



# Arizona State Senate Issue Paper

September 13, 2007

## Note to Reader:

The Senate Research Staff provides nonpartisan, objective legislative research, policy analysis and related assistance to the members of the Arizona State Senate. The *Research Briefs* series, which includes the *Issue Brief*, *Background Brief* and *Issue Paper*, is intended to introduce a reader to various legislatively related issues and provide useful resources to assist the reader in learning more on a given topic. Because of frequent legislative and executive activity, topics may undergo frequent changes. Additionally, nothing in the *Brief* should be used to draw conclusions on the legality of an issue.

## ARIZONA ELECTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

Elections are governed by federal and state law. The Voting Rights Act (VRA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) are two federal laws with significant impact on Arizona elections. Additionally, the Arizona Constitution, Arizona statutes, the Secretary of State (SOS) Elections Procedures Manual (Procedures Manual) and court opinions have helped to shape election law in Arizona. This Issue Paper addresses the VRA, HAVA, and recent state legislation involving Equipment Testing and Manual Audits of Election Results and the creation of a Permanent Early Voting List. Additionally, the Arizona Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (Proposition 200) and Redistricting and Reapportionment are discussed as litigation remains pending. Arizona's Citizen Clean Elections Act is discussed in a separate issue paper.

### FEDERAL LAW

#### THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The Voting Rights Act (VRA), adopted initially in 1965 and extended in 1970, 1975, 1982 and 2006, codifies and effectuates the 15th Amendment's permanent guarantee that, throughout the nation, no person shall be denied the right to vote on account of race or color. On July 27, 2006, President George W. Bush signed the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 (H.R. 9) that, among other things, extends sections 4 and 5 of the VRA for 25 years. The VRA contains several special provisions including preclearance and minority language requirements that are imposed in certain jurisdictions, including Arizona.

#### Preclearance

The VRA contains many provisions; of special importance to Arizona are sections 4 and 5. While section 2 of the VRA closely follows the language of the 15th Amendment and applies a nationwide prohibition against the denial or abridgement of the right to vote, section 4 of the VRA contains special enforcement provisions aimed at those areas of the country where Congress

believes the potential for discrimination to be the greatest. Under section 5 of the VRA, jurisdictions that are covered by section 4 cannot implement any change affecting voting until the Attorney General of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia determines that the change does not have a discriminatory effect, a process commonly called “preclearance.”

A jurisdiction is a “covered” jurisdiction under section 4 and required to have all voting law changes precleared if the jurisdiction maintained a voting “test or device” as a prerequisite for voting or registration as of specific dates and less than 50 percent of the voting aged residents in the jurisdiction were registered to vote or actually voted in the presidential election of 1964, 1968 or 1972. The entire State of Arizona is a covered jurisdiction because, prior to 1972, the state employed a “test or device” that required a person to show, in order to register to vote, that the person was able to read the Constitution of the United States in English in a manner that showed the person was neither prompted nor reciting from memory, unless the person was prevented from reading the Constitution due to a physical infirmity. While all of Arizona was not a covered jurisdiction until 1972, some counties were covered jurisdictions before that time.

Because Arizona is a covered jurisdiction, the state must receive preclearance of any voting law changes or practices, including redistricting changes, ballot formats, legislation amending election law statutes and other voting procedures, before the changes or practices can legally take effect. Arizona must show that the voting law change does not have a racially discriminatory purpose and that the change is not retrogressive, *i.e.*, it will not make the minority voters worse off than they were prior to the change. The Arizona Attorney General (AG) is responsible for submitting all of Arizona’s voting law or practice changes for preclearance.

A covered jurisdiction may apply for “bailout” to terminate coverage under the preclearance requirements if certain criteria are

sustained during the ten years preceding the filing of the bailout action and during its pendency. Arizona is currently ineligible for bailout due to the failure to meet these criteria over the designated period of time.

