

United States Senate
Rules Committee Hearing “Administration of Upcoming Elections”
May 19th, 2022
Testimony of Tammy Patrick

Introduction

Chairwoman Klobuchar, Ranking Member Blunt, members of the Committee and honored guests, it is a privilege to provide testimony on the status of election administration and preparedness for the 2022 Federal Election Cycle.

My name is Tammy Patrick and I currently serve as the Senior Advisor to the Elections Team at the Democracy Fund, and as an adjunct professor at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Policy at the University of Minnesota. I have worked in the election administration field for almost 20 years, and I spent eleven of those years in Maricopa County, Arizona--most of them as the Federal Compliance Officer. I have also served as a Commissioner on President Obama’s bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration and as a Senior Fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center.

I have the great fortune of knowing many state and local election officials, as well as many who work across the country, across the aisle, and across the myriad of facets of our election systems to ensure that officials have the tools and resources that they need to serve their voters well. As a representative of the National Association of Election Officials (the Election Center) to the United States Postal Service’s Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) for over a decade, I have forged relationships that have aided the improvement of our Postal Service to better “Deliver Democracy” to American voters.

Today, I would like to share with you what I am hearing and seeing unfold for the primaries and the forthcoming November midterm elections in seven main areas. Some of these are typical issues that arise in every election, but with a 2022 twist. Those areas are:

- Paper & Supply Chain Issues
- Timing
- USPS
- Mis-, Dis-, & Mal-Information (MDM)¹
- Transparency vs. Surveillance
- The Greatest Resource: People

¹ The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency website explains MDM as “misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation make up what CISA defines as “information activities”. When this type of content is released by foreign actors, it can be referred to as foreign influence. Definitions for each are below.

- **Misinformation** is false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.
- **Disinformation** is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.
- **Malinformation** is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate.”

- Election Funding

My remarks are derived from recent conversations and communications with election officials, industry and vendor service providers, and stakeholder groups—including recent convenings of the leadership of state associations² of election officials on May 5-6, 2022, and the National Postal Forum on May 18, 2022. Each section includes direct comments from election officials and professionals, an overview of the issue, and the impact it is having on the field of election administration. While the comments are included anonymously here, I encourage each of you to speak directly with the officials and providers who serve your constituents to hear their specific and unique concerns, needs and ideas.

Paper & Supply Chain Issues

“Needs: paper! Some folks have stockpiled paper but overall ballot paper for November is a major concern.” –local election official

“Paper shortage issue was mitigated because we contract with vendors who responded by purchasing paper early. We did have to increase what we pay to our vendor.” –local election official

“Supply chain issues continue with dates getting further and further pushed out. Additionally, more allocations in play, so for example recently our supplier just delivered part of an order we placed months ago but cannot fulfill the rest due to ‘paper supplier doesn’t have paper allocation for material needed’. We are searching and are having to pay higher prices for paper sizes larger than what is needed to then cut down to size so we have the ability to keep moving out the work.” –industry service provider

Issue:

Paper supply chain concerns began surfacing in the 2020 elections. The origin of the paper supply for election materials is mostly domestic, coming from North American mills in the United States and Canada. When the international supplies became problematic, other markets turned to these domestic sources to fill the gap; this reduction in supply occurred at the same time as the increased demand for corrugated paper to fulfill the spike in online shopping during the pandemic. Mills could not simultaneously continue their traditional paper-production and take on the corrugated manufacturing. Many of them opted to change production to the more lucrative corrugated product.

Ballot and envelope printers and vendors began seeing these issues in late 2021 and started to ask their election official customers to get their orders in early. In order to take care of their customers they placed their paper orders well in advance of normal schedules. Standard turnaround times have gone from a few weeks to many months to fulfill and it is now common for orders to be incomplete—partial shipments, back-orders, and outright cancellations are becoming typical. Even orders placed as early as October of 2021 (for partial delivery in March of 2022 and the balance later in the year) are still unfulfilled for some states.

² The convening had election officials from Arizona, California, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, Vermont, and Washington states.

Impact:

This is creating a disparate impact on jurisdictions. Those who use a vendor or service provider may be in better shape—*but only if* that vendor pre-ordered paper stock, the order was fully satisfied, and the jurisdiction got their order in early enough. Election offices which have traditionally printed and created their own materials in-house are now finding it difficult to obtain items and are turning to the vendors who are already strapped serving their existing customer base. Service providers and vendors are having to turn new customers away. Those customers are leaving empty-handed.

