

**Executive Summary**  
**Preliminary Report on Voter ID in the Indianapolis Elections**  
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## **Introduction**

CDEM is examining the November 7, 2006 midterm elections in Indiana to assess the Election Day impact of tighter voter ID laws. Indiana was the only state in the country to require a single uniform photo ID, and to train poll workers and educate voters without the confusion caused in other states by court intervention.

The Indiana photo ID law was passed as Senate Enrolled Act 483 in 2005, along partisan lines and over Democratic opposition. It was upheld by a federal judge in April 2006, and is currently on appeal to the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals heard arguments in October, but deferred a ruling until after the election. The case is *Indiana Democratic Party v. Rokita*.

Previous to the passage of SEA 483, voters in Indiana were not required to present any identification before voting. Under SEA 483, voters must provide a government-issued photo ID before casting a ballot. The ID must:

- a. display the voter's photograph;
- b. contain a name which conforms with the name on the voter registration list.
- c. contain an expiration date and be either current, or have expired since the last general election (in this case, Nov. 2, 2004). Military IDs having an "INDEF" expiration date are accepted.
- d. be issued by the state of Indiana or the federal government.

If a voter does not have or is unwilling to present an ID, he or she has 10 days after the election to provide ID or claim one of the exemptions from the County Election Board.

On Election Day, I visited eight polling sites in three different parts of Marion County, which are in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana: four in the predominantly African-American Center Township in downtown Indianapolis; two racially-mixed sites in the western suburbs; and two polling places in the affluent northern part of the county. In the final polling place, I stayed to watch the precinct close. My direct observation was supplemented by interviews with precinct inspectors and other poll workers during Election Day, and with party officials and civic organization representatives before, during and after the election. In addition, we plan to analyze the quantitative data from the election, including information about provisional ballots and challenged voters, when that data becomes available from the Marion County Clerk's Office.

## **Preliminary Findings**

### **Findings related to enforcement of the ID:**

A-1. Direct observation and interviews with poll workers indicate that voters were aware of the new law and brought the required ID to the polling place.

A-2. Poll workers appeared to be generally well versed in the required procedures related to the administration of the law.

A-3. This public awareness appeared to be the result of an extensive, bipartisan public-education campaign, in which the recommendations of the Commission on Federal Election Reform played a significant role.

A-4. Some poll workers did not know that the address on the photo ID card was not relevant to the voting process, and questioned voters' residency based on often-outdated addresses, contrary to state law.

A-5. The fears of some opponents of the law that there would be widespread confusion because of the ID law or that large numbers of voters would be turned away at the polls because they did not have IDs were not born out. While we do not know and may never know if eligible citizens chose not to go to the polling stations because they did not have photo IDs, my observations of polling stations and inquiries of election officials and citizens did not find evidence of citizens being prevented from voting because they did not have photo IDs.

A-6. Further research would be useful in determining whether levels of voter participation were affected by IDs.

### **General findings:**

B-1. The initial use of the iVotronic touch screen voting machines resulted in confusion at the opening and closing of some of the polls.

B-2. Partisan control of staffing remains a potential source of conflict in the polling places.

B-3. Redundant staffing in polling places strains the ability of political parties and the county to recruit and adequately train Marion County's poll workers. Resources that could be spent on training are now used in recruiting. By lowering the number of poll workers required by law, the county could develop a smaller but better-trained and more reliable cadre of poll workers.

B-4. Having no single person in charge of the polling place (rather than the individual precincts) leads to some lack of order in the polling places.