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BILINGUAL VOTING ASSISTANCE

Selected Jurisdictions' Strategies for Identifying Needs and Providing Assistance



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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-08-182](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, contains, among other things, provisions designed to protect the voting rights of U.S. citizens of certain ethnic groups whose command of the English language may be limited. The Department of Justice (DOJ) enforces these provisions, and the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) serves as a national clearinghouse for election information and procedures. The Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 mandated that GAO study the implementation of bilingual voting under Section 203 of the act. This report discusses (1) the ways that selected jurisdictions covered under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act have provided bilingual voting assistance as of the November 2006 general election and any subsequent elections through June 2007, and the challenges they reportedly faced in providing such assistance; and (2) the perceived usefulness of this bilingual voting assistance, and the extent to which the selected jurisdictions evaluated the usefulness of such assistance to language minority voters. To obtain details about this voting assistance, GAO obtained information from election officials in 14 of the 296 jurisdictions required to provide it, as well as from community representatives in 11 of these jurisdictions. These jurisdictions were selected to reflect a range of characteristics such as geographic diversity and varying language minority groups.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-182](#). For more information, contact William O. Jenkins, Jr. at (202) 512-8777 or jenkinswo@gao.gov.

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What GAO Found

All but 1 of the 14 election jurisdictions GAO contacted reported providing some form of oral or written bilingual voting assistance through such things as the use of bilingual poll workers, and each of the 14 jurisdictions reported challenges in providing assistance. Election offices reported providing similar types of oral and written bilingual voting assistance at each stage of the voting process—from voter registration to Election Day—for the November 2006 and subsequent elections. In nine of the jurisdictions, this bilingual assistance was supplemented by efforts of community-based organizations. In part because DOJ guidance intentionally provides jurisdictions flexibility in how they implement bilingual voting requirements, election offices used varied strategies to implement bilingual programs. Election officials in each of the 14 jurisdictions reported challenges in implementing bilingual assistance programs, including difficulty in recruiting bilingual poll workers and effectively targeting where to provide bilingual voting assistance. Officials in nine jurisdictions also noted they would benefit from additional guidance for providing bilingual assistance. The EAC has taken steps to provide additional guidance to jurisdictions, including plans to develop a set of management guidelines for jurisdictions to use in implementing their programs.

GAO identified little quantitative data measuring the usefulness of various types of bilingual voting assistance. Election officials and community-based organization representatives noted that certain forms of assistance, such as having bilingual poll workers, were more useful than others. Some jurisdictions stated that modifications, including outreach to language minority groups, would improve the usefulness of bilingual assistance. While none of the 14 jurisdictions had attempted to formally evaluate their assistance, most reported gathering information about the usefulness of certain aspects of the assistance. While formal evaluations have proven to be a successful means to improve program effectiveness, conducting formal evaluations of the usefulness and effect of bilingual voting assistance is difficult. Key difficulties include identifying the appropriate indicators of success and isolating the effects of bilingual assistance efforts on voters from other influences on election processes. We provided a draft of this report to DOJ and the EAC for comment. DOJ provided no comments, and the EAC's comments described its recent activities on bilingual voting assistance.

Examples of Bilingual Assistance: Polling Place Signage and Poll Worker Name Tag



Source: Election officials.



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Abbreviations

CBO	community-based organization
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
EAC	U.S. Election Assistance Commission
HAVA	Help America Vote Act of 2002

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

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Congressional Committees

The right to vote has been called one of the most fundamental rights in our democratic system of government because its effective exercise is preservative of all others. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, (Voting Rights Act) addressed the problem of denial of access to the right to vote by, among other things, outlawing specified practices and procedures such as literacy tests. In 1975, the Voting Rights Act was amended to include section 203, which requires certain jurisdictions¹ to provide bilingual election materials and assistance to protect the voting rights of U.S. citizens of certain ethnic groups whose command of the English language may be limited. These provisions were initially set to expire in 1985 but have been extended several times. Debate about whether to require bilingual voting assistance includes advocates of bilingual voting assistance who assert that it allows language minority voters to more fully participate in our nation's electoral process, while critics contend that the costs incurred in providing such assistance are not warranted because the assistance is not being used by language minority voters.

Enacted on July 27, 2006, the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 extended the bilingual provisions until 2032, and required GAO to study the implementation, effectiveness, and efficiency of current bilingual voting requirements under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.² As discussed with your offices, this report does not address the efficiency of providing bilingual voting assistance because of the lack of cost data for providing such assistance. As noted in a March 2006 report, professors at Arizona State University surveyed jurisdictions covered by Section 203 and reported that a majority of the responding jurisdictions were unable to

¹There are 296 jurisdictions required to provide bilingual assistance under Section 203. For the specific criteria for determining which jurisdictions are to be covered under Section 203, see appendix II.

²Section 9 of Pub. L. No. 109-246, 120 Stat. 577 (2006).

provide the costs of their bilingual assistance.³ Given this recent survey of jurisdictions, we focused on obtaining more detailed information about bilingual voting assistance from selected jurisdictions across the country. Our objectives were to determine:

- the ways that selected jurisdictions covered under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act have provided bilingual voting assistance as of the November 2006 general election and any subsequent elections through June 2007, and the challenges they reportedly faced in providing such assistance; and
- the perceived usefulness of this bilingual voting assistance, and the extent to which the selected jurisdictions evaluated the usefulness of such assistance to language minority voters.

To meet our objectives, we visited or collected information from 14 jurisdictions required to provide bilingual voting assistance under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act (covered jurisdictions) in 12 states. We considered surveying all of the 296 covered jurisdictions but decided against doing so for several reasons, including the March 2006 report cited above on the results of a survey of these same jurisdictions about similar issues. (For a more detailed discussion of these considerations as well as a comprehensive description of our methodology, see app. I.) We chose the 14 jurisdictions because they reflected a variety of characteristics, such as size (i.e., voting age population), geographic diversity, and varying language minority groups. We wanted a diverse group of sites to allow us to report on a wide range of jurisdictions' experiences with providing bilingual voting assistance. We also obtained information from representatives of 38 community-based organizations (CBO) in 11 of the 14 jurisdictions.⁴ We either conducted on-site interviews with or obtained information from election officials, CBO representatives, and, to a limited extent, language minority voters in the 14 jurisdictions regarding the bilingual voting assistance provided during the November 2006 general election and any subsequent elections through June 2007. In addition, we obtained and reviewed supporting documentation as evidence of the types

³Dr. James Tucker and Dr. Rodolfo Espino, "Minority Language Assistance Practices in Public Elections" (Arizona State University: Mar. 7, 2006).

⁴For purposes of this report, CBO is defined as community leaders, educators, business groups, labor groups, parent-teacher organizations, senior citizen groups, church groups, social and fraternal organizations, veterans groups, and others who are knowledgeable about bilingual voting issues affecting the relevant language minority community.

of bilingual voting assistance (e.g., sample ballots, pamphlets, voter education materials, etc.) reportedly provided to language minority voters in these jurisdictions. We also obtained these election officials' and CBO representatives' perceptions about the usefulness of bilingual voting assistance to language minority voters as well as information on any efforts to evaluate its usefulness. Because we selected a nongeneralizable sample of election jurisdictions, the experiences and views discussed in this report cannot be generalized to all 296 jurisdictions required to provide bilingual voting assistance under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.⁵

In addition to the information we obtained from these jurisdictions, we conducted interviews with and obtained information from other sources. We interviewed officials and obtained pertinent documents from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division, which is responsible for providing program guidance and enforcing compliance with the requirements under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. We also interviewed officials from the U. S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), which was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) to serve, among other things, as a clearinghouse and information resource for election officials with respect to the administration of federal elections. Additionally, we interviewed the Chief of the Census Bureau office that determines which jurisdictions are covered under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. We reviewed pertinent federal laws, regulations, and agency guidance pertaining to the Section 203 bilingual voting provisions. We also reviewed prior GAO work,⁶ other national studies, reports and news articles, attended several national conferences, and interviewed the secretary of state for one state with jurisdictions covered by Section 203 to gain further insight regarding these issues. We conducted this performance audit from October 2006 to January 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence

⁵A nongeneralizable, or nonprobability, sample is when nonstatistical judgment is used to select members of the sample, usually using specific characteristics of the population as criteria. Results from a nongeneralizable sample cannot be used to make inferences about a population, because in a nongeneralizable sample some elements of the population being studied have no chance or an unknown chance of being selected as part of the sample.

⁶See related GAO products at the end of this report for a list of our prior work.

obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Results in Brief

All but 1 of the 14 election jurisdictions we contacted reported providing some form of oral or written bilingual voting assistance through such things as the use of bilingual poll workers and written translations of voting materials, and each of the 14 jurisdictions reported challenges in providing assistance. Election offices in most contacted jurisdictions reported providing similar types of oral and written bilingual voting assistance at each stage of the voting process—from voter registration to Election Day—for the November 2006 and subsequent elections. In nine of the contacted jurisdictions, the bilingual voting assistance reportedly provided by the election offices was also supplemented by the voluntary efforts of community-based organizations. In part because DOJ guidance intentionally provides jurisdictions some flexibility in how they implement bilingual voting requirements, election offices reported using varied strategies to recruit bilingual poll workers, determine where to target bilingual voting assistance programs, and conduct outreach to the language minority community. Election officials in each of the 14 jurisdictions reported experiencing a variety of challenges in implementing bilingual assistance programs, but some key challenges were prevalent among most election offices contacted. For example, the majority of these election offices reported experiencing difficulty in recruiting bilingual poll workers, effectively targeting where to provide bilingual voting assistance, and designing and translating the bilingual assistance materials provided. Election officials in 11 jurisdictions also cited not allocating sufficient resources to their bilingual program as a challenge to providing more effective bilingual voting assistance. Officials in nine jurisdictions also told us that they would benefit from additional guidance or information on best practices for implementing bilingual assistance programs. The EAC has taken recent steps to provide additional guidance and information to jurisdictions on providing bilingual assistance, including plans to develop a set of management guidelines for jurisdictions to use in implementing their programs.

Although we identified little data measuring the usefulness of various types of bilingual voting assistance, election officials in eight jurisdictions and community-based organization representatives in seven jurisdictions we contacted told us that they believed certain forms of assistance were more useful than others. While none of the jurisdictions reported conducting formal evaluations of the effectiveness of their bilingual assistance programs, the majority reported using various informal means

to get information about the effectiveness of certain aspects of their bilingual voting assistance programs. Both election officials and CBO representatives generally agreed that having bilingual poll workers available on Election Day was a key form of assistance to voters. Election officials in four jurisdictions and community-based organization representatives in six jurisdictions believed that having translated written materials was also a key form of assistance. However, election officials in 10 jurisdictions and community-based organization representatives in 9 jurisdictions stated that modifications could be made that would improve the usefulness of the bilingual services provided to voters. For example, election officials in four jurisdictions and community-based organization representatives in nine jurisdictions stated that election offices' efforts to conduct additional outreach to individual voters and language minority groups would be key to improving the usefulness of the bilingual assistance provided to voters. Election officials in 12 of the jurisdictions as well as community-based organization representatives in 3 of the jurisdictions we included in our study reported gathering information about the usefulness of certain aspects of the bilingual voting assistance provided by the election offices. For example, election officials in four jurisdictions reported they had conducted post-election surveys of or obtained comments from poll workers to determine the number of voters who had used bilingual assistance at the polls or obtain voter feedback. While the use of formal program evaluation tools has proven to be a successful means for federal agencies to improve program effectiveness, accountability, and service delivery, conducting formal evaluations of the usefulness and effect of bilingual voting assistance is difficult. Three key difficulties include identifying the objectives and the appropriate indicators of success, determining how to measure these indicators once they have been identified, and isolating the effects of bilingual voter assistance efforts on language minority voters from more general voter outreach efforts or other influences on election processes.

We provided a draft of this report to DOJ and the EAC for review and comment. DOJ did not provide comments on the draft of this report but did provide technical edits, which we incorporated where appropriate. EAC provided written comments that described its recent activities related to bilingual voting assistance.

Background

Bilingual Voting Requirements and Covered Jurisdictions

The Voting Rights Act⁷ was intended, among other things, to protect the voting rights of U.S. citizens of certain ethnic groups whose command of the English language may be limited. Language minority provisions contained in Section 203 require covered states and covered jurisdictions—political subdivisions—that meet the act’s coverage criteria to provide written materials and other assistance, in the language of certain “language minority groups,” in addition to English.⁸ Section 203 defines these language minorities as persons who are of Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian American, or Spanish heritage. (See app. II for the specific criteria for determining which jurisdictions are to be covered under Section 203 and a list of the covered jurisdictions.)

Where the applicable language minority groups have a commonly used written language, Section 203 requires covered jurisdictions to provide written election materials in the languages of the groups. Where the language of the applicable minority group is oral or unwritten, or in the case of American Indian and Alaskan Native languages if the predominant language is historically unwritten, only oral information and assistance is required. With respect to all covered jurisdictions, DOJ guidance provides that oral assistance and publicity (e.g., public information advertisements on the radio) should be provided to the extent needed to enable members of the applicable language minority group to participate effectively in the electoral process. Section 203 requirements apply to the entire election process—from voter registration through Election Day—for all federal, state, and local elections in the covered jurisdictions.

The DOJ Civil Rights Division is to enforce the covered states and jurisdictions’ compliance with the Section 203 bilingual language requirements. Where covered states and jurisdictions fail to comply with

⁷Pub. L. No 89-110, 79 Stat. 437 (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. §§1973 to 1973bb-1).