An additional impact is felt in those states that have made changes to their election policies and laws that negate the ability to use an existing inventory of materials. New registration requirements, ballot application changes, and changes to provisional ballot forms may necessitate throwing away existing paper products and require reprinting in an already strained market. States that are running coterminous elections on old and new district lines are having to duplicate materials, while states with very specific laws around envelope paper colors are experiencing challenges getting their prescribed materials.

Not all states and election offices will be impacted equally by the paper shortage. States that offer online and automatic/automated voter registration and those that utilize electronic pollbooks to check in voters will not be as hard hit as those relying solely on paper registration and roster forms. States that have an all vote by mail/absentee voting regime as well as those jurisdictions that offer mainly in-person voting will encounter issues with the paper shortage—with the caveat that in-person vote center models are better positioned due to their electronic check-in systems and the preponderance of them relies on a ballot-on-demand system that does not see the same amount of waste in unused ballots that is typical in a precinct-based model. States that specify specific colors or paper be utilized for certain functions (I.e., “green, ballot-return envelopes” or “blue provisional forms”) are encountering difficulties when those specific colors are not available. To be very clear, the paper shortage is pervasive across the materials required to conduct an election and simply limiting options for voters to in-person is not a viable solution. It is not just ballot paper but also paper used for postcards, poll worker training manuals, voting instructions, confirmation letters, voter registration forms, etc. It is pervasive and the situation is not getting better.

Despite the utmost gravity of the paper and supply chain shortage, there is at least one silver-lining that a service provider shared with me. In this instance, a state that was unable to obtain their standard voter registration materials was encouraged to redesign the decades-old form so that it fit on available paper stock. While still fulfilling statutory requirements, the redesign centered industry best practices and plain language to make their ballots easier to comprehend for voters. This is a perfect example of how the election administration profession works. They are continually deprived of resources and services—but find the best available solution available since the election must go on. On occasion, they are able to make “lemonade out of lemons.”

Timing

“Need? time!” –local election official

*“The timing of redistricting just after 2020. One-two punch. The hits just keep coming.”
–local election official*

“Since maps are still being litigated, there will be 2 primaries for the first time (2nd in August for state races).” –local election official

*“The census delay has meant things need to be fastracked. Things are late/behind.” –
local election official*

“Court postponed our primary by three weeks. Worst case scenario, lost contracted facilities and scrambling to compete with summer camps and weddings.” –local election official

Issue:

Redistricting is playing a key role in the additional tension being felt in election offices. Some district lines are still being litigated; but even in states where the district lines are set, the election officials must now align voting precincts to the new districts, and then place voters accordingly. Some states are “geo-enabled”—leveraging geographic information systems (GIS) to create “shape files” of the districts and maintain voter allocations based on the X, Y coordinates of their residences (much like the “pin” on Google maps). However, the majority of jurisdictions are not geo-enabled and this work is done manually by the election administrators, often with paper maps and colored pencils.

Impact:

Due to the latency of the census determinations and the various redistricting efforts the final district lines have come down to voters very close to the candidate nomination process. Voters and candidates must be placed in precincts beforehand to determine their eligibility to sign petitions for candidates or know which district their eligible to run in, respectively.

The paper shortage further impacts this election administration timeline. Unless the shortage is remedied, statutorily required election mailings and notices may not go out in time. The condensed timeframe and resources leave no room for error. Given the shortage, there may not be available stock to reprint if an error occurs, and these states need to contemplate how they will handle that situation if it arises.

Similar to the challenges in the supply chain, the deluge of newly passed legislation across the country has election officials scrambling to update materials, office policies, training content, and all the supporting ephemera that is necessary for implementation. All too often they are expected to do this without any additional support and with little time.

