



BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Dennis L. White, Director Matthew M. Damschroder, Deputy Director

**For Immediate Release
July 30, 2008**

PRELIMINARY VOTING MACHINE ALLOCATION REPORT RELEASED; PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED, ABSENTEE VOTING STRESSED

(Columbus) The Franklin County Board of Elections today released a preliminary report containing voting machine allocation recommendations for the Nov. 4, 2008 general election. A hearing is scheduled at the board Thursday, Aug. 14 at 6:30 p.m. to accept public comment on the proposal.

“We’re trying to reduce the possibility of long lines that could result this fall from a projected record turnout and a lengthy ballot that will take time for voters to complete,” said board Director Dennis L. White. “Voting machine allocation is just one part of our strategy.”

Ted Allen, an associate professor of industrial and systems engineering at Ohio State University, and project manager for the board’s consultant, Sagata, Ltd., studied election data from 2004, 2006 and 2008 to produce preliminary recommendations for the board.

“We’ve documented the time it takes to vote a mock 2008 general election ballot and the frequency at which voters have arrived at the polls in the past to predict possible waiting times for November.”

Both Director White and Dr. Allen stressed that while projections are based on simulations and defensible formulas, voting and waiting times could be longer or shorter than estimated.

“More than anything, this report underscores the critical importance for Franklin County to vote by mail using an absentee ballot,” White said. “The only way to guarantee that you won’t have to wait in line is to vote early by mail.”

Deputy Director Matt Damschroder added that the board has changed several Election Day procedures to streamline voting and reduce waiting times.

“Voters now sign in by the first letter of their last name instead of having to remember their precinct name or determine in which precinct line to stand. This new procedure was implemented in March and received positive reviews from voters and poll workers alike.”

In addition to making the check in process more efficient, a voter will be able to use any voting machine in their polling place, unlike earlier elections when voters were required to use machines assigned to their home precinct even when machines from other precincts sat idle. The board is also seeking supplemental funding from the county commissioners to rent additional voting machines if rental units become available.

Dr. Mikhail Bernshteyn of Sagata, Ltd., and Chris Rockwell of Lextant, a local research firm, also consulted on the voting study.

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