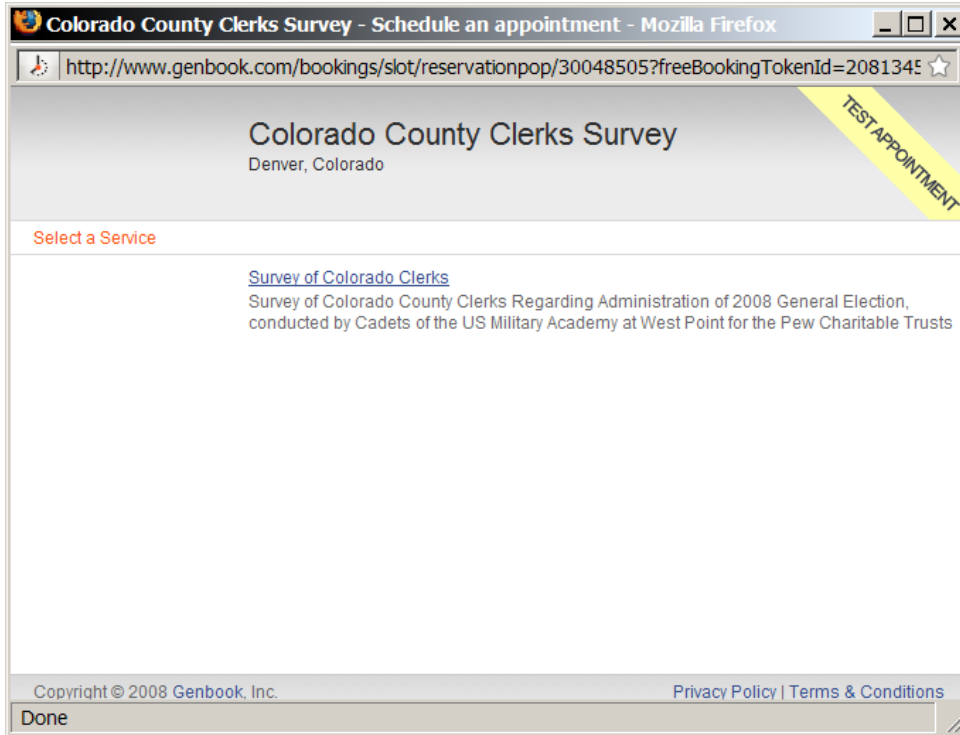
Yes
 No

If Yes: Please tell me an email address where I can send you the address and the Federal Express account number:

You can also reply to our email with electronic copies or web links to any materials.

Thank you for your time and your efforts to make voting work.

**Appendix B-2:
Screenshots of Online Survey Scheduling Tool**



Enter your details - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.genbook.com/bookings/onlinebooking/detailspop/30048505/20813530?bookingId=2C

Slot will end for 4:19

Colorado County Clerks Survey
Denver, Colorado

Appointment details: *Survey of Colorado Clerks with Interviewer 1 on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 9:00 AM* [Change](#)

Enter your details

First Name

Last Name

Contact Number

Email Address

Special Request (Optional)

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Done

Confirm your appointment - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.genbook.com/bookings/onlinebooking/confirmationpop/30048505/20813530?booking

Slot will end for 3:49

Colorado County Clerks Survey
Denver, Colorado

Confirm your appointment

! Your appointment is not quite locked in yet! Please review your details below and if they are correct click the confirm button. After confirming you should soon receive an email confirmation. This email may contain additional instructions so please review it.

Appointment: *Survey of Colorado Clerks with Interviewer 1 on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 9:00 AM* [Change](#)

Your details: Jane Doe (303)-555-5555 clerk@co.county.co.us [Change](#)

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Done

Appointment Confirmed! - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.genbook.com/bookings/onlinebooking/receiptpop/30048505/20813530?bookingId=21

Colorado County Clerks Survey

Denver, Colorado

TEST APPOINTMENT

Appointment Confirmed! [Print](#) [Close](#)

Appointment: Survey of Colorado Clerks
with Interviewer 1
on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 9:00 AM
Confirmation number: 4ECC0JISR8

Your details: Jane Doe
(303)-555-5555
clerk@co.county.co.us

Additional Information: **Thank You**
Thank you for scheduling a time to participate in our survey of Clerks and Recorders regarding administration of the 2008 General Election. You will be called at your appointment time at the number provided by a member of our research team from the US Military Academy at West Point.