⁸Another language provision is contained in Section 4(f)(4) of the Voting Rights Act but is not included in the scope of this report. Both of these provisions require covered jurisdictions to provide certain voting materials and assistance in the language of the applicable minority group but Section 4(f)(4) requires covered jurisdictions to submit specified types of proposed election law changes to the Department of Justice for preclearance under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. The formulas that trigger coverage are distinct for the two provisions. DOJ took actions under Section 4(f)(4) against Ector County, R.I. (2005), Brazos County, Tex. (2006), and Galveston County, Tex. (2007).

the provisions, DOJ may bring a civil action to enforce compliance with the bilingual language provisions. DOJ may also choose to enter into a settlement agreement, memorandum of agreement, or consent decree with a jurisdiction to ensure compliance. These agreements, which may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, outline the steps necessary to comply with the language provisions and may cover issues such as the number of bilingual poll workers needed or the materials to be translated. (See app. III for a list of jurisdictions that have been subject to DOJ actions related to Section 203 since 1980.)

DOJ has published general guidance for election officials on how to comply with Section 203 in the Code of Federal Regulations⁹ and on its Web site. This guidance provides broad information about a number of topics, including determining the exact language covered within the Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian American, or Spanish heritage language groups and the activities affected by the language provisions. For example, according to DOJ, jurisdictions should take all reasonable steps to allow members of applicable language minority groups to be effectively informed and participate effectively in the electoral process, but may also exercise some discretion as to where they focus their efforts. DOJ guidance notes that a jurisdiction need not, for example, provide bilingual assistance to all of its eligible voters if it effectively targets its bilingual program to those in actual need of assistance. In addition, DOJ guidance advises that compliance is more likely to be achieved when jurisdictions work with local language minority groups to determine the best methods to inform the language minority community about available assistance. Additionally, DOJ instructs that when evaluating whether a jurisdiction has provided a level of oral assistance needed to enable applicable language minority groups to participate effectively in the electoral process, DOJ will consider the number of bilingual poll workers utilized. It also stresses the importance of accurately translated materials. Furthermore, the DOJ Civil Rights Division states that its guidance cannot be prescriptive because election systems and the circumstances of language minority communities vary widely across the United States. Instead, DOJ provides guiding principles and practical suggestions to election officials.

Apart from DOJ's compliance guidelines, election jurisdictions, including those covered by Section 203, may also receive information from the EAC designed to assist election officials in meeting the needs of limited-English

⁹28 C.F.R. Part 55.

proficient voters. The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) established the EAC to assist in the administration of federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain federal election laws and programs, to establish minimum election administration standards for states and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of federal elections, and for other purposes. Section 202 of HAVA, in general, directs the EAC to serve as a national clearinghouse and resource for the compilation of information and review of procedures with respect to the administration of federal elections. In addition, Section 801 of HAVA transferred to the EAC all clearinghouse functions that the Office of Election Administration—established within the Federal Election Commission—exercised before the enactment of HAVA. These responsibilities included providing recommendations and tools so that election officials could provide materials in alternate languages for limited English proficiency voters. Furthermore, HAVA requires the EAC to conduct periodic studies, as the EAC may determine, to include: (1) methods of ensuring the accessibility of voting, registration, polling places, and voting equipment to all voters, including individuals with disabilities (including the blind and visually impaired), Native American or Alaska Native citizens, and voters with limited proficiency in the English language, and (2) the technical feasibility of providing voting materials in eight or more languages for voters who speak those languages and who have limited English proficiency.

The U.S. Election System

The U.S. election system is highly decentralized, with primary responsibility for managing, planning, and conducting elections residing at the local jurisdiction level. As we reported in June 2006, there are about 10,500 local government jurisdictions responsible for conducting statewide and federal elections nationwide.¹⁰ Of these jurisdictions, only 296 are covered by Section 203.¹¹ States can be divided into two groups

¹⁰GAO, *Elections: The Nation's Evolving Election System as Reflected in the November 2004 General Election*, [GAO-06-450](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 6, 2006).

¹¹There are 296 covered jurisdictions listed in the Federal Register, but the exact number of elections offices tasked with providing bilingual voting assistance is much higher. We do not know this exact number because for each of the 296 covered jurisdictions, there may be many covered sub-jurisdictions such as cities or utility districts that are required to comply with Section 203 for any of the elections they administer.

according to how they delegate election responsibilities to local jurisdictions:

- Most states delegate statewide and federal election responsibilities primarily to counties, with a few of these states delegating these responsibilities to some cities. One state, Alaska, is divided into four election regions comprised of boroughs, municipalities, and other census areas known by the U.S. Census Bureau as county equivalents. State personnel in these regions are responsible for conducting statewide and federal elections. This first group of states contains about one-fourth of the local election jurisdictions nationwide.
- The remaining states delegate these election responsibilities to subcounty governmental units known by the U.S. Census Bureau as minor civil divisions. These include entities such as cities, towns, villages, and townships. This second group of states contains about three-fourths of the local election jurisdictions nationwide.

Nearly all of the 296 jurisdictions covered under Section 203 are counties, but they also include county equivalents in some states and minor civil divisions. In addition to all elections conducted by these jurisdictions, the provisions of Section 203 also apply to the local elections conducted by sub-jurisdictions, such as cities, towns, school districts and other special purpose districts, contained within these listed jurisdictions.

Local election jurisdictions vary widely in size and complexity, ranging from small New England townships to Los Angeles County, Calif., whose number of registered voters exceeds that of many states. Our election system is based upon a complex interaction of people (voters, election officials, and poll workers), processes (controls), and technology that must work effectively together to achieve a successful election. Every stage of the election process—registration, absentee and early voting, preparing for and conducting Election Day activities, and provisional¹² voting—is affected by the interface of people, processes, and technology. (See table 1 for a discussion of the stages of the election process.)

¹²Provisional voting is the use of provisional ballots (subject to later verification of registration) in elections in certain circumstances where a voter's eligibility is unclear.

Table 1: Stages of the Election Process

Stage of the election process	Description and key elements
Voter registration	While voter registration is not a federal requirement, the District of Columbia and all states, except North Dakota, generally require citizens to register before voting. The deadline and requirements for registering vary, but at a minimum, state eligibility provisions typically require a person to be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age, and a resident of the state, with some states requiring a minimum residency period. Citizens apply to register to vote in various ways, such as at motor vehicle agencies and public assistance and disability services offices, during voter registration drives, by mail, or at local voter registrar offices. Election officials process registration applications and compile and maintain the list of registered voters that is to be used throughout the administration of an election.
Absentee and early voting	All states and the District of Columbia have provisions allowing voters to cast their ballot before Election Day by voting absentee—with variations on who may vote absentee, whether the voter needs an excuse, and the time frames for applying for and submitting absentee ballots. In addition, some states also allow early voting, in which the voter goes to a specific location to vote in person prior to Election Day. As with absentee voting, the specific circumstances for early voting—such as the dates, times, and locations—are based on the state and local requirements.
Conducting elections	<p>Election officials perform a broad range of activities in preparation for and on Election Day itself. Prior to an election, officials recruit and train poll workers to have the skills needed to perform their Election Day duties. Where needed and required, election officials must also recruit poll workers who speak languages other than English. Election officials also locate and reserve polling places, prepare ballots and seek to educate voters on topics such as what the ballot looks like, how to use a voting machine, and the location of their particular polling place. These outreach efforts may be conducted by attending CBO meetings or events, informational mailings to voters, or advertisements in the local media. Finally, election officials seek to ensure that voting equipment, ballots, and supplies are delivered to polling places.</p> <p>On Election Day, poll workers set up and open the polling places. This can include tasks such as setting up the voting machines or voting booths, readying supplies, testing equipment, posting required signs and voter education information, and completing paperwork. Before a voter receives a ballot or is directed to a voting machine, poll workers typically are to verify his or her eligibility. In some cases, poll workers may provide language assistance to language minority voters.</p>
Provisional voting	Most states are required to permit individuals, under certain circumstances, to cast a provisional ballot in federal elections. ^a While states may choose to allow provisional ballots under other circumstances, HAVA requires that an individual be permitted to cast a provisional ballot upon the execution of a written affirmation before an election official at the polling place. ^b The written affirmation must state that the individual is registered to vote in that jurisdiction and eligible to vote in that election. HAVA specifies that either the provisional ballot or the written affirmation information be transmitted to an appropriate election official for a determination as to whether the individual is eligible to vote under state law. If individuals are determined to be eligible voters, their provisional ballots are to be counted as votes in accordance with state law.

Source: GAO.

^aThe United States Election Assistance Commission, 2004 Election Day Survey: “How We Voted: People, Ballots, and Polling Places” (Sept. 2005).

^bUnder HAVA, states that had either (1) no voter registration requirements for voters with respect to federal elections (e.g., North Dakota) or (2) polling place registration on Election Day with respect to federal elections (as in Idaho, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) in effect on and after August 1, 1994, are not subject to HAVA’s provisional voting requirements.

Prior Work Related to the Elections Process

Over the years we have completed a number of reviews related to elections. In 1986¹³ and 1997¹⁴ we issued reports addressing the types of bilingual assistance provided by covered jurisdictions, as well as the cost of this assistance.¹⁵ In our 1997 report, we found that most jurisdictions reportedly were providing both oral and written assistance. We also issued a series of reports following the November 2000 general election addressing a range of issues that emerged during that election and identifying challenges that election officials reported facing throughout the election process. In addition, we have issued reports since the November 2004 general election on voter registration issues and security and reliability of electronic voting. In 2006, we reported on a wide array of election issues including discussing, at each major stage of the election process, changes to election systems since the 2000 election, and challenges encountered in the November 2004 general election.¹⁶ (See related GAO products at the end of this report for a list of our prior work.)

In addition to our work on elections, professors at Arizona State University released a comprehensive study in March 2006 regarding language minority assistance practices in public elections.¹⁷ Their study, based on survey data obtained from jurisdictions currently or previously covered by Section 203, updated the information from our 1986 and 1997 reports regarding the costs associated with providing language assistance and also discussed the types of assistance provided. About half of the surveyed jurisdictions responded, and of the respondents, a majority was unable to provide the costs of their bilingual assistance programs. Additionally, just over 80 percent of responding jurisdictions reported providing some type of language assistance.

¹³GAO, *Bilingual Voting Assistance: Costs of and Use during the November 1984 General Election*, [GAO/GGD-86-134BR](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 15, 1986).

¹⁴GAO, *Bilingual Voting Assistance: Assistance Provided and Costs*, [GAO/GGD-97-81](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 9, 1997).

¹⁵Our prior efforts to determine the costs associated with providing bilingual voting assistance revealed that because jurisdictions and states are not required to maintain such cost data, information available on their costs was scant.

¹⁶GAO, *Elections: The Nation's Evolving Election System as Reflected in the November 2004 General Election*, [GAO-06-450](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 6, 2006).

¹⁷Dr. James Tucker and Dr. Rodolfo Espino, "Minority Language Assistance Practices in Public Elections" (Arizona State University: Mar. 7, 2006).

Election Officials in All But One Jurisdiction Reported Providing Bilingual Voting Assistance, but Experienced Challenges

Election officials in 13 of the 14 jurisdictions included in our review reported providing some type of bilingual voting assistance at each stage of the election process but also reported challenges in providing this assistance. In part because DOJ's guidance intentionally provides jurisdictions some flexibility in how they implement bilingual voting requirements and the needs and preferences of language minority communities vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, election officials in these 13 jurisdictions reported using varying strategies to organize their bilingual voting assistance program staff and offices, work with CBOs, recruit bilingual poll workers, determine where to target their bilingual voting assistance programs, and conduct outreach to the language minority community. In addition, election officials in these 13 jurisdictions also reported experiencing a variety of challenges in providing bilingual assistance, with the key challenges being: (1) recruiting and ensuring quality performance of bilingual poll workers; (2) targeting bilingual voting assistance; (3) designing and translating bilingual voting assistance materials; and (4) allocating sufficient resources to provide bilingual voting assistance. Although election officials in 12 jurisdictions reported receiving some degree of guidance or assistance for addressing Section 203 requirements from DOJ and other sources, officials in 9 jurisdictions reported wanting additional guidance or assistance. The EAC has taken recent steps to provide additional guidance and information to jurisdictions on providing bilingual assistance.

All But One Jurisdiction Reported Providing Some Type of Bilingual Voting Assistance throughout the Election Process

Election officials in 13 of the 14 jurisdictions reported providing some type of written assistance and/or oral assistance for language minority voters.¹⁸ This assistance was provided throughout the election process—from voter registration to Election Day. Written assistance included such things as translated voter registration forms, ballots, sample ballots, instructions, and signs. Oral assistance included bilingual phone and in-office assistance, translated audio instructions and ballots, bilingual poll workers, and bilingual in-person outreach activities. The various types of bilingual voting assistance and the numbers of jurisdictions that reported providing each type of assistance at each stage of the election process are summarized in table 2.

¹⁸The one election jurisdiction included in our study where election officials did not report actively providing any bilingual voting assistance is the Kenai Peninsula Borough in Alaska. The Kenai Peninsula Borough Clerk is responsible for the administration of local elections whereas the State of Alaska, Division of Elections, is responsible for the administration of statewide and federal elections. A local Kenai Peninsula Borough election official reported that while they were aware that the Kenai Peninsula Borough was covered under Section 203, they maintained that bilingual voting assistance wasn't needed and provided documentation that one Native Alaskan community declined the assistance. In addition, state election officials in one region, who are responsible for the administration of statewide and federal elections in Kenai Peninsula Borough such as the November 2006 election, did not report making any special arrangements to provide bilingual voting assistance in this particular area of the state. However, we learned that local poll workers in at least two targeted communities took the initiative to provide bilingual voting assistance to those who sought it for this election. Senior officials with Alaska's Division of Elections reported that they were, at the time of the 2006 election, unaware that Kenai Peninsula Borough was covered under Section 203. These officials also told us that they are in the process of reviewing their bilingual voting assistance program.

