Document Metadata:EAC-2019-0001-DRAFT-0027

Document Details

Docket ID:	EAC-2019-0001
Docket Title:	Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed Collection; Comments Request; 2020 Election Administration and Voting Survey *
Document File:	
Docket Phase:	Notice
Phase Sequence:	1
Original Document ID:	EAC-2019-0001-DRAFT-0027
Current Document ID:	EAC-2019-0001-DRAFT-0027
Title:	Comment from Marian Schneider
Number of Attachments:	2
Document Type:	PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS *
Document Subtype:	
Comment on Document ID:	EAC-2019-0001-0017
Comment on Document Title:	Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals: 2020 Election Administration and Voting Survey
Status:	Pending_Post
Received Date:	03/11/2020 *
Date Posted:	
Posting Restriction:	No restrictions
Submission Type:	Web
Number of Submissions:	1 *

Document Optional Details

Status Set Date:	03/11/2020
Current Assignee:	Kuennen, David (EAC)
Status Set By:	Public
Tracking Number:	1k4-9fhw-qemm
Total Page Count Including Attachments:	1

Submitter Info

Comment:

March 11, 2020 TO: Election Assistance Commission Election Surveys Team Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the revised versions of the 2020 Election Administration Voting Survey (EAVS). Verified Voting's mission is to strengthen democracy for all voters by promoting the responsible use of technology in elections. Verified Voting has used data from the EAVS for many years and is appreciative of the commission's work to incorporate public commentary. The most critical changes we are asking the Election Assistance Commission Surveys Team to consider making to the 2020 EAVS are as follows: Electronic Poll Books. As noted in the most recent EAVS report, more than a quarter of jurisdictions used electronic poll books in November 2018, up from 17% in 2016 and just 8% in 2012. The number is likely to rise significantly this November. It is critical to track not just where electronic poll books are used, but the specific products in use, including products developed by states themselves. With a relatively minor change, the EAVS could provide a rich data resource for election officials, researchers, and the general public about this technology. Under question F3, respondents can list the make and model of the electronic poll book used in their jurisdictions. Use of Ballot Marking Devices for All Polling Place Voters. Beginning in 2016, some jurisdictions have deployed ballot marking devices for use by all in-person voters. In November 2020 as many as 18% of registered voters will live in jurisdictions in which all polling place voters use ballot marking devices, up from just over 1% in 2018 and significantly more voters than will use direct-recording electronic voting systems. This new marking method has generated considerable debate among election officials, advocates, academic researchers, and the general public. Gathering data necessary to accurately distinguish a voting method that will affect 1 in 5 voters is critically important. The current EAVS questionnaire leaves unclear whether all polling place voters in a jurisdiction use ballot marking devices or whether most voters hand-mark paper ballots. This distinction can be clarified by adding a few words ("for all voters") in the equipment use choices for question F7 and updating the instructions accordingly. In the same table, we recommend adding a separate equipment category for "hybrid" systems that both print and tabulate ballots. These hybrid systems do not properly fit within any existing category. (Alternatively, the phrase "but does not tabulate votes" in the description of BMDs could be replaced with broader language such as "for tabulation.") As suggested, we have provided comments in spreadsheet form about the February 2020 draft of the 2020 EAVS. We have ranked our comments by priority, but they can easily be sorted by the page number of the February 2020 pdf version. We appreciate the EAC's ongoing efforts to collect and disseminate detailed information about our elections. Thank you in advance for consideration of our comments. Respectfully submitted, Marian K. Schneider, Verified Voting Foundation President Mark Lindeman, Verified Voting Foundation Science and Tech Policy Director Audrey Malagon, Verified Voting Foundation Mathematical Advisor John McCarthy, Verified Voting Foundation Information Technology Volunteer Warren Stewart, Verified Voting Foundation Data Specialist Cris Landa, Verified Voting Foundation Program Director ✱🔵

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Government Agency Type:	
Government Agency:	
Cover Page:	[HTML]

Document Optional Details

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Government Agency Type:

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Electronic Poll Books. As noted in the most recent EAVS report, more than a quarter of jurisdictions used electronic poll books in November 2018, up from 17% in 2016 and just 8% in 2012. The number is likely to rise significantly this November. It is critical to track not just where electronic poll books are used, but the specific products in use, including products developed by states themselves. With a relatively minor change, the EAVS could provide a rich data resource for election officials, researchers, and the general public about this technology. Under question F3, respondents can list the make and model of the electronic poll book used in their jurisdictions.

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