

FCCP

**Turning Promise into Practice
Strategies for Transforming Antiquated
Voter Registration Systems**

FCCP Monday Call - May 11, 2009

Hope for Voter Registration Reforms

- **David J. Becker**, Project Director for Election Initiatives, Pew Center on the States
- **Regina M. Eaton**, Deputy Director, Democracy Program, Dēmos : A Network of Ideas & Action
- **Susan Liss**, Director of the Democracy Program, Brennan Center
- **Patricia Bauman**, President and Co-Director, Bauman Foundation

"Voter registration is a fundamental gateway to participating in democratic practices; yet [when done piecemeal] it's costly, ineffective, and frequently inaccurate."

A Few Facts

- More than 40% of calls to voter elections protection hotlines in 2008 concerned voter registration problems. (*Pew*)
- National Voter Registration Act requires public assistance offices to offer voter registration opportunities (“MotorVoter” law). Practice and enforcement was diligent for two years after NVRA passed, then dropped off. (*Demos*)
- Only four (other) nations put onus of responsibility on the individual to register to vote: Bahamas, Belize, Burundi, Mexico. (*Brennan Center*)
- 11 million low income citizens aren't registered to vote - mostly people of color, young citizens, single women, and people who move frequently. (*Demos*)

Out of 1,300,000 registration forms:

950,000 made it on the rolls:

- **450,000** were new voters.
- 500,000 were updates to addresses or duplicates.

350,000 were rejected or failed to make it on the rolls since they were incomplete, were illegible or were submitted by an ineligible individual.

"ROI" for new voters is 34%.

Source: Project Vote

Our Current Voter Registration System:

- Misses and excludes potential voters.
- Is an inefficient use of philanthropic resources.
- Represents a paper system in a digital world, prone to human error and allowing too many opportunities for disconnects.
- Fails to ensure that every eligible voter is on the rolls and that addresses are updated to accurately reflect our highly mobile population.

But there **is** hope!

Three Parallel Reform Tracks

- National and state government-based voter registration systems
- Effective implementation of public assistance agency registration required under NVRA
- Expansion of Election Day Registration

Today's Speakers

- **Michael Caudell-Feagan**, Pew Charitable Trusts
- **Ilona Carroll**, Newman & Associates, LLC
- **Joy Vermillion Heinsohn**, Z. Smith Reynolds Fdtn