United States Postal Service (USPS)

“Challenges with changes over USPS delivery and postmark requirements.” –local election official on pain points for November

Issue:

When USPS plant rationalization – the consolidation of plants and reconfiguring of the postal network – occurred almost a decade ago, the mail system shifted from locally sorting and delivering local mail to scanning, postmarking, and sorting all mail at a central processing plant.³ In some instances, election officials reached “sweetheart deals” with their relevant postmasters to keep their mail local and not send it to the central plants which are often a great distance away—especially for rural communities. In the 2020 election cycle, USPS went to “extraordinary measures”⁴ to ensure that ballots were delivered to and returned from voters in time to count before the deadline—often circumventing the standard practice of sending mail to the plants and, instead, replicating the “sweetheart deals” to keep ballots local.

Voters are recommended by USPS to mail back their ballots one week before they are due, yet 19 states allow a voter to *request* a ballot *after* USPS says it should be mailed back⁵. This applies undue pressure on the postal system and sets the false expectation with voters that applying for a ballot by mail/absentee on Monday for Tuesday’s election—allowed by a handful of states—is going to be successful.

Impact:

While processing mail locally works in many instances, ballots kept locally do not get scanned or postmarked and this is problematic for election administrators and voters. For example, a rising number of jurisdictions use ballot tracking. This tool relies on the scanning of ballots as they travel through the mail stream. Although ballots may be delivered more quickly, voters are unable to see it in their tracking tools and the data does not accurately reflect the activity. This proved problematic in 2020 Federal Court reporting⁶ as it falsely looked like thousands of ballots were lost when in fact, they were delivered to the voter but not scanned at a central processing plant. The localized delivery also precludes the postmarking of ballots under the current system. Given the lack of traditional postmarking, this may prevent ballots obtained by USPS from being accepted for the count despite the voter sending the ballot before the statutory deadline.

³ Bipartisan Policy Center, “New Reality of Voting by Mail”. (June 29, 2016).

⁴ United States Postal Service Statement. “U.S. Postal Service Utilizes Extraordinary Measures to Deliver Nation’s Ballots In Final Days of November Election Fact Sheet”. <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/statements/103020-usps-utilizes-extraordinary-measures-to-deliver-election-mail.htm> (October 30, 2020).

⁵ National Conference of State Legislatures. “Table 5: Applying for an Absentee Ballot”. (March 15, 2022) <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/vopp-table-5-applying-for-an-absentee-ballot-including-third-party-registration-drives.aspx>

⁶ Murphy, Paul P. CNN. “Fact checking the unfounded claim that USPS lost 300,000 ballots”. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/05/politics/usps-missing-ballots-fact-check/index.html> (November 5, 2020). Jacob Bogage and Christopher Ingraham. Washington Post. “USPS data shows thousands of mailed ballots missed Election Day deadline”. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/11/03/election-ballot-delays-usps/> (November 4, 2020).

For the 2022 Midterms, USPS has entered into an agreement to continue the extraordinary measures they put in place in 2020.⁷ At this time, we have not received instruction on whether or not this will mean that the issues with scanning and postmarking will be remedied for any ballots undergoing localized delivery.

Mis-, Dis-, & Mal-Information (MDM)

“Sheer volume—no longer any break in media attention/public scrutiny” –local election official

“‘Not enough hands to put out the fires’ referring to rumors.” –local election official

“Not knowing what the bad information being spread is...so staying on top of it is a challenge. You can put the facts out there, but how do you know if they are getting to the people with the bad information.” –local election official

“All news is national. Getting questions about other states and their issues. How do you get local information out when there is a dearth of local newspapers.” –local election official

Issue:

A prominent academic working in the field of election administration recently said, “we are still living with 2020, and 2024 is already here.”⁸ Election officials have been under a constant barrage of election-denying claims for the last 18 months. In some jurisdictions, election officials remain entrenched in a daily struggle against incorrect information purveyed online, on certain news platforms, and even under their own state capitol domes.⁹

Impact:

It is important to understand the landscape of election administration. More than a third of our election offices do not have a full-time employee¹⁰. More than a third of all election officials have other duties outside of elections¹¹. Slightly more than eight percent of our election offices service 75% of our voters, while 75% of our election offices service 8.4% of our voters¹². The

⁷ Nowhere in the Stipulation of Settlement. In Civil Action No. 20-cv-2295 (EGS), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People vs. the United States Postal Service, do the words “postmark” or “scan” appear. https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1457271/download?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

⁸ Gronke, Paul. Comments during the Democracy Fund National Convening of State Election Associations. (May 5, 2022).