Notes: **Changes & Cancellations**
If you need to change or cancel your appointment please phone Colorado County Clerks Survey on (202)-295-7834 during business hours.

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Done

Appendix B-3:
Email from Jefferson County Clerk & Recorder Pam Anderson
Regarding Post-Election Survey

February 18, 2009

Dear Fellow Clerk:

I would like to ask for about 20 minutes of your time to participate in a phone survey about the administration of the 2008 election.

As you may recall, last October I asked you to participate in a brief phone survey for researchers at the US Military Academy at West Point and Yale University funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. First, let me thank you for participating in that survey at a very busy time of the election. Second, I ask you to show the same generous cooperation by participating in the post-election survey.

In order to make participating in the survey as convenient as possible, the researchers have set up a website to allow you to schedule when a member of the West Point research team can call you to complete the survey. You can find a time that is convenient for you by going to <http://colorado-county-clerks-survey.genbook.com>. The simple easy steps for using the website are below.

The goal of this research is to study election administration in Colorado to share best practices and find solutions to shared problems. This research is part of the Pew Making Vote Initiative which is investing several million dollars into partnerships between local election officials and scholars to better understand the difficulties of administering elections and find solutions (for more information, see http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_detail.aspx?id=488).

I think this is a worthwhile project that will have value to each of us in the future, so I ask you to please take a few minutes to answer the questions the researchers want to ask each of us.

Thanks,
Pam Anderson
Clerk & Recorder
Jefferson County

Instructions for Survey Scheduling Website

- 1) Click on the link for "Survey of Colorado Clerks"
- 2) Click "No Preference" for the member of the research team to conduct the survey
- 3) Click on the date when you would like to complete the survey
- 4) Click on the time you would like to complete the survey
- 5) Fill in your first and last name
- 6) Fill in the phone number at which you would like to be called

Appendix B-4:
Reminder Emails from Rachel Sondheimer, US Military Academy

February 24, 2009

Dear Clerk & Recorder:

Your colleagues quickly filled up many of the times for the phone survey on the administration of the 2008 election by our team of cadets at the US Military Academy at West Point. In order to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the post-election survey, we have extended the survey period through next week.

You may recall that Jefferson County Clerk Pam Anderson sent an email about this survey last week with information about how to select a time convenient for you to complete the survey. Her email with the information for scheduling a time online is below or you can contact my colleague Christopher Mann at (202) 295-7834 to schedule a time convenient for you when a member of our research team can call you to complete the 20 minute survey.

Thank you for participating in the survey on the administration of the 2008 election by our team of cadets at the US Military Academy at West Point. We hope to provide information about election administration across the state that will be useful to you and your colleagues.

Thank you,

Dr. Rachel Sondheimer

PS - If you have already completed the survey this week, I appreciate your prompt participation and apologize for cluttering your inbox.

Rachel M. Sondheimer, PhD
Assistant Professor, American Politics, Policy and Strategy
Department of Social Sciences
Lincoln Hall Room 213
United States Military Academy
West Point, New York 10996
Phone: (845) 938-3499

March 10, 2009

Clerks and Recorders,

We are in the process of winding up our study all of the County Clerks in Colorado. The cadets were excited to hear that through your hard work and theirs as well, we have just seven clerks left for scheduling and interviewing! (Probably also because this meant that they could go on their much needed and well-deserved Spring break.) We are very eager to conclude our survey and hope to achieve our goal of complete participation among the counties of Colorado.

My co-researcher, Chris Mann, has left or is in the process of leaving messages with you to schedule a time to complete the survey. To schedule a time to take the survey please either call Chris at 202-295-7834 or schedule a time at <http://colorado-county-clerks-survey.genbook.com>. The survey only takes about 20 minutes and will be invaluable to present and future clerks in Colorado and around the nation.

Thank you for your time and hard work.