Table 2: Types of Bilingual Voting Assistance Reportedly Provided by Election Offices, by Stage in the Election Process

Stages of the election process	Types of assistance ^a	
	Written	Oral
Voter registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual or translated voter registration forms (10)^b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person outreach activities (12) Bilingual in-office assistance (10) Bilingual phone assistance (10)
Absentee and early voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual or translated ballots (12) Bilingual or translated absentee voter registration forms (8) Translated voting instructions (7) Bilingual signs (5) Translated sample ballots (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual phone assistance (11) Bilingual in-office assistance (10) In-person outreach activities (10) Translated audio ballots (7) Bilingual in-person early voting assistance (5)
Election Day voting (includes provisional voting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual or translated ballots (12) Translated voting instructions (11) Bilingual signs and buttons (11) Translated sample ballots (10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual poll workers (13) Recorded audio ballots (12) and instructions (11) Bilingual phone assistance (9) Special interpreters (6) and non-paid assistants (2)

Source: GAO analysis of responses from election officials.

^aFor each of the election offices contacted, there was little variation between the types of assistance provided in the 2006 General Election and in other subsequent elections. Thus, we did not distinguish between the 2006 General Election and other subsequent elections in this table.

^bThe number of jurisdictions where each type of assistance was reportedly provided is in parentheses.

Voter Registration Assistance Reported by Jurisdictions

Election officials in 12 jurisdictions reported providing some type of bilingual voter registration assistance and 11 of these jurisdictions reported offering both oral and written assistance. All but four election offices included in our study reported providing translated voter registration forms and all but two reported conducting in-person voter registration outreach activities targeted at the language minority community. Election offices reported a wide range of venues and methods—such as staff participation in community parades and at swearing in ceremonies for new citizens—to conduct voter registration outreach to the language minority community. In addition to these outreach activities, representatives of most election offices also reported offering bilingual voter registration assistance to individuals who phoned or visited the election office. (See table 3 for examples of written and oral bilingual assistance reportedly provided to assist language minority community voters with voter registration.)

Table 3: Examples of Bilingual Voter Registration Assistance Reportedly Provided by Election Offices

Written assistance

Miami-Dade County, FL, election officials reported providing all voter registration applications in English, Spanish, and Creole, though they were only required under Section 203 to provide written bilingual voting assistance for the Hispanic community.

The Secretary of State produces the Chinese version of the voter registration form for residents of King County, WA.^a The translated form did not ask registrants whether they would prefer to receive future election materials in Chinese, but a King County elections official reported assuming that registrants who used a Chinese registration form would also want a Chinese ballot.

In Suffolk County, NY, the Board of Elections reportedly conducted widespread bilingual information mailings to explain the voter registration process to language minority voters 20-30 days prior to Election Day.

Oral assistance

In Harris County, TX, the Tax Assessor's Office, which is responsible for voter registration, told us they had two community outreach staff that conducted voter outreach to various Hispanic and Vietnamese CBOs, attended community events to encourage people to register to vote, and selected deputies within the language communities to register voters.

Election officials in Los Angeles County, CA, reported having a multilingual phone line with live bilingual staff 2 weeks prior to major elections and a language line translator during non-election season.

In Sandoval County, NM, one election official believed the most effective form of bilingual voter registration outreach to Native American communities was staff attendance at Native American events and visits to individual voters' homes. Sandoval County, NM, election officials also reported speaking to Tribal Councils of the Pueblos and the Navajo Chapters.

Source: GAO analysis of responses from election officials.

^aAn example of Washington State's Chinese voter registration form is provided in appendix IV.

Bilingual Absentee and Early Voting Assistance Reported by Jurisdictions

Election officials in 13 of the 14 jurisdictions included in our study reported providing some form of bilingual voting assistance for absentee and/or early voting.¹⁹ The most common type of assistance (12 jurisdictions) was bilingual ballots or separate translated ballots for absentee or early voters. Other types of assistance provided by varying numbers of jurisdictions included bilingual or separate translated absentee voter registration forms; sample ballots and voting instructions; bilingual phone assistance; bilingual in-office assistance; and bilingual poll workers at early voting locations. (See table 4 for examples of written and oral bilingual assistance reportedly provided to minority language absentee and early voters.)

¹⁹All 14 of the election offices we contacted reported offering eligible voters an absentee voting option and 9 of the 14 election offices reported offering an early voting option.

Table 4: Examples of Bilingual Absentee and Early Voting Assistance Reportedly Provided by Election Offices

Written assistance
City of Boston election officials reported providing English-Spanish bilingual absentee ballots.
Orange County, CA, election officials reported mailing translated sample ballots to language minority absentee voters before mailing official paper ballots. Orange County, CA, election officials also reported that bilingual voting signs and instructions were posted at each early voting site in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.
Bilingual absentee ballot request forms in King County, WA, allowed registrants to indicate if they would like to receive future election materials in Chinese. ^a This feature allowed election officials to identify voters desiring bilingual voting assistance.
Oral assistance
Los Angeles County, CA, election officials reported having bilingual poll workers at 17 touch screen early voting sites with voting systems in 7 languages (including English).
A Jackson County, SD, election official reported offering Lakota ^b audio assistance on electronic voting machines 2-3 weeks before the November 2006 General Election.
City of Boston election officials reported offering language minority voters bilingual absentee voting assistance if they called the Boston Election Department's telephone line or walked into the office. These officials also reported working with staff in elderly housing communities to help them provide assistance to elderly voters who were disabled, ill, or otherwise not able to vote on Election Day.

Source: GAO analysis of responses from election officials.

^aA copy of King County's bilingual absentee ballot request form is provided in appendix IV.

^bElection officials we met with in South Dakota stated that Lakota was not historically a written language. However, two community leaders we met with noted that written Lakota was being taught in at least some schools.

Election Day Assistance Reported by Jurisdictions

Election officials in 13 of the 14 jurisdictions reported providing some type of written and/or oral assistance for language minority voters on Election Day. As with absentee and early voting assistance, one of the most common types of written assistance reportedly provided on Election Day was bilingual ballots or separate translated written ballots, which were reportedly provided in 12 of the jurisdictions. The most common form of oral bilingual voting assistance reportedly provided on Election Day was bilingual poll workers, who were provided in 13 jurisdictions. Two jurisdictions reportedly provided audio translations for largely unwritten Native American languages. (See table 5 for examples of written and oral bilingual assistance reportedly provided on Election Day.)

Table 5: Examples of Bilingual Election Day Assistance Reportedly Provided by Election Offices

Written assistance
Miami-Dade County, FL, election officials reported that all ballots (absentee ballots, paper, and electronic DRE ballots) were available in English, Spanish, and Creole, though they were only required by Section 203 to provide written assistance for the Hispanic community.
Montgomery County, MD, election officials reported that all written Montgomery County, MD, voting materials (including bilingual sample ballots posted in the polling place or booth, bilingual voting instructions, bilingual posters at the polling locations, and bilingual “I voted” buttons) were bilingual Spanish-English to prevent anyone from failing to make the Spanish language materials accessible.
King County, WA, election officials reported posting bilingual signs in their polling places. ^a
Oral assistance
In Orange County, CA, election officials reported that poll workers wore a badge stating the language he or she spoke and were instructed to actively provide bilingual assistance by approaching voters to ask if they need assistance. ^b
Cook County, IL, city election officials reported that they had multiple phone lines available on Election Day that language minority voters used to obtain oral assistance in multiple languages.
A Sandoval County, NM, election official reported providing “translation tapes” for minority-language voters to listen to before they voted. (In addition to Spanish, Sandoval County, NM, election officials reportedly provide bilingual voting assistance for speakers of Keresan, Towa, and Navajo—languages that are historically unwritten.)

Source: GAO analysis of responses from election officials.

^aExamples of bilingual polling place signs reportedly posted in King County, WA, are provided in appendix IV.

^bExamples of the badges reportedly worn by bilingual poll workers in Orange County, CA, are provided in appendix IV.

See appendix IV for examples of bilingual materials reportedly available to voters in some of the locations we visited.

Bilingual Assistance Reported by Community-Based Organizations

CBOs reported providing various types of bilingual voting assistance in nine of the jurisdictions included in our study. Seven key types of assistance that CBOs reported providing were:

- Informing the language minority community about voting (reportedly provided by CBOs in nine jurisdictions);
- Registering language minority voters (8);
- Providing assistance to language minority voters on Election Day (7);
- Helping determine the types of bilingual voting assistance needed and which voters need it (7);
- Informing language minority voters about early and/or absentee voting (6);
- Recruiting and training bilingual poll workers (6); and
- Helping translate or design the bilingual or translated ballot (4).

The bilingual voting assistance provided by CBOs generally took one of three forms: supplementing election office efforts, working with election offices to provide assistance, or providing assistance that otherwise was not provided by the election office. For example, some CBO representatives reported providing types of assistance similar to those offered by election offices, such as registering language minority citizens to vote or answering voters' questions. Other CBO representatives reported helping election officials provide assistance, such as helping to recruit bilingual poll workers or translating official election materials. Finally, some CBO representatives reported conducting activities related to bilingual voting assistance that election officials did not do, such as employing poll monitors and providing language minority voters with transportation to the polls on Election Day. Some examples of the specific activities the 38 CBOs included in our study reported undertaking as part of their bilingual voting assistance efforts are summarized in table 6.

Table 6: Examples of Bilingual Assistance Reportedly Provided by CBOs

Efforts to supplement bilingual voting assistance provided by election offices

A CBO serving the Chinese American community in the City of Boston, MA, reported holding voter education workshops in local low income housing units or community buildings to register people to vote and provide information about both the voting process and the bilingual assistance available.

A CBO serving the Spanish-speaking community in Montgomery County, MD, reported conducting significant media outreach, including partnering with a Spanish radio station to promote voter registration and hosting press conferences and events to attract Spanish language media and all local television and major newspapers' attention to voter education.

One Los Angeles County, CA, CBO serving the Asian American community reported hosting a toll-free hotline to take calls and answer questions from prospective voters around Election Day. According to CBO representatives, most of the calls to the phone line were in Mandarin and many calls were from citizens who had not voted before.

Efforts to collaborate with election offices in providing assistance

In King County, WA, representatives of a coalition of CBOs serving the Chinese American community reported being very involved in recruiting bilingual poll workers. They reported sending out e-mails and soliciting volunteers. The coalition also reported organizing a phone survey of bilingual poll workers to learn about their experience on Election Day. They then used this information to create a video used to train poll workers.

One representative of a CBO in Harris County, TX, reported reviewing and commenting on the accuracy of a demographic map that county election officials used to determine where to target resources.

Representatives of various Asian American CBOs in Cook County, IL, reported that they translated election materials in the past but the demand became overwhelming. Thus, the election office started using a private company for the translations or did the translations itself. However, these CBOs reported that they still occasionally checked translations and provided the election office with feedback on transliteration.

Efforts to provide assistance not otherwise provided by the election office

A representative with one CBO reported monitoring around 50-100 polling sites in Los Angeles County, CA, for the November 2006 election. This CBO compiled poll monitoring reports, sent them to election officials, and walked through these reports with election officials at post-election debrief meetings.

A CBO representing the Filipino community in Los Angeles County, CA, reportedly provided voters with transportation to the polls because some polling places were difficult to locate and not convenient to public transportation.

Source: GAO analysis of responses from CBO representatives.

Jurisdictions Reported Using Various Strategies to Implement Their Bilingual Voting Assistance Programs

Election officials in jurisdictions included in our review reported using varying strategies to implement their bilingual voting assistance programs. These strategies included combinations of (1) employing bilingual voting assistance coordinators; (2) working with CBOs; (3) recruiting bilingual poll workers; (4) determining where to target²⁰ their bilingual voting assistance programs; and (5) conducting outreach to the language

²⁰"Targeting" refers to a system in which the minority language materials or assistance are provided to fewer than all persons or registered voters. It is the view of the U.S. Attorney General that a targeting system will normally fulfill the minority language requirements if it is designed and implemented in such a way that language minority group members who need minority language materials and assistance receive them.

minority community. The range of election office strategies may be due in part to the flexibility of the guidance that the DOJ Civil Rights Division provides to help covered jurisdictions address the requirements of Section 203, as the guidance places the responsibility of determining how best to provide the required assistance with the individual jurisdictions. DOJ states that its guidance is intentionally flexible because the needs and preferences of language minority communities vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. This flexibility allows election offices to tailor their programs to try to meet their jurisdiction's unique needs.

Nine Jurisdictions Employed Bilingual Voting Assistance Coordinators

Election officials in nine of the jurisdictions included in our study reported that they employed dedicated coordinators to manage their bilingual voting assistance programs. Officials in two of these offices noted that employing a bilingual voting assistance coordinator who was familiar with the demographics of the local language minority communities was particularly helpful in effectively determining where to target their bilingual voting assistance. In addition, election offices in four of the six jurisdictions that were required to provide assistance in more than one language reported having at least one designated staff for each covered language minority group. For example, the Orange County, Calif., registrar of voters reported having one or two bilingual "community program specialists" devoted to bilingual voting assistance in each of its covered languages—Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Most Jurisdictions We Contacted Worked with Community-Based Organizations but Differed in Their Approach and Extent of Activities

Election officials in 10 of the 14 jurisdictions reported that they worked with CBOs in providing bilingual voting assistance. Of these, officials in seven reported having formal election advisory committees or task forces that included CBO representatives. Election officials reported that some of these advisory committees provided input such as feedback on elections, comments on translated election materials, and suggestions for targeting bilingual voting assistance. For example, in King County, Wash., the election office reportedly received guidance and assistance from a "Section 203 Community Coalition," which was comprised of five CBOs representing the Chinese community. According to coalition members, the coalition worked closely with the election office, meeting as often as twice a month. In one example of their collaboration, King County's "Section 203 Community Coalition" reportedly introduced the idea of conducting surname analysis to identify Chinese-speaking potential voters and then mail the identified individuals a postcard notifying them about bilingual voting assistance and encouraging them to return the postcard to the King County Elections Department if they would like to receive future elections materials in Chinese. The coalition conducted the analysis, the county paid

for the mailing, and both parties told us it was a very successful collaborative effort.

The three elections offices that reported working with CBOs but did not report having formal advisory committees reportedly worked with CBOs in other ways. For example, Seward County, Kans., election officials reported working with CBOs on voter outreach to minority language voters by distributing bilingual voter registration cards. Similarly, Suffolk County, N.Y., election officials reported working and communicating regularly with a network of CBOs to disseminate election information to language minority voters through churches, community centers, and households. Suffolk County election officials stated that their relationships with CBOs were very helpful because they facilitated voter outreach and expanded the Bureau of Elections' access to people in the language minority community.

Most Jurisdictions We Contacted Had Bilingual Poll Workers and Used Multiple Methods to Recruit Them

Election officials in 13 jurisdictions we contacted reported recruiting bilingual poll workers through a combination of efforts. These efforts included: (1) contacting CBOs and language minority media, (2) posting recruitment materials in language minority neighborhoods, (3) contacting potential poll workers directly, (4) recruiting from the public and private sector employers, and (5) conducting direct mailings. According to officials in nine jurisdictions, one method of recruiting bilingual poll workers was communication with representatives of CBOs or the minority community who facilitated contacting and recruiting bilingual poll workers. In addition, election officials in some jurisdictions reported using language minority media such as in-language radio, television, and newspapers to encourage members of the language minority community to serve as bilingual poll workers. For example, an election official in King County, Wash., reported success with a televised public service announcement featuring a Chinese American former Governor of Washington State encouraging other Chinese Americans to volunteer as bilingual poll workers. Five elections offices reported posting signs in language minority neighborhoods—in schools, libraries, stores, and civic associations—to recruit bilingual poll workers. In the City of Los Angeles, election officials reported posting signs in ethnic grocery stores in language minority neighborhoods to recruit bilingual poll workers. Election officials in five jurisdictions also reported recruiting bilingual poll workers through in-person contact with potential applicants at language minority community events, through e-mail messages, and by making targeted phone calls. Other jurisdictions reported more success in recruiting either high school or college students to be bilingual poll workers than did those who tried recruiting bilingual poll workers from

Jurisdictions' Targeting of
Bilingual Voting Assistance
Efforts Involved a Combination
of Approaches

the private sector. Representatives of several election offices reported supplementing these efforts by recruiting local government employees to be bilingual poll workers. Finally, in three of the election offices we contacted, officials stated that direct mailings were used to recruit bilingual poll workers.

To determine where to target their bilingual voting assistance efforts, election officials in many of the jurisdictions we contacted reported using some combination of surname analysis, reviews of U.S. Census Bureau and other demographic data, input from CBOs, and analysis of voter requests for bilingual voting information. Specifically, these efforts included the following:

- Analyzing surnames: Election officials in eight jurisdictions reported using surname analysis to try to identify those areas within a jurisdiction that contain a higher concentration of voting age citizens with surnames indicative of the covered minority language. A few election officials stated that surname analysis was most helpful in identifying language minority individuals in largely homogeneous communities or in identifying neighborhoods that were undergoing demographic transitions and experiencing an influx of new language minority communities. Other election officials reported that although surname analysis may not have been an accurate tool, it was an approach prescribed in a legal agreement negotiated with the DOJ Civil Rights Division. As a result, officials chose to use surname analysis, but in combination with other targeting approaches. Officials with the DOJ Civil Rights Division noted that in many of the agreements reached between the Civil Rights Division and local election officials, surname analysis was used—in the absence of other reliable data—as a starting point for determining appropriate sites for bilingual poll workers.
- Analyzing demographic data: Election officials in some jurisdictions reported using demographic data and information from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources to identify language minority communities within their jurisdictions. For example, due to concerns that surname analysis alone was not allowing them to effectively target assistance, election officials in Harris County, Tex., told us they hired a contractor to use Census data to identify areas with population concentrations of language minority individuals within their jurisdiction. Election officials in Montgomery County, Md., reported using a combination of Census data and other data sources such as demographic statistics on students in the jurisdiction's public school system to target those precincts with the greatest need for bilingual voting assistance.

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- Obtaining input from CBOs: Election officials in nine jurisdictions reported obtaining input from CBOs to better target their bilingual voting assistance programs. Officials in seven of the election offices we contacted reported seeking targeting guidance from their language minority advisory committees. For example, an election official in Montgomery County, Md., reported that their multicultural outreach committee has been very helpful in identifying which voters need bilingual voting assistance, the types of assistance to be provided, and at which precincts assistance needs to be provided. In Los Angeles County, Calif., election officials stated that they obtained input from CBOs as part of their systematic targeting process to identify precincts that may need bilingual voting assistance—if a community partner organization indicated that a neighborhood should be targeted for a particular language, the polling places in that neighborhood were considered “targeted.”
 - Analyzing voter requests: Officials in four election offices reported utilizing records of past voter requests for or use of bilingual voting assistance to target future bilingual voting assistance efforts. For example, some officials reported collecting data on requests for bilingual assistance noted on voter registration cards, absentee ballot request forms, and phone calls to the elections office. In addition, election officials in three jurisdictions reported asking poll workers to record the number of requests for bilingual voting assistance on Election Day. Election officials in Los Angeles County, Calif., for example, reported that they tracked requests for language assistance by precinct and had poll workers use a “multilingual tally card” to keep track of the numbers of voters requesting language assistance on Election Day. (An example of a multilingual tally card used in Los Angeles County is provided in app. IV.) Election officials in five jurisdictions, however, stated that they did not or could not track voter requests for assistance. For example, Seward County, Kans., election officials stated that Kansas state law forbids the election office from tracking individuals’ requests for bilingual voting assistance. Similarly, an election official in Montgomery County, Md., reported that due to personal privacy concerns, the county did not track usage of bilingual voting assistance. Election officials in Harris County, Tex., noted that their state-issued voter registration forms did not have a place for registrants to indicate their preferred language; therefore, it was not possible for the local jurisdictions to track requests for assistance using voter registration forms.

Most Jurisdictions Conducted Outreach but Reportedly Used Diverse Methods to Engage Language Minority Communities

Election officials in 13 jurisdictions told us that they used various strategies to reach out to language minority voters to inform them of the availability of bilingual voting assistance and to educate them about the election process. These strategies included working with CBOs; using ethnic media outlets; conducting in-person contacts; and posting bilingual voting information on the Internet. Specifically, these efforts included the following:

- Working with CBOs: Election officials in nine jurisdictions reported working with representatives of CBOs to conduct bilingual outreach and voter education. For example, Suffolk County, N.Y., election officials stated that they worked closely with the network of organizations active in their language minority communities to disseminate election information to churches, community centers, and households in their efforts to reach language minority voters. Election officials in the City of Boston reported that they communicated regularly with the CBO representatives that participate in the city's Voter Outreach and Education Task Force, and that the CBOs played an active, necessary role in disseminating bilingual voting assistance information. Similarly, election officials in King County, Wash., reported that CBOs provided substantial amounts of outreach, workshops, and seminars informing and educating language minorities of the availability of election materials and how to use the new voting system implemented in the jurisdiction.
- Using media outlets: Jurisdictions reported using a variety of media outlets to conduct bilingual outreach and voter education. Election officials in most of the jurisdictions included in our study reported using print media, radio or televised public service announcements to conduct bilingual outreach, and the types of media used sometimes varied among the targeted language minority communities. For example, election officials in Orange County, Calif., reported using Spanish-speaking television stations to target information to the Latino community but that using Vietnamese radio stations and newspapers were more effective for reaching the Vietnamese community. Election officials in the City of Boston reported that they worked with the Ethnic Media Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts to determine what ethnic media outlets were most used by the language minority community in their jurisdiction. Finally, election officials in six jurisdictions also reported using targeted translated mailings to inform the covered language minority community about election processes and important voter information. These included translated voter registration forms, sample ballots, and voting instructions.

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- Using in-person contact: Election officials in 11 jurisdictions reported using in-person contact with the language minority community as another means to inform targeted individuals about the availability of bilingual voting assistance and to educate them on election processes. For example, election officials for the City of Boston reported that in-person contact was the most effective outreach method in their jurisdiction. As a result, their staff attended and registered voters at language minority community forums and swearing-in ceremonies for new citizens. Election officials in other jurisdictions also reported that they visited language minority community events or locations such as festivals and libraries to conduct voter outreach and education. For example, an election official in King County, Wash., stated that she participated in voter education forums held by a CBO to talk through the voter's pamphlet with Chinese-speaking voters, provide instructions on how to fill out the ballot, and encourage participants to share their knowledge with others in the language minority community.
 - Posting information on the Internet: Officials in 11 of the election offices we contacted reported posting bilingual voting assistance materials and information on their websites, though to varying extents. For example, election officials in Harris County, Tex., told us they translated aspects of their Web site to provide language minority individuals with essential voting information, including important dates, early voting and Election Day information, sample ballots, and information on how to operate the jurisdiction's voting system. In contrast, Orange County, Calif., election officials reported that nearly all of the web content provided in English is available in each of the four covered languages. Los Angeles County, Calif., election officials reported focusing their Web site's language content on frequently utilized materials while working to make more election procedures available in the county's required minority languages.

All 14 Jurisdictions Reported Challenges in Providing Bilingual Voting Assistance

All 14 jurisdictions we contacted reported experiencing challenges in providing bilingual assistance, with the key challenges related to: (1) recruiting and ensuring quality performance of bilingual poll workers, (2) targeting bilingual voting assistance, (3) designing and translating bilingual voting assistance materials, and (4) allocating sufficient resources to bilingual voting assistance. In addition to identifying these key challenges, officials in nine jurisdictions expressed a desire for more guidance or assistance on providing bilingual voting assistance.

Many Jurisdictions Reported Difficulties Recruiting Bilingual Poll Workers and with Bilingual Poll Worker Performance

Election officials in nine of the jurisdictions stated that they had difficulty recruiting bilingual poll workers for a variety of reasons. For example, five jurisdictions reported that recruiting was difficult because of the long hours and minimal pay provided to bilingual poll workers—they believed that many individuals in the language minority communities had multiple jobs and could not afford to commit to the long hours required of a bilingual poll worker on Election Day. Election officials in five jurisdictions also added that it was a challenge to recruit bilingual poll workers who were willing to serve at a polling place outside their home precinct. In their experience, some bilingual poll workers either did not have the means to travel to other polling sites or were reluctant to do so. In addition, demographic shifts in some jurisdictions reportedly created recruiting challenges. For example, representatives of four election offices stated that recruiting was especially challenging for new language minority communities with only a very limited pool of potential bilingual volunteers or when members of the language minority community that are fluent in the covered language are decreasing in numbers due to aging. In one jurisdiction, an election official reported that some voters who reside in areas that are not historically language minority communities do not want to be identified as language minority speakers; therefore, they hesitate to volunteer.

In addition to recruiting problems, representatives of election offices from two jurisdictions reported that they experienced challenges related to bilingual poll worker performance. For example, election officials in Los Angeles County, Calif., stated that, in their experience, the performance of bilingual poll workers has been adversely affected by poor treatment by other poll workers that did not recognize the importance of providing bilingual voting assistance. Election officials in this jurisdiction also stated that CBOs have complained in the past that some of the bilingual poll workers were unwilling to assist language minority voters due to differences in their personal and cultural backgrounds, noting that acculturating new bilingual poll workers into the election environment was an issue they needed to address. In addition, election officials in this jurisdiction mentioned that while cultural sensitivity and diversity training was included in their general poll worker training, it was very difficult to spend sufficient time on the topic when there was a great deal of material to cover during the brief poll worker training time available. Similarly, election officials in the City of Boston reported difficulty managing some veteran poll workers who were reticent to use the training associated with the bilingual voting aspects of their job. According to these officials, expanding the length of training to address these issues has not been an option because trainees' attention to the material covered was limited to a

Some Jurisdictions Reported Difficulties Targeting Those Voters Who Needed Bilingual Voting Assistance

certain amount of time, attendance is not required, and it could increase costs associated with the training.

Election officials in eight of the jurisdictions we contacted reported that limitations in surname analysis, U.S. Census Bureau data, or demographic shifts in their jurisdictions made it difficult to effectively target bilingual voting assistance. Election officials in several jurisdictions reported that surname analysis did not accurately indicate whether individuals were actually limited-English proficient or proficient in the covered language, and added that surname analysis may overstate the need for bilingual assistance in particular precincts. Election officials in Los Angeles County, Calif., also noted that surname analysis was not useful in jurisdictions containing multiple language minority groups, especially those with many overlapping surnames. For example, these officials reported that it was very difficult to correctly distinguish between members of the Filipino and Spanish-speaking communities using surname analysis because Filipino surnames overlap with Spanish surnames.

Election officials in some jurisdictions also asserted that U.S. Census Bureau data are not accurate or detailed enough to enable them to effectively target language minority voters or, in some cases, determine the precise dialect a covered language minority community speaks. For example, Suffolk County, N.Y., election officials reported that they have had challenges targeting language minority individuals who are eligible to register and vote due to the number of undocumented persons included in Census data who are not registered to vote. In addition, election officials for Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska, explained that while the Census data identified the jurisdiction as requiring bilingual voting assistance in American Indian and Aleut languages, it is not clear what specific languages or dialects officials should target.²¹ Some election officials also explained that targeting bilingual voting assistance can be more difficult when the language minority communities are not concentrated in discrete geographic areas within the jurisdiction. For example, Los Angeles County, Calif., election officials reported that the diversity of the county's population and its constant demographic shifts require their office to modify their targeted precincts every 2 years, whereas Census data for jurisdictions covered under Section 203 are currently updated every 10 years.

