

LIMITING THE NEED FOR PROVISIONAL VOTES

Nobody wants to vote provisionally, and requiring a person to cast a provisional ballot slows down the process considerably. There are some fairly simple things that can be done before Election Day to reduce the likelihood that voters will exercise their absolute federal right to cast a provisional ballot so long as they claim that they are properly registered where they try to vote.

- Some people will end up at the wrong place, no matter what is done, but sending **all** registered voters – and that means those on inactive lists or those who **might** have moved – notice of when and where to vote reasonably close to Election Day, will reduce those numbers. This is another area **not** to look for costs savings, even if state law is permissive on required notice.
- Other options that should also be used to be sure voters can confirm both that they are registered and where to vote (an increasing problem with changes in precinct boundaries to make their size manageable and to take account of schools closings etc) include hot lines and websites where an individual can check her registration and/or a separate site that tells anyone where to vote based on the residence provided. The utility of those alternatives is greatly enhanced when there are newspaper or radio/TV announcements about them and their availability is prominently displayed on state and local websites.
- Many people who move in-state forget to tell the relevant election official about their change of address, but they do tell the DMV so that their driver's license and car registration are correct. Many officials are unaware that the Motor Voter Act (NVRA, §5(d)) not only requires states to offer voter registration when issuing a driver's license, but also requires the state to change a driver's residence for voting purposes when changing the driver's address, unless the driver specifically asks the state not to do that. It may be too late to do much about that for 2008, but it may be possible to use DMV information as a cross-check to notify people that their move may require them to re-register in their new location.