### ***Minority Language Election Requirements***

The VRA also requires election information to be provided in more than one language, according to a two-part test. The first condition is satisfied if, in a state or jurisdiction, one of the following is true: 1) more than five percent of the voting-age citizens are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient; 2) more than 10,000 of the voting-age citizens are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient; or 3) in the case of a political subdivision that contains all or any part of an Indian reservation, more than five percent of the American Indian or Alaska Native voting-age citizens within the Indian reservation are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient. If the second condition, the illiteracy rate of the citizens in the language minority as a group is higher than the national illiteracy rate, is also true, then the jurisdiction must provide voting materials in other languages, in addition to the English language until August 6, 2032. Under these provisions of the VRA, the State of Arizona must provide all voting materials in the Spanish language and some counties must provide all voting materials in one or more Native American languages.

### ***HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT***

The United States Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002 to establish a program to provide funds to states to replace punch card voting systems, establish the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to assist in the administration of federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain federal election laws and programs. Additionally, HAVA established minimum election administration standards for states and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of federal elections.

In order to receive HAVA monies, each state is required to develop and submit a state plan to the Federal Election Commission and the EAC to implement the new federal requirements. The SOS organized a 25-member committee to create Arizona's plan. The final Arizona plan was submitted on May 15, 2003, and is the official working document for implementation of the federal HAVA requirements.

In addition to the creation of a state plan, each state is required to create an election fund consisting of federal appropriations to implement HAVA to be used exclusively to carry out federal HAVA requirements.

Among other election law changes, HAVA requires each state to meet minimum election technology and administration requirements, including:

- ensuring that voting systems used in federal elections on and after January 1, 2006, meet certain voting system standards.
- employing provisional voting, for certain voters whose eligibility to vote is in question, in federal elections held on and after January 1, 2004.
- posting certain voting information at the polls on the day of each election for federal office held on and after January 1, 2004.
- developing and maintaining a uniform computerized statewide voter registration database no later than January 1, 2004.
- implementing requirements for voters who register by mail on and after January 1, 2003.

As part of HAVA compliance, the SOS permitted counties to purchase direct recording equipment (DRE) for disability accessible voting systems. The SOS allowed counties to purchase DRE machines from one of three major voting system vendors. In Pima County, many citizen activists voiced concerns about the DRE machines the Pima County Board of Supervisors had selected for disabled voting, claiming they are unreliable and insecure. During the summer of 2006, the Pima County Board of Supervisors delayed its decision whether to approve the

voting systems, causing concern that Arizona would not be in compliance with HAVA, which requires that the disabled have the ability to vote in secret, rather than with assistance. A group of citizens requested the Maricopa County Superior Court to issue an injunction to stop the use of these machines in 13 Arizona counties. The petitioners claimed that two of the three vendors' machines were unreliable and insecure. The Superior Court denied the injunction and granted the SOS's motion to dismiss the case. The Pima County Board of Supervisors then approved the DRE machines for use beginning in the 2006 primary election. The case is currently on appeal to the Arizona Court of Appeals.

## **ARIZONA LAW**

### ***VOTING EQUIPMENT TESTING AND MANUAL AUDITS OF THE ELECTION***

Both the SOS's Procedures Manual and statute contain instructions concerning the testing of voting equipment. The Procedures Manual articulates the period of time before an election that the automatic tabulating equipment and programs must be tested to ascertain that the equipment and programs will correctly count the votes cast. The public is given at least 48 hours' notice of the testing. The test is observed by at least two election inspectors who are not of the same political party and is open to representatives of the political parties, the candidates, the press and the public. The test is conducted by processing a preaudited group of ballots marked to record a predetermined number of valid votes. If any error is detected, the cause must be ascertained and corrected and an errorless count must be made before the equipment is approved. The same testing procedures are repeated immediately before the start of the official count of the ballots. Additionally, electronic ballot tabulating systems are tested for logic and accuracy within seven days before their use for early balloting pursuant to the Procedures Manual.

