



NASS

National Association
of Secretaries of State

For Immediate Release
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NASS SURVEY SUMMARY: States' Progress Implementing Two Key HAVA Mandates

The National Association of Secretaries of State conducted an informal survey to determine what progress states have made in implementing two key mandates of The Help America Vote Act (HAVA): modernizing voting equipment and developing statewide voter registration databases. Election officials from 24 states responded to the survey. The results are summarized below.

Modernizing Voting Equipment

HAVA requires that states "provide disability access that is equal to the level of access, privacy and independence available to other voters" by utilizing one piece of accessible equipment in each polling place. A portion of the \$3 billion that Congress appropriated to fund HAVA's mandates was intended to help states pay for the new equipment. Congress also appropriated an additional \$325 million for states that choose to replace their punchcard and lever voting machines with more modern equipment.

The deadline for making these improvements is January 1, 2006, but at the time NASS conducted this survey, the federal government had not yet released updated voting systems guidelines. We asked the states whether they would continue to wait for updated guidelines before purchasing equipment. We also asked them what types of voting equipment they would use in 2006.

- Eighty-eight percent of respondents said they will not continue to wait for the federal government to release updated voting system guidelines, and that they must proceed now if they are to meet HAVA's January 1 deadline. Many of those states also said that, when the guidelines are published, they will require contractors to retrofit the equipment they are purchasing now.
- Sixty-three percent of respondents said they will use mostly optical scan equipment in 2006.
- Direct Response Electronic Voting Machines (DREs) will be the most commonly used system in 22 percent of the states that participated in the survey.
- Approximately 20 percent of the states said they will use only one type of voting equipment statewide. Half of those states will use DREs and half will use optical scan systems.

Managing Voter Registrations at the State Level

HAVA gives each state until January 1, 2006 to implement a statewide voter registration database that includes the name and registration information for every voter in the state, and assigns a unique identifier to each one. Election officials will work with their states' motor vehicles administrations to verify the driver's license and/or social security numbers of all new registrants.

We asked the states whether they would have HAVA-compliant databases in place by the deadline. We also asked them how they would handle voter registrations where the identification number provided could not be verified.

- Ninety-seven percent of respondents say they will have HAVA-compliant systems in-place by January 1, 2006.
- Only 72 percent of the survey respondents answered the question about how they would handle an inability to verify an ID number.
 - Forty-nine percent of those states said that if a number could not be verified, they would notify the voter and would not register that individual.
 - Forty-two percent said they would register the individual and require that the voter show identification at the polling place.
 - Twelve percent said they would register the voter and notify him/her of the discrepancy.

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