Rachel M. Sondheimer

Rachel M. Sondheimer, PhD
Assistant Professor, American Politics, Policy and Strategy
Department of Social Sciences
Lincoln Hall Room 213
United States Military Academy
West Point, New York 10996
Phone: (845) 938-3499

Appendix C – Voter Turnout in 2008 General Election

Turnout Percentage among Registered Voters 2008 General Election

County	Turnout in 2008 General Election	County Type
Adams	73.6	Denver Metro Area
Alamosa	72.2	Rural
Arapahoe	78.1	Denver Metro Area
Archuleta	72.1	Rural
Baca	76.5	Rural
Bent	71.8	Rural
Boulder	79.1	Denver Metro Area
Broomfield	82.0	Denver Metro Area
Chaffee	79.0	Rural
Cheyenne	78.1	Rural
Clear Creek	79.5	Rural
Conejos	75.8	Rural
Costilla	72.9	Rural
Crowley	76.0	Rural
Custer	77.4	Rural
Delta	77.2	Rural
Denver	66.5	Denver Metro Area
Dolores	78.9	Rural
Douglas	83.0	Denver Metro Area
Eagle	73.6	Small City
El Paso	73.1	CO Springs Metro Area
Elbert	80.6	Rural
Fremont	68.9	Rural
Garfield	73.8	Rural
Gilpin	70.5	Rural
Grand	74.7	Rural
Gunnison	72.3	Rural
Hinsdale	82.1	Rural
Huerfano	75.7	Rural
Jackson	69.4	Rural
Jefferson	80.2	Denver Metro Area
Kiowa	84.6	Rural
Kit Carson	75.0	Rural
La Plata	75.1	Rural
Lake	67.5	Rural
Larimer	78.7	Small City
Las Animas	74.0	Rural
Lincoln	73.8	Rural
Logan	76.3	Rural
Mesa	74.1	Small City
Mineral	83.0	Rural
Moffat	69.7	Rural
Montezuma	69.5	Rural
Montrose	77.7	Rural

Morgan	73.8	Rural
Otero	69.3	Rural
Ouray	78.8	Rural
Park	75.5	Rural
Phillips	73.9	Rural
Pitkin	75.9	Small City
Prowers	70.5	Rural
Pueblo	71.9	Small City
Rio Blanco	71.3	Rural
Rio Grande	73.6	Rural
Routt	74.9	Rural
Saguache	73.3	Rural
San Juan	88.6	Small City
San Miguel	69.2	Rural
Sedgwick	72.1	Rural
Summit	69.9	Rural
Teller	73.1	Rural
Washington	80.2	Rural
Weld	76.5	Small City
Yuma	75.6	Rural
Total	75.4	

Appendix D – Composition of Ballots Cast in 2008 General Election

Method of Voting Percentage among Ballots Cast in the 2008 General Election

County	Mail	Early In Person	Election Day
Adams	30	11	59
Alamosa	31	19	50
Arapahoe	47	5	48
Archuleta	47	12	40
Baca	56	4	39
Bent	48	15	37
Boulder	57	6	37
Broomfield	48	16	36
Chaffee	49	15	36
Cheyenne	52	11	36
Clear Creek	56	7	36
Conejos	51	13	35
Costilla	47	19	34
Crowley	56	11	34
Custer	61	5	34
Delta	37	30	33
Denver	54	13	33
Dolores	46	22	32
Douglas	46	22	32
Eagle	47	21	32
El Paso	51	18	32
Elbert	51	18	31
Fremont	50	20	30
Garfield	52	18	30
Gilpin	57	13	30
Grand	60	10	30
Gunnison	62	7	30
Hinsdale	36	35	29
Huerfano	38	33	29
Jackson	52	19	29
Jefferson	59	12	29
Kiowa	36	36	28
Kit Carson	65	7	28
La Plata	52	20	27
Lake	55	18	27
Larimer	62	12	26
Las Animas	39	37	25
Lincoln	58	16	25
Logan	70	5	25
Mesa	42	34	24
Mineral	45	31	24
Moffat	51	25	24
Montezuma	58	18	24
Montrose	64	13	24

Morgan	67	9	24
Otero	67	10	23
Ouray	68	8	23
Park	63	15	22
Phillips	67	10	22
Pitkin	67	12	21
Prowers	70	9	21
Pueblo	46	34	20
Rio Blanco	63	17	20
Rio Grande	67	13	20
Routt	67	13	20
Saguache	60	21	19
San Juan	63	18	19
San Miguel	72	10	18
Sedgwick	73	9	18
Summit	64	19	17
Teller	67	16	17
Washington	68	17	16
Weld	75	10	16
Yuma	69	17	15
Total	63	15	22

Appendix E – Regression Results for Influence of Clerks on Share of Votes Cast by Mail

Effect of Clerk Encouragement About Type of Voting on Share of Ballots Cast by Mail: OLS Regression Results