²¹Aleut is one branch of the Eskimo-Aleut language family and has multiple dialects.

Many Jurisdictions Reported Difficulties Designing or Translating Bilingual Voting Assistance Materials

Election officials in nine jurisdictions reported difficulties designing or translating their bilingual voting assistance materials. Election officials reported that translating ballot language was particularly challenging because of differences in the meanings of words in various dialects of a given language or difficulties finding comparable phrasing in the covered language. Some election officials reported that this challenge was exacerbated by the limited time they had to review and correct errors before printing and distributing the election materials. For example, election officials in Montgomery County, Md., reported that they operated under short time frames with the vendors that produced their materials and had just 7 days to proof the ballot layout, design, spelling, audio pronunciation, touch screen text, and optical scan text before the materials had to be printed. In addition, some election officials noted that a translated ballot in a minority language is often longer than the English version—this difference in text length made it difficult to design a user-friendly bilingual ballot.

Some Jurisdictions Reported Difficulty Allocating Sufficient Resources to Their Bilingual Voting Assistance Efforts

Election officials in 11 jurisdictions reported that they had difficulty allocating either sufficient staff or financial resources to their bilingual voting assistance efforts. Election officials in five jurisdictions stated that additional staff would allow them to more effectively conduct outreach to the language minority communities. For example, an election official from Miami-Dade County, Fla., stated that having limited staff available to send to language minority communities has made it more difficult to educate language minority voters about the election process. Additionally, election officials in two jurisdictions stated that having sufficient staff would allow them to more effectively translate and review the written and oral assistance provided. In Montgomery County, Md., election officials reported that they rely heavily on unpaid community volunteers but with additional funding the county could conduct more outreach activities.

Many Election Officials We Contacted Desired Additional Guidance and Information on Providing Bilingual Assistance

Although officials in 12 jurisdictions reported receiving some degree of guidance or assistance from DOJ or other sources, officials in 9 jurisdictions also reported that more guidance or assistance may be helpful. For example, election officials in the City of Boston stated that they received some assistance from DOJ in the past, but that additional guidance and greater coordination among jurisdictions that provide bilingual voting assistance would also be beneficial. These officials told us they had taken the initiative to communicate with other covered jurisdictions to learn about their approaches to providing bilingual voting assistance but believed that a more organized system for information sharing between jurisdictions would be useful. These same views were echoed by election officials participating in discussion sessions we held on

bilingual voting assistance during two national election conferences on election issues sponsored by the Election Center in 2007. Specifically, in both discussion sessions, several election officials noted that additional guidance and greater coordination among jurisdictions that provide bilingual voting assistance would be beneficial. In addition, an official from a jurisdiction included in our study stated that the Secretary of State's Office and DOJ had offered assistance, but little to none had been received. Election officials in five jurisdictions that reported receiving guidance or assistance from DOJ stated that some of the assistance was not helpful, accurate, or reliable. Officials with the DOJ Civil Rights Division stated that their office offers guidance and assistance to local election officials on how to comply with Section 203, but it is the responsibility of covered jurisdictions to determine what languages, forms of languages, or dialects will be effective in their jurisdictions. Furthermore, these officials stated that its guidance is intentionally flexible because election systems and the circumstances of language minority communities vary widely across the United States. Instead, DOJ states that it provides guiding principles and practical suggestions for election officials to use. DOJ officials also noted that they have taken steps to make covered jurisdictions aware of this guidance, including conducting in-person visits with newly-covered jurisdictions as well as making presentations to state and local election officials through national groups and associations.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission Has Taken Recent Steps to Provide Additional Guidance and Information to Jurisdictions on Providing Bilingual Assistance

The EAC has taken steps to provide guidance on bilingual voting assistance as part of its responsibilities under HAVA to serve as a national clearinghouse and resource for information with respect to the administration of federal elections. For example, the EAC formed a Language Accessibility Program that has taken steps to provide recommendations and tools to election officials on providing bilingual voting assistance. In April 2007, the EAC published English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English versions of a glossary of over 1,800 election terms and phrases used in the administration of elections. The glossary was designed to assist state and local election officials in providing translated election materials that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. In addition, in September 2007, the EAC awarded a contract to translate this glossary into five additional languages covered under Section 203: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, with an anticipated glossary publication date of May 2008. The EAC also issued two guidebooks on recruiting and training poll workers that included suggestions on serving the needs of language minority voters. For example, one of the guidebooks included a section on partnering with civic organizations to recruit bilingual poll

workers, and the other guidebook included a chapter on recruiting bilingual college students to serve as poll workers.

In addition to its completed publications, the EAC has other assistance efforts planned in response to recent concerns voiced by election officials to the EAC regarding the need for additional guidance and information on providing bilingual assistance. For example, the EAC plans to dedicate a future chapter of its set of Election Management Guidelines to the topic of language accessibility. EAC officials reported that this language accessibility chapter (and accompanying brochure) will address strategies for election officials to consider and implement when providing elections services to voters with limited English proficiency throughout the election process. The EAC plans to develop this guidance by consulting election officials and professionals with first-hand experience managing elections in order to identify and develop the key content the publications should address. EAC officials noted that this process should begin in April 2008, and final publications should be released to the public by the end of that year. After its initial set of Election Management Guidelines has been completed, the EAC plans to regularly assess the need to cover other topic areas and update previous materials to maintain current and relevant information in the guidelines.

Some Forms of Bilingual Voting Assistance Were Perceived as More Useful than Others, but Formally Evaluating Its Usefulness Presented Many Challenges

Although we identified little data measuring the usefulness of various types of bilingual voting assistance, election officials in eight jurisdictions and CBO representatives in seven jurisdictions in our study told us that they believed certain forms of assistance were more useful than others. In addition, none of the jurisdictions had formally evaluated the effectiveness of their bilingual voting assistance programs, although most had used some means of gathering information about elements of the assistance provided. Election officials in 10 jurisdictions and CBO representatives in 9 jurisdictions also stated that modifications could be made that would improve the usefulness of the bilingual services provided to voters. While the use of formal program evaluation tools has proven to be a successful means for federal agencies to improve program effectiveness, accountability, and service delivery,²² conducting formal evaluations of the usefulness and effect of bilingual voting assistance is difficult for a variety of reasons. Three key difficulties include (1) identifying the objectives and

²²GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: GPRA Has Established a Solid Foundation for Achieving Greater Results*, [GAO-04-38](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 10, 2004).

appropriate indicators of success, (2) determining how to measure these indicators once they have been identified, and (3) isolating the effects of bilingual voting assistance efforts on language minority voters from more general voter outreach efforts or other influences on election processes.

Certain Types of Assistance Were Viewed as More Useful than Others

Although the election jurisdictions and CBOs we met with had not conducted any formal evaluations of the bilingual assistance they provided, the majority of both believed that the assistance that the election offices provided was useful to language minority voters. Specifically, election officials we met with in 12 of 14 jurisdictions and leaders of CBOs in 10 of 11 jurisdictions believed that the bilingual voting assistance provided by the election offices was useful to language minority voters and helped improve their participation in the voting process. However, some types of bilingual assistance were viewed as more useful than others. (See table 7 for the types of bilingual voting assistance identified as most useful.)

Table 7: Most Useful Types of Bilingual Voting Assistance, as Reported by Election Officials and CBO Representatives

Type of bilingual voting assistance provided by the election office	Number of jurisdictions in which election officials viewed this as the most useful type of assistance	Number of jurisdictions in which CBO representatives viewed this as the most useful type of assistance
Bilingual poll workers	6	5
Translated voting materials (i.e., voter guides, registration forms, sample ballots, ballots)	4	6
Community outreach and education activities	2	3
Media in-language (i.e., newspapers, tv, radio, mailings)	2	2
Web site	2	0
Translated polling place signage	1	0
All forms of bilingual assistance	1	0
Designated bilingual coordinator	0	3
Use of community advisory committees	0	2
Voting machines bilingual ballots	0	2
Phone assistance to intermediaries on behalf of language minority voters	0	1

Source: GAO analysis of responses from election officials and CBO representatives.

Note: Officials may have designated more than one type of assistance as most useful. Election officials and CBO representatives may be in the same jurisdiction.

Both election officials and CBO representatives generally agreed that having bilingual poll workers available on Election Day was among the most useful forms of assistance to voters. As noted above, election officials and CBO representatives in some jurisdictions also believed that having translated written materials was among the most useful forms of assistance. For example, a CBO representative in Harris County, Tex., told us that having bilingual voting guides, sample ballots, and other election materials was more useful to voters than having bilingual poll workers available on Election Day. He explained that members of the community preferred to have translated written materials that they could study in their homes and discuss with family members prior to the election rather than waiting to get assistance from bilingual poll workers on Election Day.

In limited instances, bilingual voting assistance was not viewed as useful. In two jurisdictions, the limited use of the bilingual voting assistance by voters led election officials to question its usefulness. For example, officials with the Harris County, Tex., tax assessor's office (which is responsible for voter registration in the county) provided us with some data that indicated a low usage of translated voter registration applications. During calendar year 2006 and through June 2007, the office distributed roughly 97,000 voter registration applications in Vietnamese and roughly 173,000 in Spanish by placing them at branches of the tax assessor's office, public libraries, and Texas Department of Public Safety locations, as well as distributing them during community outreach events. However, the office received back only 2 of the Vietnamese and 309 of the Spanish registration applications. While the officials did not speculate as to the reasons for the low usage of the translated forms, they noted that since they are required to provide the forms in both languages they would continue doing so. CBO representatives in two jurisdictions also told us that they did not believe that the bilingual voting assistance provided by the election offices was always useful. For example, a CBO representative in Jackson County, S. Dak., noted that bilingual voting assistance was not needed because about 95 percent of people in the covered language group can read and understand English. This opinion was also similar to that of a group of senior citizen Filipino voters we met with through a CBO in Los Angeles County, Calif. These voters had mixed views on the usefulness of the bilingual voting assistance they received. Some of these voters indicated that the quality of the translated ballots was poor; therefore, they instead voted using the English version of the ballots. However, these voters also noted that Filipinos generally know how to read and speak English; thus, the assistance was not necessary. Yet, these voters also wanted the same benefits (i.e., translated election materials) provided to them that other language minority groups received under Section 203.

Election officials and CBO representatives in some jurisdictions stated that modifications could be made that would improve the usefulness of the bilingual assistance currently provided to language minority voters. For example, election officials in four jurisdictions and CBO representatives in nine jurisdictions believed that the usefulness of bilingual voting assistance provided by the election office could be improved through additional community outreach and education efforts. Election officials in five jurisdictions and CBO representatives in six jurisdictions noted that improvements in the translation of bilingual voting materials would improve their usefulness to language minority voters. Finally, election officials in three jurisdictions and CBO representatives in seven jurisdictions believed that improvements in the recruiting and training of bilingual poll workers would improve the usefulness of bilingual voting assistance. (See table 8 for a list of specific suggestions from election officials and CBO representatives for improving the usefulness of bilingual voting assistance.)

Table 8: Suggestions on How Election Offices Can Improve the Usefulness of Bilingual Voting Assistance, according to Election Officials and CBO Representatives

Community outreach and education

- Following-up on community outreach events to determine their impact (i.e., whether new voters registered).
 - Seeking additional members of the language community for participation in advisory committees.
 - Having community leaders volunteer to work in election offices to better understand the election process.
 - Surveying or otherwise soliciting feedback from language minority voters about the bilingual assistance they received.
 - Placing more public service announcements about the election process in language media (i.e., radio, tv, or newspapers).
 - Hiring more permanent bilingual staff.
 - Issuing bilingual voting guides.
 - Providing financial assistance to CBOs so that they could provide additional bilingual voting assistance.
 - Using high-profile spokespeople to raise awareness of the importance of voting among language minority voters.
 - Having dedicated phone lines, answered in-language, to provide assistance or information about voting to language minority voters.
-

Translating election materials

- Ensuring that all materials are translated.
 - Placing additional translated materials on election office Web sites.
 - Using bilingual ballots versus separate translated ballots.
 - Translating candidate debates and forums as well as materials into the covered language.
 - Asking members of the language minority community to proofread translations.
 - Providing audio ballots in the covered language.
 - Tracking voter language preferences (via registration forms) to provide mailings in the preferred language.
 - Using standardized translated terms.
 - Working with the language minority community to identify specific dialects of a language that are needed, if any.
-

Recruiting, training, and placing bilingual poll workers

- Hiring additional bilingual poll workers.
 - Ensuring bilingual poll workers are placed at the polling places that need them.
 - Improving poll worker training to emphasize bilingual assistance as a regular part of doing business.
 - Reducing bilingual poll worker training class size to allow more in-depth discussions.
 - Increasing oversight of bilingual poll workers to ensure they are actually providing assistance.
 - Having bilingual poll workers wear name tags—in the relevant language—to identify the language they speak.
 - Asking CBOs to assist with conducting poll worker training.
 - Recruiting bilingual poll workers from the business community.
 - Using bilingual city employees as poll workers.
 - Increasing poll worker pay.
-

Source: GAO analysis of responses from election officials and CBO representatives.

Some Election Officials
and Community-Based
Organization
Representatives Attempted
to Measure Aspects of
Bilingual Assistance

None of the jurisdictions we included in our study had formally evaluated the effectiveness of their bilingual voting assistance programs, although most had used some means of gathering information about the assistance provided.²³ Election officials in two jurisdictions told us that formal evaluations of their bilingual voting assistance programs were unnecessary, since even if they discovered that voters had not used the assistance or did not find it useful, the jurisdictions were still required to provide it. Further, officials in one of these jurisdictions said it is inappropriate for the jurisdiction to conduct such a study because of the risk of perceived political motivations to do away with bilingual voting assistance, as well as the potential for legal action if the evaluation results were used to try to justify not providing bilingual voting assistance.