⁹ Corse, Alexa. Wall Street Journal. “Election Officials Steel Themselves for Threats as Midterm Season Gears Up”. (May 15, 2022). <https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/election-officials-steel-themselves-for-threats-as-midterm-season-gears-up-11652619600>. Peter Eisler and Linda So. Reuters. “One in five U.S. election officials may quit amid threats, politics.” (March 10, 2022). Brodie, Mark. KJZZ. “Arizona election officials are quitting over threats and misinformation.” (May 12, 2022). <https://kjzz.org/content/1779342/arizona-election-officials-are-quitting-over-threats-and-misinformation>.

¹⁰ Paul Gronke, Paul Manson, Jay Lee, and Heather Creek. “Understanding the career journeys of today’s local election officials and anticipating tomorrow’s potential shortage.” (April 20, 2021).

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² Elections & Voting Information Center. “The Democracy Fund / Reed College Survey of Local Election Official Summary”. <https://evic.reed.edu/leo-survey-summary/>

drain on officials already understaffed, overworked, and under resourced that the onslaught of MDM is causing is considerable. Although there are some large jurisdictions with designated communications specialists on staff, my former jurisdiction of Maricopa County, Arizona is a great example, for the majority of election offices this is yet another skill they have been asked to master.¹³

The unfounded challenges to the 2020 election – which bore no fruit in the courtroom, uncovered no widespread issues in valid election audits – continue to circulate and election officials struggle to stay abreast of the most recent conspiracy theory, to get correct and truthful information out to their voting public. While it is true that we shouldn't expect our county or municipal election officials to go up against sophisticated, adversarial, foreign nation-states – a guiding factor in the creation of elections as critical infrastructure – we also should not expect them to be successful in piercing through the constant din of misinformation coming from the megaphones of major news networks, and from social media platforms no longer pulling down 2020 content “because the election is over.” A recent survey reported that administrators feel that their job as an election official is now more dangerous.¹⁴

Transparency vs. Surveillance

“Partisan groups (under the guise of election integrity) are aggressively bogging down EO offices” –local election official

“Weaponizing FOIA requests” –local election official

“Overwhelmed with records requests” –local election official

“The activists are just bullying us” –local election official

“Aggressive observers” –local election official

“We just don't know what to expect the new issue will be for these activist groups” –local election official

“What we need?...we need nonsense to stop.” –local election official

Issue:

Historically, election administrators felt they toiled away in obscurity and lamented at the lack of public interest in how our democracy works and encouraged wider participation—including as a poll worker, signing up to be a temporary worker, or observing a Logic & Accuracy test. While more participation and interest are promising signs of increasing civic engagement, we also see increasingly active, orchestrated campaigns to overwhelm and disrupt election offices fueled by and mis-, dis- and mal-information (MDM).

¹³ Masterson, Matt. “Vice-Chair Masterson: Election Officials as IT Managers”. (April 21, 2016) <https://www.eac.gov/vice-chair-masterson-election-official-it-manager>

¹⁴ Brennan Center. “Election Official Survey” <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey-march-2022>

Impact:

There is a clear distinction between transparency, education, and observation – election officials encourage and welcome all three – and antagonistic surveillance to distract and interrupt officials from their proclaimed oath to administer our elections. Public documents for some of these efforts use adversarial and inflammatory language that pits observers against the election officials in their communities.¹⁵ Known efforts – that succeed in placing a heavy toll on election officials – range from concerted campaigns to flood election offices with wide-reaching FOIA requests (I.e., “all emails for last 2 years,” and “all ballot images,” etc.),¹⁶ to frequently stationing individuals inside election offices to question every move that an official makes in the course of a typical work day. Some will say, “Why is that a problem? Are they guilty of something? Do they have something to hide?” Constant surveillance is traumatic even when going about your normal business. Think of it this way, if you are followed closely by a police car when driving at the speed limit, following all the traffic laws, one tends to get nervous even though they’ve done nothing wrong. Are the taillights out? When did I last check to make sure the blinkers worked properly? Second guessing ones every move is stressful in an already stressful job.

