

Voting Equipment and Machines

The *2006 Election Administration and Voting Survey* asked a series of questions about voting systems and equipment, including the types of voting systems used, who manufactured the equipment, and the version of software used. Unlike the 2004 survey, however, the 2006 survey allowed States and jurisdictions to list more than one type of machine. The survey did not ask jurisdictions to document what part of the voting process (i.e., at the polls, disabled voting, absentee voting, early voting) for which the different equipment was used. For example, a jurisdiction could use an optical scan system for absentee ballots but use an electronic voting machine for in-person early and/or polling place voting; as a result, both were listed in that jurisdiction's survey response. This means that the 2006 Election Assistance Commission (EAC) survey portrays the breadth of machine usage in the States. However, the overall percentages regarding voting equipment usage are not comparable to the 2004 EAC survey data.

The variations in voting equipment usage were apparent in the survey responses. Table F shows the number of jurisdictions that reported multiple numbers of voting equipment types in use for the 2006 election. Nearly 30 percent of the jurisdictions across the country reported using multiple voting systems. The survey instrument allowed up to five different systems to be identified for each jurisdiction.

The 2006 data show there has been a dramatic rise in the number of jurisdictions using electronic systems compared to what was reported in the 2004 EAC study. In 2004, just 9.3 percent of the jurisdictions reported using electronic voting equipment, but this increased to 53.6 percent two

Voting Equipment Definitions

- **Optical scan** – A system of recording votes by marks in voting response fields on ballots, which are read by an optical scanner.
- **Electronic systems** – A direct recording electronic device utilizing touch screens, push buttons, or select wheels.
- **Lever machine** – A system that records votes by mechanical lever-actuated controls into a counting mechanism that tallies the votes without a physical ballot.
- **Punch card** – A system where votes are recorded by punches in voting response fields on a ballot card.
- **Paper ballot** – A system of recording votes on paper ballots that are then counted and tabulated manually.

Table F
Number of Jurisdictions Reporting Use of Multiple Voting Systems

| Number Reported | Jurisdictions |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| No voting equipment reported | 876 |
| One system reported | 1,318 |
| Two voting systems reported | 897 |
| Three voting systems reported | 31 |
| Four voting systems reported | 1 |
| Five voting systems reported | 0 |
| Total Jurisdictions | 3,123 |

years later. Use of lever machines declined by more than 50 percent from 2004 to 2006, while the use of paper ballots declined even more dramatically. However, the change in geographic reporting used in 2004 (where towns and townships were included in the jurisdictions) compared to 2006 (where just counties were recorded) is the main reason for the decrease in the use of paper ballots reported in the survey. Punch card systems, the focus of such scrutiny in 2000, have virtually disappeared, from 4 percent of jurisdictions in 2004 to .4 percent in 2006. Detailed data on voting machines are provided by State in table 34 in appendix B.

Number of Machines

In 2004, the EAC survey asked for the actual number of voting machines that were used in a jurisdiction. However, there was no similar question for 2006. There was also no question about whether the votes were tallied in the precinct or at a central location.

Table G
2006 Voting Equipment Used

| Type of Voting Equipment | Percentage of Jurisdictions Using Equipment, 2006 |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Optical scan | 42.7% |
| Electronic systems | 53.6% |
| Lever machine | 2.1% |
| Punch card | 0.4% |
| Paper | 3.2% |
| Mixed | 0.7% |
| Unknown | 0.1% |