Election officials in 12 of the 14 jurisdictions reported they used various informal means to get information about the effectiveness of certain aspects of their bilingual voting assistance programs. For example, election officials in six jurisdictions told us they used feedback from voters, community groups, advisory committees, phone calls to a language telephone hotline, and other public contacts to determine if the bilingual assistance was useful and whether any modifications were needed. Election officials in one jurisdiction said their CBO partners were their “eyes and ears”—providing significant input if the bilingual voting assistance they provided was not effective or needed improvement. These officials commented that they believed obtaining feedback from CBOs was the best way to know how they were doing, and told us that DOJ had acknowledged that using CBOs for feedback is a good idea. Election officials in another jurisdiction reported that they reviewed Election Day call-center logs to determine whether voters or others had reported any problems related to bilingual voting assistance, and that if any problems were identified the jurisdiction worked to address them. Election officials in four jurisdictions reported they had conducted post-election surveys of or obtained comments from poll workers, either to determine the number of voters who had used bilingual assistance at the polls on Election Day or to obtain feedback about election judges’ and poll workers’ experiences concerning the assistance provided. Finally, election officials in two jurisdictions noted that they reviewed changes in the numbers of language minority voters voting or requesting non-English ballots to gauge the effectiveness of their efforts.

²³By formal evaluation, we mean a systematic examination of the extent to which the provided bilingual voting assistance successfully achieved its intended purpose(s).

Representatives from CBOs in three jurisdictions reported that their organizations had conducted some type of evaluation of the bilingual assistance provided by their election jurisdiction in the November 2006 general election or had collected other information about the bilingual voting assistance provided in their jurisdictions. For example, representatives of a CBO in one jurisdiction told us they had conducted exit polling with all voters, not just language minority voters, in the November 2006 general election. Leaders from CBOs in another jurisdiction reported conducting focus groups with county leaders, voters, and callers to a phone bank regarding the usefulness of the bilingual voting assistance provided in their jurisdiction. In addition, representatives of a CBO that was involved in two jurisdictions noted that their organization collected data on Election Day regarding the presence and activity of bilingual poll workers and the display of translated voting materials in polling places. Representatives with one CBO told us their method of evaluation relied on informal feedback from community members.

Conducting Formal Evaluations of the Usefulness and Effect of Bilingual Voting Assistance Is Difficult

While formal program evaluation tools have proven to be successful means for federal agencies to improve program effectiveness, accountability, and service delivery, election offices face many difficult issues in evaluating the effectiveness, or outcomes, of the bilingual voting assistance they provide.²⁴ Among these, three key issues are (1) identifying the objectives of the bilingual voting assistance program and criteria for achieving these objectives, (2) determining how to measure these criteria once they have been identified, and (3) isolating the effects of the bilingual assistance from other influences on language minority voters when they vote. (See app. V for a discussion of additional challenges to evaluating the usefulness of bilingual voting assistance.)

- Identifying the objectives and criteria: The identification of appropriate objectives and criteria for achieving them is basic to any evaluation of effectiveness, as an effective program must move toward the

²⁴Evaluations of effectiveness, or outcomes, can be distinguished from process or implementation evaluations, which are designed to assess the extent to which a program is operating as intended. As we have stated before, effectiveness evaluations are difficult to design and execute because optimal conditions for the scientific study of complex social programs almost never exist. Attributing results to a particular intervention can be difficult when such programs are evaluated in real world settings that pose numerous methodological challenges.

achievement of an identified purpose. Examples of objectives for bilingual assistance could be (1) increased language minority voter turnout, (2) increased independence demonstrated by language minority voters when voting, and (3) language minority voters who are better informed when casting their ballots.

- Determining how the objectives and criteria will be measured: Once objectives and criteria have been established, it is then necessary to determine how they will be measured. For a number of reasons, measuring the effectiveness of bilingual voting assistance is difficult. For example, to measure the effectiveness of bilingual voting assistance on language minority voter turnout, if a jurisdiction keeps records on which voters have indicated needing bilingual assistance, poll books can be checked to see whether these voters have voted and the numbers of such voters can be tracked across elections. However, officials in one jurisdiction told us that state law prohibited them from indicating either a person's race or their primary language in their voter registration records. Additionally, a jurisdiction could track the number of ballots printed in a covered language that had been used by voters. However, the number of ballots would not be a useful measure if both English as well as the covered language are printed on the same ballot. Measuring other potential indicators could be even more difficult. For example, one objective of bilingual voting assistance could be to enable language minority voters to cast their ballots independently—for example, without the need for someone to accompany them into the polling booth to provide language assistance. However, without information on the number and percentage of voters who needed assistance to cast their ballot prior to the implementation of bilingual voting assistance, jurisdictions could not measure the effect of the assistance on this indicator accurately.
- Isolating the effects from other influences: Isolating the effects of bilingual assistance on voter behavior would be extremely difficult because a number of factors influence voter behavior—such as age, party affiliation, or social organizations to which voters belong. For example, turnout among Hispanic voters could increase in the first election following the implementation of bilingual assistance. This same election could feature one or more Hispanic candidates on the ballot or one of the candidates could have taken a position deemed as “anti-immigrant.” It could be difficult to determine the contribution of each of these factors to the increased Hispanic voter turnout.

The two general approaches that are often used to help isolate the effects, or impact, of a program would be difficult to use in evaluating bilingual voting assistance. The first approach involves having baseline data—data from the period before a program is implemented—along with data collected from the period after a program is implemented and comparing the two periods to determine whether there are differences in the indicators being measured. However, this approach could be very difficult, if not impossible, to use because jurisdictions might not have collected the relevant data from previous elections. Also, as mentioned earlier, unless there is some ability to determine the contribution of other factors that might influence voter behavior, it could be difficult to determine the specific effect bilingual assistance has had.

The second approach is to have a comparison or control group and involves collecting data from a separate group of individuals who do not participate in the program but have characteristics similar to those who do participate in the program to determine whether there are any differences between these groups on the indicators being measured. With bilingual voting assistance, this would mean collecting data on groups of language minority voters who do not receive any bilingual assistance, and comparing the results to data collected from language minority voters who received the assistance. However, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to keep a control group of language minority voters from hearing or seeing pre-election bilingual assistance provided through the media. Further, unless conducted in a simulated way, such as in a mock election, a jurisdiction covered under Section 203 seeking to use such a methodology with respect to language minority voters would appear to face the additional challenge of meeting the Section 203 requirements as well as complying with other applicable federal and state voting rights protections.

Concluding Observations

Most election officials we met with supported providing bilingual voting assistance and took actions to implement this assistance in their respective jurisdictions; however, many of them also expressed uncertainty on how best to assess and meet the needs of language minority voters. DOJ provides guidance on bilingual assistance under Section 203, and it is intentionally flexible in nature to allow covered election jurisdictions to tailor their bilingual voting assistance programs to the specific needs and resources of their communities. At the same time, this flexibility has led to uncertainty among election officials as to whether their bilingual programs are actually meeting requirements or the needs of

language minority voters. Moreover, although we have noted in prior work that federal agencies have successfully used formal program evaluation tools to improve federal program effectiveness, accountability, and service delivery, the methodological difficulties election officials and others would likely face in trying to formally assess the effectiveness of their bilingual assistance programs for language minority voters make formal evaluations of these programs very difficult. As a result, the extent to which bilingual voting assistance programs are meeting the needs of language minority voters is unknown.

However, the difficulty in conducting formal evaluations does not mean that election jurisdictions would not benefit from additional feedback or information about their own or other jurisdictions' bilingual voting assistance programs. The EAC's recent efforts to develop and provide guidance to election jurisdictions regarding the translation of election terminology and recruiting bilingual poll workers address two of the challenges we identified in this report. Similarly, the EAC's planned development of additional management guidelines for election officials on how to provide bilingual voting assistance might also help jurisdictions in providing this type of assistance. However, because the specific content of these management guidelines has yet to be determined, whether they will provide election officials with the information they seek is unknown. Nonetheless, while these guidelines may not provide election officials with feedback about their specific language assistance programs, making such information available from a central, easily accessible source could help jurisdictions address challenges they face in determining how to provide bilingual voting assistance that will be useful to the language minorities in their communities. Finally, although it is difficult to evaluate the effect of bilingual assistance, in the absence of better data on the extent to which the assistance is both used and helpful to voters with limited-English proficiency, there is likely to continue to be debate about the merits of bilingual voting assistance.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DOJ and the EAC for review and comment. DOJ did not provide comments on the draft of this report but did provide technical edits, which we incorporated where appropriate.

The EAC provided written comments on December 21, 2007, which are presented in appendix VI. The EAC presented additional details on its efforts to provide election officials and the public with information on bilingual voting assistance.

We are sending copies of this report to interested congressional committees, the Attorney General, the Commissioners of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, and other interested parties. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at www.gao.gov. Please contact William Jenkins at 202-512-8777 or jenkinswo@gao.gov if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in appendix VII.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William O. Jenkins, Jr." with a stylized flourish underneath.

William O. Jenkins, Jr.
Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues

List of Congressional Committees

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman

The Honorable Robert Bennett
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman

The Honorable Lamar S. Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert A. Brady
Chairman

The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

This review examined the provision of bilingual voting assistance by selected jurisdictions covered under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. Specifically, our objectives were to provide information on:

- the ways that selected jurisdictions covered under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act have provided bilingual voting assistance as of the November 2006 general election, and the challenges they reportedly faced in providing such assistance; and
- the perceived usefulness of this bilingual voting assistance, and the extent to which the selected jurisdictions evaluated the usefulness of such assistance to language minority voters.

For both objectives, we conducted site visits or obtained information electronically from 14 selected jurisdictions covered by Section 203. However, before opting for this approach, we considered other options: (1) a survey of all 296 covered Section 203 jurisdictions along with a probability sample of all local government jurisdictions, including cities, towns, school districts and relevant special districts, contained within these covered jurisdictions that conduct their own local elections; and (2) a survey of only the 296 jurisdictions listed in the Federal Register, an option similar to the methodology we used in our 1997 report.

We chose to focus on the efforts of selected jurisdictions and not to survey all jurisdictions for several reasons. First, while we had a list of the 296 jurisdictions covered by Section 203, we were unable to locate an inventory of the complete population of the sub-jurisdictions contained within these jurisdictions that conducted their own elections from either the Department of Justice (DOJ) or the Census Bureau. The Chief of the Census Bureau office that prepares the determinations for Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act told us that it might be possible to develop an inventory of all sub-jurisdictions contained within the 296 covered jurisdictions through a complicated merge of Census' Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) system data files with its Census of Local Government data files. However, she said the Census of Local Government data do not indicate whether local governments hold elections or, if they do, who administers the elections. Therefore, to identify sub-jurisdictions that conduct their own elections and contacts within these entities, we would have needed to either canvass election officials in all 296 counties or other covered areas, as well as state elections officers, or construct a population of all sub-jurisdictions from Census Bureau data and then select a probability sample of sub-jurisdictions to survey and develop our own contact information. We believed this approach would have been very difficult, costly, and time

consuming. In addition, we learned that prior to testimony given at the summer 2006 hearings for the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, a team of researchers at the University of Arizona had already surveyed all 296 jurisdictions listed in the Federal Register, in addition to hundreds of other jurisdictions, about similar issues.¹ We were reluctant to resurvey jurisdictions about related matters so soon thereafter.

For our chosen methodology, we selected a sample of 14 covered jurisdictions in 12 states. We selected these jurisdictions because they reflected a variety of characteristics, such as size (i.e., voting age population), geographic diversity, varying language minority groups and their size relative to the voting age population, early voting provisions, and the longevity of each jurisdiction's coverage under the Section 203 bilingual voting provisions; and, we wanted a diverse group of sites to allow us to report on a wide range of jurisdictions' experiences with providing bilingual voting assistance. (See table 9 for a listing of the jurisdictions included in our study and the criteria used to select them.) Because we selected a nongeneralizable sample of election jurisdictions, the experiences and views discussed in this report cannot be generalized to all 296 jurisdictions required to provide bilingual voting assistance under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act or to the community-based organizations (CBO) in these jurisdictions.

¹Dr. James Tucker and Dr. Rodolfo Espino, "Minority Language Assistance Practices in Public Elections" (Arizona State University: Mar. 7, 2006).

Table 9: Jurisdictions Selected for GAO Site Visits and the Related Information Used to Make the Selections

Election jurisdiction	Jurisdiction covered under Sec. 203 in year 2000 for the first time?	Current covered language group(s)	Current language minority subgroup(s)	Census region
Boston (Suffolk County), MA	No	Spanish-heritage	Hispanic	Northeast
Cook County, IL	No	Spanish-heritage, Asian American	Hispanic, Chinese	Midwest
Harris County, TX	No	Spanish-heritage, Asian American	Hispanic, Vietnamese	South
Jackson County, SD	Yes	American Indian	Sioux	Midwest
King County, WA	Yes	Asian American	Chinese	West
Los Angeles County, CA	No	Spanish-heritage, Asian American	Hispanic, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese	West
Miami-Dade County, FL	No	Spanish-heritage	Hispanic	South
Montgomery County, MD	Yes	Spanish-heritage	Hispanic	South
Orange County, CA	No	Spanish-heritage, Asian American	Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese	West
Kenai Peninsula Borough, AK	No	Alaskan Native, American Indian	Aleut, American Indian	West
Sandoval County, NM	No	American Indian	Navajo, Pueblo	West
Seward County, KS	Yes	Spanish-heritage	Hispanic	Midwest
Starr County, TX	No	Spanish-heritage	Hispanic	South
Suffolk County, NY	No	Spanish-heritage	Hispanic	Northeast

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Jurisdiction citizen voting age population in 2000	Covered language group(s) voting age limited- English proficient population in 2000	Percent limited-English proficient in 2000	Subject of DOJ action?	Uses early voting?	Recommended by advocacy groups for study?
388,580	11,820	3.0	Yes	No	Yes
3,429,235	143,175	4.2	No	Yes	Yes
1,964,970	124,885	6.4	Yes	Yes	Yes
655 ^a	25 ^a	3.8 ^a	No	No	No
1,220,300	10,535	0.9	No	Yes	Yes
4,992,965	644,505	12.9	Yes ^b	Yes	Yes
1,164,345	273,975	23.5	Yes	Yes	Yes
539,745	10,055	1.9	No	No	No
1,631,415	137,160	8.4	No	Yes	Yes
			No	Yes	No
6,670	2,525	37.9	Yes	Yes	Yes
11,715	1,160	9.9	No	Yes	Yes
22,600	10,050	44.5	No	Yes	No
978,075	16,685	1.7	Yes	No	No

Source: GAO analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, DOJ, local/state officials, and national advocacy groups.