As soon as the polls are closed and the last ballot has been deposited in the ballot box, the election board or the tally board must

immediately count the votes cast. All proceedings at the counting center are under the direction of the board of supervisors or other officer in charge of elections and may be observed by representatives of each political party and the public. If for any reason it becomes impracticable to count all or a part of the ballots with tabulating equipment, the officer in charge of elections may direct that they be counted manually. Beginning in the 2007 general election, the public can view live video of the ballots at the counting center through a link on the SOS's website. Disruptions in the live video feed will not affect or prevent the tabulation of ballots but the county recorder or officer in charge of elections must attempt to reinstate video coverage as soon as practicable. A \$75,000 appropriation in FY 2007-2008 provides \$5,000 to each county to implement the live video recording. The recordings must be retained as a public record through the challenge period for the general election.

Concerns about election fraud with electronic tabulating machines prompted the Legislature to classify the counterfeiting of election returns as a class 3 felony and to establish a procedure for manually auditing certain randomly selected election results. For each countywide primary, general and presidential preference election, the county officer in charge of the election conducts a hand count of at least two percent of the precincts in that county, or two precincts, whichever is greater, selected at random from a pool consisting of every precinct in that county. Up to five contested races must be hand counted, which must include one federal race, one statewide office race, one statewide ballot measure, one state legislative office race and additional contested federal statewide or legislative races or ballot measures until four races have been selected or no additional races or ballot measures are available for selection on those ballots. If a presidential race is on the ballot, it also must be hand counted. A hand count is not conducted for a precinct if there are no contested races. All selections of races are chosen by lot without the use of a computer, after the primary ballots are separated by political party.

If the randomly selected races result in a difference in any race that is less than the assigned designated margin when compared to the electronic tabulation of those same ballots, the results of the electronic tabulation constitute the official count for that race. If the randomly selected races result in a difference in any race that is equal to or greater than the designated margin when compared to the electronic tabulation of those same ballots, further hand counts must be performed. If there are sufficient discrepancies between the hand count and the electronic tabulation, all the ballots from an entire county may be hand counted.

The designated margin of error is determined by the Vote Count Verification Committee (Committee) within the office of the SOS. The designated margin is used in reviewing the hand counting of votes and to set the acceptable variance rate between the machine and hand counts. The Committee established the designated margin for early ballots to be five ballots or two percent, whichever is greater. The Committee established the designated margin for ballots cast at the polling place to be three ballots or one percent, whichever is greater. These designated margins were precleared on October 19, 2006, and were officially used for the first time in the 2006 general election.

## ***EARLY VOTING***

A voter may vote early by mail or in person at a designated early voting location. A voter may request an official early ballot within 90 days before any election by providing a name, address, date of birth and state or country of birth or information to confirm the identity of the voter. The early ballot and envelope is mailed postage prepaid to the voter and must be returned by a designated time before the election. Additionally, a voter may appear personally at an on-site early voting location before 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election.

Legislation in 2007 created a Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) for voters in Arizona. A voter must make a written request or complete an application containing the voter's name,

residence address, mailing address in the voter's county of residence, date of birth and a signature to compare the signature on the voter's registration form. One hundred twenty days prior to a scheduled election, the voter will receive an election notice that includes the election dates, early ballot mailing date, the address where the ballot will be mailed and instructions on changing a voter's information or requesting that an early ballot not be sent. Early ballots are mailed to voters on the PEVL no later than the first day of early voting.

A voter can be removed from the list by written request or if the voter is placed on the inactive list because the initial election notice is returned undeliverable and the voter is unable to be contacted. A voter can be placed back on the PEVL by submitting a new request. A voter is not removed from the PEVL for failing to vote an early ballot. An absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter is eligible to be placed on the PEVL.

## **ARIZONA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (Proposition 200)**

Proposition 200 was a citizen's initiative placed on the 2004 general election ballot and approved by the voters. In addition to other requirements, it requires that evidence of United States citizenship be submitted by every person to register to vote and that proof of identification be presented by every voter at the polling place prior to voting.

