Election Day Vote Centers

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Background

- Centralization: Smaller number of larger polling locations
- Openness: Voting at any location
- First adopted in Larimer County, Colorado in 2003
- As of 2017 eleven states allow jurisdictions to use vote centers on Election Day
- California has authorized the use of vote centers starting in 2018.
Expectations for EDVCs

• Greater voter turnout
  • Increased turnout among infrequent voters
• Cost savings
• Increased ballot completion
• Greater voter satisfaction with the voting experience
Findings: Voter Participation

- Turnout rates increased in Larimer County, Colorado after the adoption of vote centers by 2.6% i.e., 3,000 additional voters in a county with 114,140 registered voters (Stein and Vonnahme 2008).

- The effect of vote centers on the likelihood of voting was substantially greater for registered voters with an infrequent history of voting (Stein and Vonnahme 2008).

- Voters at vote centers report voting for more ballot contests than voters at precinct polling places (Stein and Vonnahme 2008).

- The positive turnout effect of vote centers was observed in Lubbock County, Texas which replaced precinct election day polling places with vote centers in 2008 (Stein and Vonnahme 2012).

  - Turnout effects of vote centers more pronounced for infrequent voters in lower turnout—midterm Congressional elections—than higher turnout Presidential year elections.
Findings: Voter Satisfaction

• Voter satisfaction with EDVCs is substantially greater than with traditional election day polling places (Stein and Vonnahme 2009; 2012; Folz 2014; Schelle et al).

• EDVC voters are more satisfied than voters at precinct polling places with:
  • Poll workers
  • Polling place location
  • Parking
  • Confidence their vote would be counted accurately
  • Waiting in line
  • Electronic voting equipment
Findings: Cost of Elections

• The adoption of vote centers reduced total costs per vote cast in selected Indiana counties between 14% (Floz 2014) and 25% (Scheele et al 2009).

• Colorado counties adoption of voter centers reduced total costs per vote cast by 25% (Stein and Vonnahme 2009).

• Similar cost reductions were reported by Collin, Lubbock and Fort Bend counties in Texas and New Mexico counties e.g., Bernalillo (Stein et al 2010).

• Costs per voter are associated with a significantly high level of voter satisfaction is counties with Election Day vote centers than precinct voting (Stein and Vonnahme 2008)
Spending on elections and voter satisfaction: Colorado 2008

![Graph showing the relationship between cost per vote cast ($) and voter satisfaction on a scale from Poor to Excellent for EDVC and Precinct.]
Worst Practices: Collin County, Texas 2010

- 57 Election Day vote centers, all at locations used as precinct polling places in 2008

- One additional EDVC location at the Dallas Rapid Transit station

- Result: Long wait times to vote

- Collin county did not choose to locate vote centers at new, larger and locations central to where voters shop, work and travel during the day.
Worst Practices: Denver, 2006

• Inadequate cache capacity in voter registration data book led to significant long wait times to check in to vote.

• Denver dropped voter centers after 2006 election.