^aFor jurisdictions covered because of the American Indian Reservation approach, population data are provided on citizens who are American Indians or Alaska Natives in the part of the jurisdiction that is contained within the Indian Reservation. A discussion of these criteria is provided in appendix II.

^bThe DOJ actions involved subjurisdictions within Los Angeles County, not the county itself.

^cPopulation data were not provided by the Census Bureau when the total number of voting age citizens is less than 50.

Generally, we obtained information from the single office responsible for conducting elections in each of these jurisdictions. However, in two jurisdictions—Cook County, Ill., and Harris County, Tex.—we met with officials in two separate offices because each office had separate responsibilities for statewide and federal elections held in the jurisdiction. In Cook County, the Chicago Board of Elections Commissioners is responsible for administering these elections in the portion of Cook County that is Chicago, and the Cook County Clerk is responsible for administering elections in the remainder of Cook County. In Harris County, the tax assessor/collector is responsible for voter registration, and

the County Clerk is responsible for the remainder of election activities. Due to numerous scheduling conflicts, we were unable to arrange a visit to Sandoval County, N. Mex.; however, we did obtain written responses to our questions from an election official in Sandoval County via electronic means. In one jurisdiction—Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska—we interviewed not only a local government official who has responsibility for local elections but also state officials, as the state has responsibility for overseeing federal and statewide elections in Alaska jurisdictions. Also, we selected 2 sub-jurisdictions among the 14 covered jurisdictions to learn about the bilingual voting assistance these localities provided in local elections. We identified these sub-jurisdictions by asking election officials about what localities within their jurisdictions conducted their own local elections. These localities were: Los Angeles City, Calif., and Kadoka City, S. Dak.

In addition to obtaining information from election officials, we also selected 38 CBOs that represent relevant language minority communities in 11 of the 14 jurisdictions.² We selected the CBOs through inquiries with election officials, contacts with national level advocacy groups to learn of local counterparts, contacts with the CBOs themselves to learn of additional groups in their communities, and Internet searches. In our discussions with representatives with a few CBOs, we were able also to speak with a few language minority voters (in one case with the help of an interpreter) who said they had used the bilingual assistance provided by their jurisdiction.

We either conducted on-site interviews with or obtained information electronically from election officials and CBO representatives regarding the bilingual voting assistance provided in the November 2006 general election and any subsequent elections through June 2007. Using a semi-structured interview guide, we obtained information from the election offices about

- office staff assigned to provide bilingual assistance;
- the office's strategy for identifying needs and providing bilingual assistance;
- the type(s) and availability of bilingual assistance provided at different stages of the election process for the November 2006 general election

²After repeated attempts, we were unable to make contact with any CBOs in Sandoval County, N. Mex., and Suffolk County, N.Y. Additionally, we were unable to locate any CBOs in Starr County, Tex.

and any subsequent elections, including voter education efforts, voter registration, early voting and absentee voting, recruiting and training poll workers, ballot design and voting systems, Election Day activities, and the usefulness of this assistance to voters; and

- supporting documentation as evidence of the types of bilingual voting assistance (e.g., sample ballots, pamphlets, voter education materials, etc.) provided to language minority voters in these jurisdictions.

Using a semi-structured interview guide, we also obtained information from CBO representatives about their roles in providing bilingual voting assistance in the November 2006 general election and any subsequent elections; their views about the bilingual assistance provided by the election office in these elections; and the usefulness of this assistance.

We also interviewed officials and obtained documents from other relevant parties. Interviews and documents were obtained from the DOJ Civil Rights Division, which is responsible for providing program guidance and enforcing compliance with the requirements under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. We also interviewed officials from the EAC, which was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to, among other things, act as a clearinghouse and resource for information and review of procedures with respect to the administration of federal elections. Additionally, we interviewed the Chief of the Census Bureau office that prepares the determinations for Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. We reviewed pertinent federal laws, regulations, and agency guidance pertaining to the bilingual voting provisions. We also reviewed extensive prior GAO work, other national studies, reports, and news articles; attended several national conferences; and interviewed the secretary of state for one state with jurisdictions covered by Section 203 to gain further insight regarding these issues. We conducted this performance audit from October 2006 to January 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Section 203 Coverage Criteria Regarding Language Minority Groups and Covered Jurisdictions

Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act provides specific criteria for determining which states and jurisdictions are covered by the Section 203 language minority provisions. The Director of the Census Bureau has responsibility for making the official determinations regarding which political subdivisions are covered under section 203. To make its determinations, the Census Bureau reevaluates the jurisdictions covered by Section 203 every 10 years using new Census data as they become available. ¹ The number of covered jurisdictions has risen from 227 in 1975, the first year jurisdictions were required to comply with Section 203,² to 296 jurisdictions in 30 states in 2002, the year of the most recent determination.³ The Census Bureau uses classifications—states, counties, minor civil divisions, or tribal areas—and variables such as voter age, language proficiency, and citizenship as self-reported on Census forms to determine the jurisdictions to be covered under Section 203. The following material in figure 1 describes the coverage criteria.

¹The long form census, which had been used in coverage determinations, will no longer be used by the Census Bureau after 2010. The American Community Survey has replaced the long form and will be administered by the Census Bureau annually. As a result, future determinations for coverage under Section 203 will be made by the Director of the Census based upon information compiled by the ACS on a rolling 5-year average.

²40 Fed. Reg. 41827 (1975). In addition to the 227 jurisdictions identified in the 1975 determinations, the state of Alaska was also listed as having statewide coverage for Native Alaskans but with no specific jurisdictions identified as being covered.

³67 Fed. Reg. 48,872 (2002).

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Figure 1: Section 203 Coverage Criteria for Implementation of the Voting Rights Act Provisions Regarding Language Minority Groups

§55.6 Coverage Under Section 203(c).

(a) **Coverage formula.** There are four ways in which a political subdivision can become subject to section 203(c).^a

(1) **Political subdivision approach.** A political subdivision is covered if

- (i) More than 5 percent of its voting age citizens are members of a single language minority group and are limited-English proficient; and
- (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens in the political subdivision is higher than the national illiteracy rate.

(2) **State approach.** A political subdivision is covered if

- (i) It is located in a state in which more than 5 percent of the voting age citizens are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient;
- (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens in the state is higher than the national illiteracy rate; and
- (iii) Five percent or more of the voting age citizens of the political subdivision are members of such language minority group and are limited-English proficient.

(3) **Numerical approach.** A political subdivision is covered if

- (i) More than 10,000 of its voting age citizens are members of a single language minority group and are limited-English proficient; and
- (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens in the political subdivision is higher than the national illiteracy rate.

(4) **Indian reservation approach.** A political subdivision is covered if there is located within its borders all or any part of an Indian reservation

- (i) In which more than 5 percent of the voting age American Indian or Alaska Native citizens are members of a single language minority group and are limited-English proficient; and
- (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens is higher than the national illiteracy rate.

(b) **Definitions.** For the purpose of determinations of coverage under section 203(c), “limited-English proficient” means unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process; “Indian reservation” means any area that is an American Indian or Alaska Native area, as defined by the Census Bureau for the purposes of the decennial census; and “illiteracy” means the failure to complete the fifth primary grade.

(c) **Determinations.** Determinations of coverage under section 203(c) are made with regard to specific language groups of the language minorities listed in section 203(e).

Source: 28 C.F.R. §55.6.

^aThe criteria for coverage are contained in Section 203(b).

The Director of the Census Bureau applied these criteria to the data obtained from the 2000 census (the most recent census) to determine which jurisdictions are covered under Section 203. The Director of the

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Census Bureau identifies the relevant language groups for the covered jurisdictions. Because the Census Bureau data used to determine the covered language are self-reported, the specific language an individual speaks is not always identified and thus jurisdictions may not know the specific language for which they are to provide assistance. For example, an individual may identify their language as “Indian language,” but this does not clarify for the jurisdiction what specific Indian language assistance it is to provide. Also, some Section 203 covered jurisdictions have more than one language group for which they are required to provide voting assistance. (See table 10 for the list of jurisdictions covered under Section 203 and the respective language groups, as of July 2002.)

Table 10: Jurisdictions Covered under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act

State and political subdivision	Language group
Alaska	
Aleutians West Census Area	Aleut
Bethel Census Area	Eskimo
Bethel Census Area	American Indian (Tribe not specified)
Bethel Census Area	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Denali Borough	Athabascan
Dillingham Census Area	Eskimo
Dillingham Census Area	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Dillingham Census Area	Native (Other group specified)
Kenai Peninsula Borough	American Indian (Tribe not specified)
Kenai Peninsula Borough	Aleut
Kodiak Island Borough	Filipino
Lake and Peninsula Borough	Athabascan
Lake and Peninsula Borough	Aleut
Lake and Peninsula Borough	Eskimo
Nome Census Area	Eskimo
North Slope Borough	American Indian (Tribe not specified)
North Slope Borough	Eskimo
Northwest Arctic Borough	Eskimo
Northwest Arctic Borough	Alaska Native (Other group specified)
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	Athabascan
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	Native (Other group specified)
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	Athabascan
Wade Hampton Census Area	Eskimo

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Wade Hampton Census Area	American Indian (Chickasaw)
Wade Hampton Census Area	American Indian (Tribe not specified)
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	Athabaskan
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	Eskimo
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Arizona	
Apache County	American Indian (Apache)
Apache County	American Indian (Navajo)
Apache County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Cochise County	Hispanic
Coconino County	American Indian (Navajo)
Coconino County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Gila County	American Indian (Apache)
Graham County	American Indian (Apache)
Greenlee County	Hispanic
Maricopa County	Hispanic
Maricopa County	American Indian (Tohono O'Odham)
Navajo County	American Indian (Apache)
Navajo County	American Indian (Navajo)
Navajo County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Pima County	Hispanic
Pima County	American Indian (Tohono O'Odham)
Pima County	American Indian (Yaqui)
Pinal County	American Indian (Apache)
Pinal County	American Indian (Tohono O'Odham)
Santa Cruz County	Hispanic
Yuma County	Hispanic
Yuma County	American Indian (Yuman)
California	
State Coverage	Hispanic
Alameda County	Hispanic
Alameda County	Chinese
Colusa County	Hispanic
Contra Costa County	Hispanic
Fresno County	Hispanic
Imperial County	Hispanic
Imperial County	American Indian (Central or South American)

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Imperial County	American Indian (Yuman)
Kern County	Hispanic
Kings County	Hispanic
Los Angeles County	Hispanic
Los Angeles County	Chinese
Los Angeles County	Filipino
Los Angeles County	Japanese
Los Angeles County	Korean
Los Angeles County	Vietnamese
Madera County	Hispanic
Merced County	Hispanic
Monterey County	Hispanic
Orange County	Hispanic
Orange County	Chinese
Orange County	Korean
Orange County	Vietnamese
Riverside County	Hispanic
Riverside County	American Indian (Central or South American)
Sacramento County	Hispanic
San Benito County	Hispanic
San Bernardino County	Hispanic
San Diego County	Hispanic
San Diego County	Filipino
San Francisco County	Hispanic
San Francisco County	Chinese
San Joaquin County	Hispanic
San Mateo County	Hispanic
San Mateo County	Chinese
Santa Barbara County	Hispanic
Santa Clara County	Hispanic
Santa Clara County	Chinese
Santa Clara County	Filipino
Santa Clara County	Vietnamese
Stanislaus County	Hispanic
Tulare County	Hispanic
Ventura County	Hispanic

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Colorado	
Alamosa County	Hispanic
Conejos County	Hispanic
Costilla County	Hispanic
Crowley County	Hispanic
Denver County	Hispanic
La Plata County	American Indian (Navajo)
La Plata County	American Indian (Ute)
Montezuma County	American Indian (Navajo)
Montezuma County	American Indian (Ute)
Otero County	Hispanic
Rio Grande County	Hispanic
Saguache County	Hispanic
Connecticut	
Bridgeport town (Fairfield County)	Hispanic
Hartford town (Hartford County)	Hispanic
Meriden town (New Haven County)	Hispanic
New Britain town (Hartford County)	Hispanic
New Haven town (New Haven County)	Hispanic
Waterbury town (New Haven County)	Hispanic
Windham town (Windham County)	Hispanic
Florida	
Broward County	Hispanic
Broward County	American Indian (Seminole)
Collier County	American Indian (Seminole)
Glades County	American Indian (Seminole)
Hardee County	Hispanic
Hendry County	Hispanic
Hillsborough County	Hispanic
Miami-Dade County	Hispanic
Orange County	Hispanic
Osceola County	Hispanic
Palm Beach County	Hispanic
Hawaii	
Honolulu County	Chinese
Honolulu County	Filipino
Honolulu County	Japanese