### ***History***

In July of 2003, Protect Arizona NOW and Yes on 200, both political committees, filed an application to circulate the initiative petition for the Arizona Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act. There were a sufficient number of valid signatures on the petitions to place the initiative on the ballot, whereby it was subsequently numbered Proposition 200. Prior to the election, Proposition 200 was subject to two unsuccessful challenges attempting to remove it from the ballot.

Proposition 200 was approved by the voters in the 2004 general election. The election was canvassed on November 22, 2004. On November 30, 2004, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund sought a temporary restraining order (TRO) to prevent Proposition 200 from becoming law. The TRO was granted, but expired on December 22, 2004. On December 22, 2004, Governor Napolitano officially proclaimed the election results.

The AG then submitted the portion of Proposition 200 modifying election laws to the DOJ for preclearance. When the DOJ precleared Proposition 200 on January 24, 2005, the portions relating to election law became legally enforceable.

### ***Proof of Citizenship to Register to Vote***

For persons registering to vote or re-registering to vote in a different county on or after January 24, 2005, Proposition 200 requires the person to provide proof of citizenship. If proof of citizenship is not provided, the form is rejected and the person is requested to provide proof of citizenship. A person is not registered to vote until the person provides satisfactory proof of citizenship.

Statute defines the acceptable forms of identification for proving citizenship. Satisfactory evidence of United States citizenship includes one of the following:

- An Arizona driver's license number or nonoperating identification license number, issued after October 1, 1996.
- A driver's license or nonoperating identification license from another state that identifies United States citizenship.
- A legible photocopy of a birth certificate with the name of the applicant that verifies United States citizenship. Supporting documentation, like a marriage license, may be needed if the name on the birth certificate is not the same as the person's current legal name.
- A legible photocopy of the pertinent pages of the United States passport.

- United States naturalization certificate number or the presentation of the original certificate of naturalization.
- Bureau of Indian Affairs Card Number, Tribal Treaty Card Number or Tribal Enrollment Number.

### ***Identification at the Polls***

Proposition 200 contains a provision requiring a voter at the polls who wishes to obtain a ballot to present one form of identification that contains the voter's photograph or two different forms of identification without the voter's photograph. However, there may be times in which the voter does not possess an acceptable form of identification. In February 2005, the AG advised the SOS that regulations guiding poll workers regarding acceptable forms of identification should be put in place and state statutes should be amended to allow a voter who lacks sufficient identification to vote a provisional ballot. Also, on February 4, 2005, the AG issued a formal opinion stating that a driver or nonoperating identification license issued in Arizona after October 1, 1996, is satisfactory evidence of United States citizenship to register to vote.

During the 2005 legislative session, the Legislature approved an act to allow a qualified elector, whose name is on the precinct register but who does not present the proper forms of identification, to vote a provisional ballot if the elector presents one other specified form of identification. This legislation was vetoed by the Governor. After the legislative session, the SOS developed new procedures for proof of identification at the polls and the AG and Governor, as required by law, approved the changes to the SOS's Procedures Manual. In August 2005, the AG requested that these procedural changes be precleared by the DOJ.

The changes to the SOS's Procedures Manual were precleared by the DOJ in October of 2005. Under the new procedures, all voters, regardless of whether they provide sufficient identification, will be allowed to vote using one of three types of ballots:

- The first type of ballot that may be issued is a regular ballot. This will be issued to voters who present sufficient identification and the information on the identification reasonably appears to be the same as the signature roster or the recorder's certificate.
- The second type of ballot that may be issued is a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot will be set aside and verified at the recorder's office following the election. A provisional ballot will be issued to voters, who present sufficient identification, but the voter's name does not appear on the signature roster or the information on the voter's identification does not reasonably appear to be the same as the signature roster or the recorder's certificate. A provisional ballot will also be provided to voters who do not present sufficient identification but do present identification that is issued by a recognized Native American Tribe.
- The third type of ballot that may be issued is a conditional provisional ballot given with instructions to return to the county recorder's office with proper identification. The conditional provisional ballot will be issued to voters who do not present sufficient identification. The poll worker must notify the voter that he or she must provide sufficient identification to the county recorder and provide the voter with instructions on how and where the voter may provide proof of identification. The ballot will not be counted unless the voter provides the county recorder proof of identification by 5:00 p.m. on the fifth business day after a general election that includes an election for a federal office, or by 5:00 p.m. on the third business day after any other election.

### ***Recent Litigation***

Proposition 200 continues to be under scrutiny and subject to litigation. In 2006, a group of citizens and community groups challenged Proposition 200's requirement for proof of citizenship to register to vote and the requirement to provide identification at the polls. The United States District Court did not grant

the plaintiff's requested temporary restraining order to prevent Arizona officials from enforcing the election provisions of Proposition 200. On October 5, 2006, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals enjoined the implementation of Proposition 200's voting identification requirement in connection with the 2006 general election and enjoined Proposition 200's registration proof of citizenship requirements so that voters could register before the October 9, 2006, registration deadline without having to show proof of identification. However, on October 20, 2006, the United States Supreme Court vacated the order of the Ninth Circuit, therefore identification at the polls was necessary during the 2006 general election. On appeal, the Ninth Circuit refused to enjoin the citizenship requirement finding that plaintiffs had demonstrated little likelihood of success of proving that Arizona's registration identification requirement is a poll tax. The court also found that the plaintiffs failed to demonstrate that Proposition 200's identification requirement imposes a severe burden on the right to vote and therefore was justified as an even-handed and politically neutral law aimed at preserving the integrity of the election process. The case is still pending in district court on remand from the Ninth Circuit.

## ***REDISTRICTING AND REAPPORTIONMENT***

Redistricting and reapportionment are terms that are often used interchangeably when discussing the process that occurs every ten years across the country. In actuality, "redistricting" is the process of redrawing the specific congressional district and legislative district boundaries, while "reapportionment" is the process of reallocating the 435 seats in Congress among the 50 states, based on each state's population total as determined in the decennial census (reapportionment of Congress every ten years is the underlying purpose for taking the Census, as mandated in the U.S. Constitution). Federal law outlines the mathematical formula for determining how to calculate each state's representation in Congress, based on total population, but with a guarantee

that each state will receive at least one seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a result of population growth, Arizona's congressional membership increased from six in the 1990s to eight, effective in 2002.

Since the late 1960s, the Arizona Legislature has consisted of 30 legislative districts, each of which is represented by two members of the Arizona House of Representatives and one member of the Arizona Senate. The 30 districts have been redrawn every ten years after the Census, generally by passage of a bill by the Legislature that describes the boundaries of the districts.

The U.S. Supreme Court has established two different standards for reviewing population variations for districts within a state, with one standard for state legislative districts and a higher standard for a state's congressional districts. For a state's legislative districts, the Supreme Court has ruled that districts must be "substantially equal" in population, which is generally interpreted as having less than a ten percent difference between the most populous and least populous districts. For a state's congressional districts, the Supreme Court has held that district population totals must be "as nearly equal as practicable," which generally means a difference of only one or two persons between the most populous and least populous district.

## ***INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION***

With the approval of Proposition 106 at the 2000 general election, the job of drawing Arizona's congressional and legislative district lines was transferred from the Legislature to the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC). The five members of the IRC are selected from a pool of applicants who are required to comply with specific criteria regarding geographic representation, political affiliation, and political employment and activity. The first four members are selected in succession by each of the four caucus leaders at the Legislature, with those four Commissioners then selecting a fifth

person from the pool of applicants to serve as the chair of the IRC.