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Coeff.</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p-value</u>
Encouraged Mail Voting	5.7	3.0	1.91	0.063
Encouraged Early Voting	0.7	5.7	0.12	0.903
Encouraged Mail or Early Voting	2.9	4.0	0.74	0.464
% Ballots Cast by Mail in 2006	0.5	0.2	3.13	0.003
% Ballots Cast by Mail in 2004	0.0	0.2	0.05	0.958
# of Registered Voters	0.0	0.0	1.81	0.078
% Democrats in County	-0.3	0.3	-0.95	0.347
% Republicans in County	-0.2	0.3	-0.95	0.348
\$ New Registrants in County	-0.3	0.6	-0.53	0.597
Budget per Registered Voter	0.0	0.1	-0.21	0.833
Constant	53.9	23.1	2.33	0.025

Effect of Voter Education Allocation to Voting by Mail on Share of Ballots Cast by Mail: OLS Regression Results

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Coeff.</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p-value</u>
% of Voter Education Allocated to Voting by Mail	0.1	0.1	1.13	0.264
% Ballots Cast by Mail in 2006	0.5	0.2	3.19	0.003
% Ballots Cast by Mail in 2004	0.0	0.2	0.03	0.975
# of Registered Voters	0.0	0.0	1.53	0.134
% Democrats in County	-0.2	0.3	-0.76	0.449
% Republicans in County	-0.2	0.3	-0.79	0.435
\$ New Registrants in County	-0.2	0.6	-0.39	0.698
Budget per Registered Voter	0.0	0.1	-0.30	0.768
Constant	49.6	22.9	2.17	0.036

**Effect of Voter Education Tactic about Voting by Mail on Share of
Ballots Cast by Mail: OLS Regression Results**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Coeff.</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p-value</u>
Newspaper	8.4	4.3	1.96	0.058
Other Media Outreach	-5.9	4.4	-1.34	0.188
Direct Mail	7.0	2.4	2.94	0.006
Website	-0.7	3.1	-0.21	0.832
Office Visits	1.6	3.5	0.47	0.641
Respond to Inquiries	5.8	4.8	1.21	0.234
Information in the Office	-17.6	4.6	-3.86	0.000
Word of Mouth	1.9	4.0	0.47	0.643
% Ballots Cast by Mail in 2006	1.0	0.2	6.64	0.000
% Ballots Cast by Mail in 2004	-0.3	0.2	-1.5	0.142
# of Registered Voters	0.0	0.0	1.73	0.093
% Democrats in County	-0.3	0.2	-1.09	0.281
% Republicans in County	-0.3	0.2	-1.22	0.231
\$ New Registrants in County	-0.1	0.5	-0.18	0.861
Budget per Registered Voter	0.0	0.1	0.15	0.880
Constant	39.5	19.6	2.02	0.052

Appendix F – Voters with Military APO Mailing Addresses

Military Mailing Addresses Among Registered Voters By County

As of January 7, 2009

County	Bases in the Americas (excl. US & Canada) [State = AA]	Bases in Europe & Central Command (incl. Iraq & Afganistan) [State = AE]	Bases in the Pacific [State = AP]	Total Overseas Military [by APO/FPO]	<i>Other Out of State Mailing Addresses</i>
Adams	0	86	40	126	1052
Alamosa	1	2	1	4	63
Arapahoe	15	299	131	445	3840
Archuleta	0	4	0	4	80
Baca	0	1	0	1	17
Bent	0	4	1	5	14
Boulder	2	83	50	135	3704
Broomfield	1	26	4	31	221
Chaffee	0	7	3	10	93
Cheyenne	0	2	3	5	12
Clear Creek	0	3	3	6	53
Conejos	0	0	0	0	7
Costilla	0	0	0	0	3
Crowley	0	1	0	1	4
Custer	0	0	0	0	32
Delta	0	5	6	11	151
Denver	5	152	42	199	3727
Dolores	0	1	0	1	8
Douglas	2	86	43	131	1485
Eagle	5	1	3	9	391
El Paso	13	1336	294	1643	4904
Elbert	0	10	3	13	96
Fremont	0	16	10	26	133
Garfield	0	4	8	12	245
Gilpin	0	1	0	1	66
Grand	0	4	2	6	84
Gunnison	0	8	1	9	161
Hinsdale	0	2	1	3	6
Huerfano	0	5	0	5	37
Jackson	0	1	0	1	43
Jefferson	6	194	119	319	3292
Kiowa	0	0	1	1	5
Kit Carson	0	1	0	1	34
La Plata	0	7	3	10	414
Lake	0	1	0	1	27
Larimer	3	117	52	172	2322
Las Animas	0	3	0	3	69