A recent poll of election officials found:¹⁷

- **77%** feel that threats against election officials have increased in recent years
- **54%** are concerned about the safety of their colleagues
- **28%** are concerned about being assaulted on the job
- **1 in 6** local election officials have personally experienced threats
- **73%** of those who were threatened, received threats over the phone
 - **53%** in person
 - **37%** through social media

To be clear, it is not just that there is increased scrutiny or observation. Over the last year I have spoken to election officials from all over the country – Colorado, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Washington, Vermont, Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina and more – who have had death threats against themselves and their families, had their children followed to school, their elderly parents targeted. I have had strangers come up to me at conferences and share that after their staff goes home every night, they close their office door and have a good cry before leaving the

¹⁵ In the “Citizens Guide to Building an Election Integrity Infrastructure” there are sections on “Know Your Opponents” and being “prepared for intimidation tactics to keep conservatives out of election offices” and tips to be sure you travel in pairs in order to have a “witness to what transpires” and to “document any encounter that is intended to make you feel uncomfortable” (page 8), to “be able to handle the local election officials” (page 11), and to such extremes that “Make the commitment that every decision made by the election office will be made in the presence of one or more representatives of the Election Integrity Task Force” (page 12). The voter rolls are a problem in every jurisdiction in America, due to the constant duplications, difficulty of removing and updating the rolls because of threats by ideological groups to sue if and when a jurisdiction tries to update voter rolls and remove those who have died, or moved, or stopped voting for some reason and are no longer active” (page 16). <https://whoscounting.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Citizens-Guide.pdf>

¹⁶ Timm, Jane C. NBC News. “*Amateur fraud hunters bury election officials in public records requests*”. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/amateur-fraud-hunters-bury-election-officials-public-records-requests-rcna15432> (February 12, 2022). Shelby Tankersley. HometownLife. “*Elections, Planned Parenthood, city payroll were popular records requests targets in 2021*”. (March 15, 2022).

¹⁷ Brennan <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey-march-2022>

office themselves—usually taking circuitous routes and varying routes in case someone is following them so that they don't fall into a normal routine or set pattern and make themselves more vulnerable. At the recent convening of local state association leaders mentioned previously, Supervisor Craig Latimer, a 35-year law enforcement professional who retired as a major prior to running for office of Election Supervisor in Hillsborough County, FL 13 years ago provided tips such as not parking next to vans with side doors as that is a prevalent way that abductions occur. In his office they have installed a system of warning lights for evacuations out of the front or the back of the facility depending on where the breach or threat is located—one color light means the panic button was set off in the front lobby and evacuation out the rear of the building is necessary while the other colored light means the issue is in the back of the building, proceed out the front to safety. It is heartbreaking that in the United States of America, we must go to such lengths to protect our election administrators, their staff, and the other members of the community who rise to the challenge of conducting our elections. Remember: our democracy only exists as long as we continue to have elections and there are administrators to conduct them on the behalf of the American people—and the elected officials like those here in this room today who the voters choose to represent them when they cast their ballots.

The Greatest Resource: People

“Personnel. Retirements not just at the director level, but throughout the organization with a major loss of institutional knowledge.” –local election official

“1/3 of election officials aren't running again” –local election official

“Morale of EOs is low and challenging” –local election official

“Clerks overwhelmed/burnt out, apprehensive about upcoming elections in this environment.” –local election official

“Needs: pollworkers. We lost a lot of pollworkers in 2020” –local election official

Issue:

The current environment could not happen at a worse time. The election administration field is on the precipice of a mass exodus of election professionals:

- **74%** of chief local election officials are over 50 years of age and a quarter are over the age of 65.¹⁸
- **35%** of local officials are eligible to retire before the 2024 election, including more than half of those in the largest jurisdictions (those serving more than 250,000 registered voters).¹⁹

¹⁸ Paul Gronke, Paul Manson, Jay Lee, and Heather Creek. “Understanding the career journeys of today's local election officials and anticipating tomorrow's potential shortage.” (April 20, 2021).

¹⁹ Paul Gronke, Paul Manson, Jay Lee, and Heather Creek. “Amplifying the Perspective of Officials at the Front Lines of Elections”. <https://democracyfund.org/idea/amplifying-the-perspectives-of-officials-at-the-front-lines-of-elections/> (April 19, 2021).

We saw a similar, but less expansive, situation after the passage of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) when a substantial number of poll workers and election officials retired or left the field. What is different about this current situation is the broader scale of the possible turnover within the profession and their potential replacement with individuals motivated by partisan or malicious intents—in direct contradiction to the oath of office all election officials take upon taking the position.