The IRC adopts congressional and legislative district boundaries after holding hearings and receiving comment from the public and the Legislature, as provided in Proposition 106. On adoption by the IRC, the new district boundaries are subject to review and preclearance under the VRA, just like any other change in Arizona's election laws or procedures. Once precleared, the new districts are used for all subsequent legislative and congressional elections.

### ***Redistricting Plan Progress***

The IRC adopted the equal population grid for the congressional and legislative districts on June 7, 2001. The grid was required by Proposition 106 as the initial starting point for districts and was based on Arizona's Township, Range and Section Public Land Survey System.

The Commissioners traveled around the state in the summer of 2001 conducting public hearings. The purpose of the hearings was to present information about the redrawing of Arizona's congressional and legislative districts and to hear input from citizens about redistricting.

Draft district maps were adopted by the IRC in August 2001. The draft maps incorporated modifications to the initial grids to accommodate many of Proposition 106's redistricting goals, such as respect for "communities of interest." The draft maps were available for public comment for at least 30 days.

The IRC adopted final district maps in May 2002, following DOJ objections to the original legislative maps adopted by the IRC. The United States District Court ordered these maps be used in the fall 2002 election.

In February 2003, the DOJ precleared the legislative district map adopted by the IRC in May 2002 for use in the fall 2004 election.

In January 2004, the Maricopa County Superior Court found that the maps drawn by the IRC in May 2002 failed to meet a constitutional

mandate requiring districts to be made politically competitive to the best extent possible. The Superior Court found that the IRC's failure to adequately take competition in the districts into account violated the rights of Arizona voters and resulted in maps that are unfair. The court approved an injunction against using the maps in the 2004 election and ordered the IRC to reconvene within 45 days to adopt a new plan for use in the 2004 election. The Superior Court approved a reworked IRC map in April 2004 and ordered the IRC to submit the new map to the DOJ.

In May 2004, the Arizona Court of Appeals granted a stay of the Superior Court injunction to allow the May 2002 maps to be used in the 2004 election, finding that it was too late into the election cycle to redraw the maps. The reworked IRC map was withdrawn from submission to the DOJ.

In October 2005, the Arizona Court of Appeals rendered a decision regarding the maps. It reversed the portion of the January 2004 judgment that invalidated the legislative redistricting map and remanded the case to the Superior Court for further review. It directed the Superior Court to apply another standard of review to the case and to determine whether a new trial or additional evidence or arguments were warranted. The Court of Appeals vacated the Superior Court's judgment that approved the reworked IRC map in April 2004. The Court of Appeals, however, upheld the Superior Court's ruling that the IRC did not violate constitutional principles when it created district boundaries that separated the Hopi Tribe and Navajo Nation into different congressional districts. The decision was appealed to the Arizona Supreme Court, but review was denied and the remand in the Superior Court was allowed to proceed.

The Superior Court utilized a more deferential standard of review but found that the IRC's plan violated the Arizona Constitution. Specifically, the court found that the IRC did not consider or favor competitiveness, as required by the Arizona Constitution, to the extent practicable and so long as competitiveness does not create a significant detriment to the other goals of creating the district boundaries (Ariz.

Const. Art. IV, part 2, § 1(14)(F)). Since the plan violates the Constitution, the IRC may not utilize the plan in any upcoming elections. The Superior Court's order was effective on March 7, 2007, which was 120 days from the date of issuance. The IRC has appealed this order to the Arizona Court of Appeals and a decision is expected to be issued in 2007.

---

• **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** •

- Arizona Secretary of State  
[www.azsos.gov](http://www.azsos.gov)
- Independent Redistricting Commission  
<http://www.azredistricting.org/>
- Arizona Attorney General  
[www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov)
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Voting Section <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/>
- U.S. Election Assistance Commission  
<http://www.eac.gov>
- Joseph Kanefield, *Election Law in Arizona*, Arizona Attorney (Nov. 2006)  
<http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/>
- National Conference of State Legislatures, Elections  
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt/elect/elect.htm>