Lincoln	0	0	0	0	15
Logan	1	3	3	7	83
Mesa	3	54	34	91	589
Mineral	0	0	0	0	9
Moffat	0	3	5	8	74
Montezuma	0	1	0	1	132
Montrose	1	2	9	12	186
Morgan	0	3	0	3	54
Otero	0	8	5	13	68
Ouray	0	3	1	4	71
Park	0	5	5	10	101
Phillips	0	0	1	1	36
Pitkin	0	0	0	0	254
Prowers	0	2	0	2	23
Pueblo	4	62	22	88	559
Rio Blanco	0	2	0	2	19
Rio Grande	0	2	2	4	53
Routt	0	6	1	7	142
Saguache	0	2	0	2	42
San Juan	0	0	0	0	3
San Miguel	0	2	0	2	54
Sedgwick	0	4	2	6	23
Summit	0	1	0	1	236
Teller	0	5	0	5	117
Washington	0	2	1	3	11
Weld	2	42	18	62	728
Yuma	0	0	0	0	57
Total	64	2687	933	3684	30639

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Notes

- ⁱ Every election has a unique combination of ballot items that shape the electoral landscape. In 2008, Colorado was a Presidential swing state, had a contested open seat for the US Senate, and the largest number of state level ballot measures in state history.
- ⁱⁱ The postal voting systems in Oregon and Washington might also be considered to have permanent mail voting status since all elections are conducted entirely by mail (except in Pierce County, WA where voters retain the option to vote in person). New Jersey joined the states with permanent mail voting status in 2009.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The analysis uses a copy of the official state voter registration database obtained from the Colorado Secretary of State in January 2009. The Secretary of State's Office maintains the SCORE database in conjunction with the County Clerks. The SCORE database includes the information required by HAVA as well as additional information for managing election administration (e.g. pasting voting, method of voting, date ballots are cast, date ballots are mailed, date ballots are received, etc). The Secretary of State's Office has been very helpful in sharing this data with us for research purposes.
- ^{iv} Some surveys were conducted by the lead investigators when cadets were not available at times the Clerks could be reached.
- ^v This data was compiled and shared by Douglas Steen of ISSI in Colorado.
- ^{vi} It is also possible that the responses about the Clerks' personal interest are biased since they were clearly aware that the survey was about election administration.
- ^{vii} Under Colorado law, voters who fail to participate in the most recent statewide General election are removed from 'active' voter rolls, although they are still considered registered.
- ^{viii} Current regulations on voter status can be found at http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/rule_making/8_ccr_1505_1_sos_election_rules_as_amended_08_26_09.pdf
- ^{ix} Past voting in primaries is not used in this analysis because the vote history for primaries is not complete for many counties in the earlier elections in this time period.
- ^x We use past general elections for this analysis because the Colorado voter file does not provide consistent data about voting in primaries and other elections in many counties prior to 2006.
- ^{xi} The Census values were appended to individual voter records by YouGovPolimetrix, Inc. using the smallest unit of collection available from the Census (block, tract, etc).
- ^{xii} Anecdotal evidence of the high volume of training performed by the Clerks was apparent to the interviewers in the pre-survey. It was often difficult to schedule times to do that survey because Clerks were out doing staff training.
- ^{xiii} The negative relationship between the cost of election administration and county size is consistent with findings in California described by the anonymous reviewer of this report from Hall (2008). Unfortunately, we were unable to locate this working paper of the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project to verify the characterization of the reviewer.
- ^{xiv} Green & Gerber (2008) report on an experiment showing that presentations in high schools may significantly increase turnout by as much as 9 percentage points among first time voters (pp. 115-116).
- ^{xv} Using the January 2009 voter file has a clear problem: voters are removed from the registration rolls when they move, die, or fail to vote. Some groups – notable younger and lower income citizens – are more likely to move and to fail to vote in low salience elections, so they are more likely to be purged. Therefore, the historical data is likely to be biased. Unfortunately, archived versions of the voter file are not available, so the estimates from the current voter file are the best available data.
- ^{xvi} This list of military voters by county was distributed by the authors at the Colorado County Clerks Association meeting in June 2009.