Impact:

Election officials are leaving the field in record numbers, taking institutional knowledge and experience with them. States that have had the most targeting of local officials (Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, etc.) are reporting losses of a third to half of their officials and the state associations are scrambling to bring new election officials up to speed. When we consider that 57% of local election officials are themselves elected (35% in partisan elections, 22% via nonpartisan races) and the remaining 43% are appointed or hired—often with partisan requirements, it is easy to see why we have cause for concern²⁰. We have candidates running for state and local election offices on election-denier platforms. Of course, these candidates trust the system enough for their own race, their own election, and for that of sitting office holders whom they agree.

In 2020 we had tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of poll workers who were unable to work the polls due to the health risks present in the global pandemic. In 2022 poll workers are declining to serve due to the caustic environment and threats to their physical safety. Elections are conducted by people, for people. Without our neighbors, friends, and family members stepping in to pick up the mantle we cannot conduct elections in this country.

Election Funding

“Election funding! Including, dealing with backlash from accepting private funding in 2020” –local election official

“People interested in staying on top of new legislation, especially those related to election funding” –local election official

Issue:

State and local election departments are historically underfunded, often only receiving episodic federal funding and varying degrees of support from state and local appropriations. In my years as a local election official, it was commonplace to not only put budget increases on hold, but to submit budgets with 5, 10, or even 20% reductions year after year. A 2020 study by Auburn University of Election Center members demonstrated that the median elections department budget comprised just 0.54% of the overall jurisdiction’s budget.²¹ The bottom line: even if the budgets of most election offices were doubled, they would barely make up more than 1% of the overall budget in their respective jurisdictions.

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ Hale, Kathleen and Mitchell, Brown. *How We Vote: Innovation in American Elections*. Georgetown University Press. (2020) Page 209.

Impact:

In our democracy, election officials have a job that unambiguously must be done – no matter what – on a pre-determined timeline. Necessity is the mother of invention, and too often the lack of election resources is the catalyst for innovation—demonstrated in the thousands of laboratories of democracy across the county. In California, I have seen PVC pipe connected to Christmas tree stands with zip-tied tablets mounted to create inventory scanning gateways for polling place materials coming in on election night. In Missouri, transport carts for polling materials and equipment also made from PVC. “Election officials are used to ‘making do’ with what they have. They often express pride in pulling off the complicated logistical maneuvers necessary to conduct elections on a shoestring budget. One consequence of the frugality imposed on election administration is that services provided to voters vary considerably across the nation.”²²

The demands on election offices are not stagnant. The expectations of election administration have grown from a relatively clerical role prior to 2000, into a role that now necessitates that officials also function as an IT manager, cyber-security expert, public health authority, and social media fact checker/MDM combatant. The conduction of the 2020 presidential election in the United States during a global pandemic laid bare the inequity of resources across the country and insufficient funding streams to provide basic services to the American electorate. To fill that void, philanthropic funding stepped in. Non-governmental support came in many forms: direct funding for nonpartisan activities and materials, in-kind donations of personal protective equipment (PPE), local labor and materials provided by small businesses to build items like plexiglass shields, and corporations providing large facilities to use as vote centers and polling locations.

Conclusion

Too often aspects of election administration are weaponized to fit partisan narratives, rather than working across and with our differences to address the root cause or need for a given policy. For example, providing sufficient and steady streams of government resources would close and solve for the gap that philanthropic funding has often filled to ensure officials can conduct elections and voters can fulfill their constitutional right to cast a ballot. For those who argue that we should have the projected winners on election night, supporting efforts to allow officials to pre-process ballots returned before Election Day would decrease the wait afterwards. Additionally, there are viable options for others who are against drop-boxes. If we prepaid for the postage of ballots and allow for ballots to use a postmark or other official USPS information that the ballot was mailed on time before the deadline.

Too often state and local election officials – who are committed to conducting lawful elections under the rules they are given – are being asked to do more with less, and despite how it impacts the voters they serve. Seventy-seven percent believe that fed government should do more.²³

²² Stewart, Charles, iii. MIT Election Data Science Lab and the National Institute for Civil Discourse. “The Cost of Conducting Elections”. (May 16, 2022).

²³ Brennan <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey-march-2022>