



The Center for Voting and Democracy

6930 Carroll Ave., Suite 610
Takoma Park, MD 20912 - (301) 270-4616
(301) 270-4133 (fax) - info@fairvote.org
www.fairvote.org

Deborah Markowitz
26 Terrace Street-Drawer 09
Montpelier, VT 05609-1101



July 22, 2005

Dear Deborah Markowitz:

I am executive director of FairVote – The Center for Voting and Democracy, a non-profit, non-partisan organization promoting free and fair elections. I had an important request.

Our Right to Vote Initiative program's Ryan Griffin is coordinating creation of a comprehensive public on-line resource on election administration and electoral reform in all fifty states, plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories. We believe this resource will be the first of its kind. It will contain information on: the office or offices responsible for overseeing elections; the election or appointment process for each office; and background on the current officeholders and announced candidates for the office, if to be elected by 2006. Based on media searches, public records and survey responses, we will provide information on officials' views on their states' electoral process and potential reforms designed to increase voter participation and election integrity.

I'm writing to ask you to participate in this project by completing the enclosed survey. We know that many of these issues are complex and your opinions will reflect the particular circumstances or your state, with simple "yes" and "no" answers often needing explanation. Therefore, in addition to indicating your position on a range of options for each reform idea, we encourage you to elaborate on your responses and suggest additional policies at the federal, state or local levels of government. It would be particularly helpful to send comments by email to Ryan Griffin at rgriffin@fairvote.org.

We're working with other organizations like Common Cause and the National Voting Rights Institute on this project. All responses to this survey will be available on our website under the Democracy USA Program. If you have any questions and/or would like to receive an electronic version of the survey, please contact Ryan Griffin at (301) 270-4616 or rgriffin@fairvote.org.

Ryan or one of his colleagues will follow up with you during the week of August 8th. We thank you in advance for your time, and thanks for your role in making our democracy work.

Sincerely yours,

Rob Richie
Executive Director

Hope to catch up soon.

Best,
Rob

FairVote Board of Directors- John Anderson (Chair) o Antonio Gonzalez o Edward Hailes o Hendrik Hertzberg
Jesse Jackson, Jr. o Malla Lazu o Nina Moseley o Krist Novoselic o Faye Park o Jamin Raskin
William Redpath o Ken Ritchie o Rashad Robinson o Katherine Spillar o Cynthia Terrell o David Wilner

Voter Participation

	Already exists in my state	Support in my state	Support local pilot	Support study	Oppose in my state	See my Comments
Assistance for language minority voters outside of Voting Rights Act mandates				✓		
Automatic restoration of voting rights for ex-felons	-	N/A	-			ex felons vote in VT
Automatic voter registration ¹				✓		
Continuation of National Voter Registration Act	N/A		N/A			
Early voting in person	✓					
Election Day registration		✓				
Facilitate student voter registration at colleges ²	✓					
Full access to polling places for people with disabilities	✓					
Full implementation of Help America Vote Act under current deadline	N/A		N/A			
High school early registration programs ³	✓					
Longer polling hours			- N/A -			No indication that polling hrs are insufficient
More polling places/ voting stations at current locations			- N/A -			No indication that this is needed
No excuse absentee voting	✓					
Voter guides sent in mail				✓		

¹ This could include a variety of methods for generating clean and complete statewide voter rolls, including using data from the Department of Motor Vehicles, tax records and student lists.

² This could include a variety of measures such as requiring colleges to distribute registration forms to all students, submitting a list of students' current addresses to election administrators for the purpose of address verification or accepting college identification cards as a valid form of identification.

³ Most states currently allow 17-year-olds to register to vote as long as they will be 18 by the next election. This question relates to supporting high school programs to perform these registrations and/or lowering the registration age to allow these programs to reach more students -- with the most ambitious goal being registration of all students before they leave high school.

Voter participation comments:

we have very few lines at our polling places that require waits of 15 min. or more.

Election Integrity and Fairness

	Already exists in my state	Support in my state	Support local pilot	Support study	Oppose in my state	See my Comments
Inter-state coordination to avoid double registration		✓				
Laws prohibiting deceptive election practices designed to confuse would-be voters		✓				
Mandatory poll worker training standards	✓					
Non-partisan, un-elected chief election official(s)					✓	
Photo ID required at polls					✓	
Prohibit election officials from campaign work					✓	
Quick and full disclosure of campaign contributions	✓					
Standardized statewide recount procedure	✓					
State review of local decisions and performance after elections	✓					
Statewide voting equipment	✓					
Transparency in voting roll purges	✓					
Uniform ballot design	✓					
Uniform standards for counting provisional ballots ⁴	✓					
Voter-verified paper ballot	✓					
Voter identification cards					✓	

⁴ including counting votes in state and national races on ballots cast in incorrect precincts.

Election Integrity and fairness comments:

In VT these elections are run + votes are counted by bi-partisan teams. This provides a check against fraud, and ~~is~~ rarely causes problems. Note that the

Electoral Reform

	Already exists in my state	Support in my state	Support local pilot	Support study	Oppose in my state	See my Comments
Changing how your state allocates presidential electors				✓		
Conduct city elections on the same day throughout state	✓					<i>with a few exceptions</i>
Election Day holiday		✓				
Instant runoff voting			✓			
Internet Voting					✓	
Mail-in balloting	✓					
Non-partisan elections ?	?					
Non-partisan redistricting				✓		
Programs to have more students be poll workers	✓					
Programs to allow legal permanent residents to serve as poll workers / interpreters	✓					
Proportional voting systems for legislative elections				✓		
Public financing of elections	✓ - <i>in a limited way</i>					
Requiring citizens to be available as poll workers					✓	
Term limits for state reps.					✓	
"Top two" primary system ⁵					✓	
Voting centers ⁶ ?					✓	

⁵ Under the "top two" primary system the two primary candidates receiving the greatest number of votes advance to the general election, regardless of party affiliation. This system was recently adopted for primaries in Washington State.

⁶ These "voting malls" were recently suggested by the Election Center's National Task Force Report and are being adopted by certain counties in Colorado and elsewhere.

Electoral reform comments:

National Electoral Reforms

We realize that the following areas are national in nature. However, most of these federal issues would affect election administration in your state; therefore, we would like to give you the opportunity to comment on them.

	Support	Support study	Oppose	See my Comments
Congressional voting rights for people of the District of Columbia	✓			
Direct election of President	? How	— need more in FO		
Establishing a right to vote in the U.S. Constitution		✓		
Lower voting age to 16 or 17			✓	
Reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act of 1965		✓		
Uniform poll-closing times in presidential elections		✓		

National election reform comments: