



CENTER FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS

A cooperative venture of the Georgia Office of the Secretary of State and Kennesaw State University

Risks of the Current UOCAVA Mail-in Voting Process

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Conventional UOCAVA System

- The current vote-by-mail UOCAVA model is derived from the vote-by-mail (VBM) absentee systems – with a twist:
 - “logistical, geographical, operational and environmental barriers”
 - Out of sight – out of mind

Risks

- Risk – event or condition that threatens the expected (and desired) outcome of a system
- Risks are managed or mitigated – rarely eliminated
- The cost of mitigating a risk is weighed against the value of the asset or outcome threatened by the risk
- There is not a single method of valuing assets

Risks

- The risks associated with vote-by-mail UOCAVA systems are not wholly unique to VBM systems
- Other voting system models can ameliorate some of these risks, but also can introduce additional risks:
 - Internet voting
 - Kiosk

Risk

- Highly mobile voters – UOCAVA voters may move frequently. Maintaining up-to-date voter registration records is difficult and dependent upon factors outside the control of the election official
 - Priorities
 - Dependents

Risk

- Determining “right” or “wrong” ballot is a challenge
- Wrong ballot
 - Detected – If a UOCAVA voter receives the wrong ballot, there may not be sufficient time to inform the election office and request the correct ballot
 - Undetected – The UOCAVA voter votes the wrong ballot

Risk

- Double jeopardy – “right” ballot transmittal document transmitted to the UOCAVA voter may be duplicated onto “wrong” ballot in the election office.

DAWSON COUNTY

OFFICIAL ABSENTEE/PROVISIONAL/CHALLENGED BALLOT

OFFICIAL SPECIAL ELECTION RUNOFF BALLOT
OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA
JUNE 8, 2010

To vote, blacken the Oval (●) next to the candidate of your choice. To vote for a person whose name is not on the ballot, manually WRITE his or her name in the write-in section and blacken the Oval (●) next to the write-in section. If you desire to vote YES or NO for a PROPOSED QUESTION, blacken the corresponding Oval (●). Use only blue or black pen or pencil.

Do not vote for more candidates than the number allowed for each specific office. Do not cross out or erase. If you erase or make other marks on the ballot or tear the ballot, your vote may not count.

If you change your mind or make a mistake, you may return the ballot by writing "Spoiled" across the face of the ballot and return envelope. You may then mail the spoiled ballot back to your county board of registrars, and you will be issued another official absentee ballot. Alternatively, you may surrender the ballot to the poll manager of an early voting site within your county or the precinct to which you are assigned. You will then be permitted to vote a regular ballot.

"I understand that the offer or acceptance of money or any other object of value to vote for any particular candidate, list of candidates, issue, or list of issues included in this election constitutes an act of voter fraud and is a felony under Georgia law." [OCGA 21-2-285(h) and 21-2-383(a)]

For U.S. Representative in 111th
Congress From the 9th
Congressional District of
Georgia

(To Fill the Unexpired Term of Nathan Deal, Resigned)
(Vote for One)

- TOM GRAVES
Republican
- LEE HAWKINS
Republican

FRONT Card 1 RptPct 10-10 "001-WEST"

Risk

- Signature verification – Election officials must verify that the signature on the application and outer envelope match the voter's signature on file with the office. This verification is subject to human interpretation of signature attributes and these attributes can change over time and circumstances

Risk

- Overvotes/ Undervotes – There is no technological prevention of overvotes or warning of undervotes

Risk

- Error Correction – Spoiled ballots cannot be easily exchanged for unvoted ballots

Risk

- Coercion/Vote Selling – Unobserved access to the voter by vote buyers or intimidators while voter has ballot in their possession

Risk

- Accessibility – Printed ballots may present accessibility issues for vision, mobility and cognitively impaired voters

Risk

- Deadlines – The 45-day turnaround deadline does not take into account realities of ballot preparation, including proofing, printing and mailing ballots, run-offs, specials, etc.

Risk

- Verification of receipt
 - Verification of receipt that the documents sent by the voter have been received by the elections office
 - Verification of receipt of the voted ballot envelope by the elections office

Risk

- Single, physical copies of key documents – Many of the documents used in the UOCAVA VMB system have no electronic counterpart and are subject to total loss or misplacement
 - Includes ballots – 94 VBM voters in Cuyahoga did not include the ballot in 2010 May primary

MOVE and Risk Mitigation

- MOVE has presented opportunities to mitigate some traditional risks of the UOCAVA VMB system
- Delivery of ballot – preceding events: qualification of candidates (including any challenges), construction of the election database, production of ballot proofs, proofing and sign-off of ballot proofs, production and delivery of print files, printing and delivery of ballots to the jurisdiction, Logic & Accuracy testing of scanners and ballots, and processing of absentee ballot applications.

Mitigation

- *Mitigation:* The electronic submission of voter registration information, absentee ballot application and receipt of absentee ballot can decrease the delays in the movement documents between the UOCAVA voter and the elections office

Risk

- Use of email as means of correspondence and delivery of documents:
 - Firewalls – May prevent the transmission and receipt of documents as attachments
 - Persistence of email accounts – Account ownership may be of short duration – even shorter than physical addresses
 - Predictable formats of email addresses

Risk

- Email (cont.):
 - Maintenance of passwords and password security – Users may fail to keep passwords secure, or may intentionally share email accounts
 - Threshold of IT knowledge required to use – Users must know how to acquire accounts and in some instances configure email clients

Mitigation

Mitigation: Push vs. Pull

- If Absentee Ballot transmittal forms are “pushed” out to UOCAVA voters, they may not be delivered. They should be pulled from secure websites, requiring password access

Risk

- Technological capabilities at county level –
The routine, disciplined use of email and online posting of ballots may stretch the technological capabilities of some counties. In Georgia, some counties do not have IT departments, or even a county email domain

Mitigation

- *Mitigation:* Jurisdictions will need to implement appropriate training, technology support and oversight to ensure that email and attachments are managed in a timely and secure fashion

Risk

- Accessibility – Conventional VBM systems provide limited accommodation to voters with disabilities
 - Low vision/poor vision
 - No vision
 - Motor skills

Mitigation

- *Mitigation:* The electronic versions of the instructions and ballot transmittal document can be enlarged (for low-/poor-vision disability) and converted to audio with appropriate end-user technology
 - May permit use of other voter-provided AT

Risk

- Deadlines – The deadlines for voter registration and ballot submission are obstacles to successful participation in elections. There are no links in the chain of events that can be restructured as to run concurrently

Mitigation

- *Mitigation:* One link that can be compressed is the delivery of the ballot (or ballot transmittal document - BTD) to the voter. This document can be made available to the voter via a secured website, permitting them to download the BTD, mark and mail the document to their local election office
- Email can reduce turnaround of requests for information

Risk

- Wrong ballot is made available to the voter
 - 2012 redistricting will acerbate this risk
 - Congested metro areas lead to voter confusion on district boundaries

Mitigation

- Voter can review ballot online and make timely inquiries regarding correctness

Risk

- Duplication of ballot – Transmittal ballots must be duplicated onto scanable ballots. This duplication is prone to human transcription errors as well as the potential loss of source document

Mitigation

Mitigation:

- Maintain chain of custody of all source documents
- Use teams to duplicate ballots
- Develop and use reconciliation procedures specifically for UOCAVA subsystem

Challenges

- Integration of new UOCAVA requirements with existing absentee systems
 - Rising tide will lift all ships?
- Rising expectations of UOCAVA voters regarding access and ease
- Maintaining focus on full scope of UOCAVA community – not just military voters
- Unintended consequences

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