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Maui County	Filipino
Idaho	
Bannock County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Bingham County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Caribou County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Owyhee County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Power County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Illinois	
Cook County	Hispanic
Cook County	Chinese
Kane County	Hispanic
Kansas	
Finney County	Hispanic
Ford County	Hispanic
Grant County	Hispanic
Haskell County	Hispanic
Kearny County	Hispanic
Seward County	Hispanic
Louisiana	
Allen Parish	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Maryland	
Montgomery County	Hispanic
Massachusetts	
Boston city (Suffolk County)	Hispanic
Chelsea city (Suffolk County)	Hispanic
Holyoke city (Hampden County)	Hispanic
Lawrence city (Essex County)	Hispanic
Southbridge town (Worcester County)	Hispanic
Springfield city (Hampden County)	Hispanic
Michigan	
Clyde township (Allegan County)	Hispanic
Mississippi	
Attala County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Jackson County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Jones County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Kemper County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Leake County	American Indian (Choctaw)

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Neshoba County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Newton County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Scott County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Winston County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Montana	
Big Horn County	American Indian (Cheyenne)
Rosebud County	American Indian (Cheyenne)
Nebraska	
Colfax County	Hispanic
Sheridan County	American Indian (Sioux)
Nevada	
Clark County	Hispanic
Elko County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Elko County	American Indian (Shoshone)
Humboldt County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Lyon County	American Indian (Paiute)
Nye County	American Indian (Shoshone)
White Pine County	American Indian (Shoshone)
New Jersey	
Bergen County	Hispanic
Cumberland County	Hispanic
Essex County	Hispanic
Hudson County	Hispanic
Middlesex County	Hispanic
Passaic County	Hispanic
Union County	Hispanic
New Mexico	
State Coverage	Hispanic
Bernalillo County	Hispanic
Bernalillo County	American Indian (Navajo)
Bernalillo County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Catron County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Chaves County	Hispanic
Cibola County	American Indian (Navajo)
Cibola County	American Indian (Pueblo)
De Baca County	Hispanic
Dona Ana County	Hispanic

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Eddy County	Hispanic
Grant County	Hispanic
Guadalupe County	Hispanic
Harding County	Hispanic
Hidalgo County	Hispanic
Lea County	Hispanic
Luna County	Hispanic
McKinley County	American Indian (Navajo)
McKinley County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Mora County	Hispanic
Rio Arriba County	Hispanic
Rio Arriba County	American Indian (Navajo)
Roosevelt County	Hispanic
San Juan County	American Indian (Navajo)
San Juan County	American Indian (Ute)
San Miguel County	Hispanic
Sandoval County	American Indian (Navajo)
Sandoval County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Santa Fe County	Hispanic
Santa Fe County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Socorro County	Hispanic
Socorro County	American Indian (Navajo)
Socorro County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Taos County	Hispanic
Taos County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Torrance County	Hispanic
Union County	Hispanic
Valencia County	Hispanic
Valencia County	American Indian (Pueblo)
New York	
Bronx County	Hispanic
Kings County	Hispanic
Kings County	Chinese
Nassau County	Hispanic
New York County	Hispanic
New York County	Chinese
Queens County	Hispanic

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Queens County	Chinese
Queens County	Korean
Suffolk County	Hispanic
Westchester County	Hispanic
North Dakota	
Richland County	American Indian (Sioux)
Sargent County	American Indian (Sioux)
Oklahoma	
Harmon County	Hispanic
Texas County	Hispanic
Oregon	
Malheur County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
Pennsylvania	
Philadelphia County	Hispanic
Rhode Island	
Central Falls city (Providence County)	Hispanic
Providence city (Providence County)	Hispanic
South Dakota	
Bennett County	American Indian (Sioux)
Codington County	American Indian (Sioux)
Day County	American Indian (Sioux)
Dewey County	American Indian (Sioux)
Grant County	American Indian (Sioux)
Gregory County	American Indian (Sioux)
Haakon County	American Indian (Sioux)
Jackson County	American Indian (Sioux)
Lyman County	American Indian (Sioux)
Marshall County	American Indian (Sioux)
Meade County	American Indian (Sioux)
Meade County	American Indian (Cheyenne)
Mellette County	American Indian (Sioux)
Roberts County	American Indian (Sioux)
Shannon County	American Indian (Sioux)
Stanley County	American Indian (Sioux)
Todd County	American Indian (Sioux)
Tripp County	American Indian (Sioux)
Ziebach County	American Indian (Sioux)

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Texas	
State Coverage	Hispanic
Andrews County	Hispanic
Atascosa County	Hispanic
Bailey County	Hispanic
Bee County	Hispanic
Bexar County	Hispanic
Borden County	Hispanic
Brewster County	Hispanic
Brooks County	Hispanic
Caldwell County	Hispanic
Calhoun County	Hispanic
Cameron County	Hispanic
Castro County	Hispanic
Cochran County	Hispanic
Concho County	Hispanic
Crane County	Hispanic
Crockett County	Hispanic
Crosby County	Hispanic
Culberson County	Hispanic
Dallas County	Hispanic
Dawson County	Hispanic
Deaf Smith County	Hispanic
DeWitt County	Hispanic
Dimmit County	Hispanic
Duval County	Hispanic
Ector County	Hispanic
Edwards County	Hispanic
El Paso County	Hispanic
El Paso County	American Indian (Pueblo)
Fisher County	Hispanic
Floyd County	Hispanic
Frio County	Hispanic
Gaines County	Hispanic
Garza County	Hispanic
Glasscock County	Hispanic
Goliad County	Hispanic

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Gonzales County	Hispanic
Guadalupe County	Hispanic
Hale County	Hispanic
Hall County	Hispanic
Hansford County	Hispanic
Harris County	Hispanic
Harris County	Vietnamese
Hidalgo County	Hispanic
Hockley County	Hispanic
Howard County	Hispanic
Hudspeth County	Hispanic
Irion County	Hispanic
Jeff Davis County	Hispanic
Jim Hogg County	Hispanic
Jim Wells County	Hispanic
Karnes County	Hispanic
Kenedy County	Hispanic
Kinney County	Hispanic
Kleberg County	Hispanic
Knox County	Hispanic
Lamb County	Hispanic
La Salle County	Hispanic
Live Oak County	Hispanic
Loving County	Hispanic
Lubbock County	Hispanic
Lynn County	Hispanic
Madison County	Hispanic
Martin County	Hispanic
Matagorda County	Hispanic
Maverick County	Hispanic
Maverick County	American Indian (Other tribe specified)
McMullen County	Hispanic
Medina County	Hispanic
Menard County	Hispanic
Midland County	Hispanic
Mitchell County	Hispanic
Moore County	Hispanic

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Nolan County	Hispanic
Nueces County	Hispanic
Parmer County	Hispanic
Pecos County	Hispanic
Presidio County	Hispanic
Reagan County	Hispanic
Reeves County	Hispanic
Refugio County	Hispanic
Runnels County	Hispanic
San Patricio County	Hispanic
Schleicher County	Hispanic
Scurry County	Hispanic
Starr County	Hispanic
Sterling County	Hispanic
Sutton County	Hispanic
Swisher County	Hispanic
Tarrant County	Hispanic
Terrell County	Hispanic
Terry County	Hispanic
Titus County	Hispanic
Tom Green County	Hispanic
Travis County	Hispanic
Upton County	Hispanic
Uvalde County	Hispanic
Val Verde County	Hispanic
Victoria County	Hispanic
Ward County	Hispanic
Webb County	Hispanic
Wharton County	Hispanic
Willacy County	Hispanic
Wilson County	Hispanic
Winkler County	Hispanic
Yoakum County	Hispanic
Zapata County	Hispanic
Zavala County	Hispanic

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State and political subdivision	Language group
Utah	
San Juan County	American Indian (Navajo)
San Juan County	American Indian (Ute)
Washington	
Adams County	Hispanic
Franklin County	Hispanic
King County	Chinese
Yakima County	Hispanic

Source: Federal Register (67 Fed. Reg. 48,871-48,877 (2002) (codified in appendix to 28 C.F.R. Part 55)).

Note: In the cases where a state is identified as covered, those counties or county equivalents not displayed in the table are exempt from the obligation.

Appendix III: DOJ Actions under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, 1980-2007

Jurisdiction	State	Date	Type of action
County and City of San Francisco	CA	1980	Consent decree
San Juan County	UT	1984	Memorandum of agreement ^a
McKinley County	NM	1986	Consent decree ^b
State of Arizona	AZ	1989	Consent decree ^c
New Mexico and Sandoval County	NM	1990	Consent decree ^d
Dade (Metropolitan) County	FL	1993	Consent decree
Cibola County	NM	1993	Stipulation and order ^e
Socorro County	NM	1993	Consent decree
Alameda County	CA	1996	Settlement agreement and order
San Juan County	NM	1996	Memorandum of agreement
Bernalillo County	NM	1998	Consent decree ^f
City of Lawrence	MA	1999	Settlement agreement and order
County and City of Passaic	NJ	1999	Consent decree ^g
Orange County	FL	2002	Consent decree
Brentwood Union Free School District	NY	2003	Consent decree
San Benito County	CA	2004	Consent decree
San Diego County	CA	2004	Consent decree
Ventura County	CA	2004	Consent decree
Suffolk County	NY	2004	Consent decree
Harris County	TX	2004	Memorandum of agreement
Yakima County	WA	2004	Consent decree
City of Azusa	CA	2005	Consent decree
City of Paramount	CA	2005	Consent decree
City of Rosemead	CA	2005	Consent decree
City of Boston	MA	2005	Memorandum of agreement
Westchester County	NY	2005	Consent decree
Cochise County	AZ	2006	Consent decree
Maricopa County	AZ	2006	Memorandum of agreement
Broward County	FL	2006	Memorandum of agreement
City of Springfield	MA	2006	Consent decree
City of Philadelphia	PA	2006	Complaint
Hale County	TX	2006	Consent decree
Kane County	IL	2007	Consent decree
City of Walnut	CA	2007	Complaint
City of Earth	TX	2007	Complaint
Seagraves Independent School District	TX	2007	Complaint

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Jurisdiction	State	Date	Type of action
Littlefield Independent School District	TX	2007	Complaint
Post Independent School District	TX	2007	Complaint
Smyer Independent School District	TX	2007	Complaint

Source: DOJ officials.

^aConsent decree was amended in 1990.

^bConsent decree was amended in 1990.

^cConsent decree amended in 1993.

^dConsent decree modified in 1994 and again in 2004.

^eAgreement was extended in 2004.

^fConsent decree extended in 2003.

^gAdditional criteria set forth in supplemental consent decree in 2001.

Appendix IV: Examples of Bilingual Voting Written Assistance Materials

The following are excerpted examples of bilingual voting materials provided by election officials in covered jurisdictions.

Figure 2: Excerpt of a Chinese Voter Registration Form - King County, Wash.

選民郵寄登記表

Washington 華盛頓州 - 州務卿
Secretary of State

您可用此表來：
 • 登記在華盛頓州參加選舉；
 • 如果您搬家，請更新居住地址；
 • 更改您登記的姓名；
 • 要求繼續領取缺席選票。

請填寫以下選民登記表裡第一號至第十號空格的所有資料，切記在第十號的空格裡寫您的姓名。填寫完此表後，請沿虛線摺疊、封口、並寄出。

如果您身體狀況使您不能簽署此表，請在第十號的空格裡作一個 X 記號，並請幫助您填寫此表的人士填寫第十一號空格。

如果以郵寄方式呈遞這份表格，而您是第一次在這個州登記參加選舉，且沒有在 1A 或 1B 的空格裡填寫任何資料，您必須提供以下其中一份文件之副本：
 • 最近帶有照片的身份證
 • 最近期的水電帳單
 • 銀行結單
 • 政府支票
 • 薪金支票
 • 或其他有您姓名及地址的政府文件

請先在此對摺

請用黑色筆 - 請清楚地以正楷書寫		<input type="checkbox"/> 更改姓名	<input type="checkbox"/> 在華盛頓州更改地址	<input type="checkbox"/> 在華盛頓州全新登記
留意：如果您不是美國公民，不要填寫此表。				僅供官方使用
在選舉當天之前，您是否已滿 18 歲？		<input type="radio"/> 是 <input type="radio"/> 否 <input type="radio"/> 是 <input type="radio"/> 否		
聯邦和州法律規定您要提供您的華盛頓州駕駛執照或華盛頓州的身份證的號碼。如果您沒有華盛頓州駕駛執照或華盛頓州身份證，請提供您社會保險號碼的最後 4 個數字。				
1 華盛頓州駕駛執照號碼	2 最後 4 個數字/社會保險號碼	3 <input type="radio"/> 如果您沒有華盛頓州駕駛執照、身份證或社會保險號碼，請填寫此欄位。	3 出生日期 (月/日/年)	
2 姓	<input type="radio"/> 男 <input type="radio"/> 女	日間電話號碼 () () () ()		
4 名	中間名簡寫 <input type="radio"/> J <input type="radio"/> II <input type="radio"/> Sr <input type="radio"/> III	電郵地址 (簡寫)		
5 華盛頓州居民住址 (必須填寫)		城市或鄉鎮	郵政編號	
6 您收信的郵政地址 (如與以上地址不同)		城市或鄉鎮	州	郵政編號
7 請填寫所有適用之圖框 <input type="radio"/> 從軍 (國內) <input type="radio"/> 從軍 (國外) <input type="radio"/> 國民警衛軍/海軍 <input type="radio"/> 美國公民 (海外)		8 索取持證性缺席/郵寄選票 我希望在所有的未來的選舉中收到缺席/郵寄選票 <input type="radio"/> 是 <input type="radio"/> 否		
9 我曾用此姓名和/或地址登記為選民。		請在此簽署以前登記時用的簽名		
姓名 _____	部 _____	X		
街址號碼 _____	州 _____			
城市 _____	郵政編號 _____			

在這裡第二次對摺

警告：如您故意在這份選民登記表上提供虛假的資料，或知情地在選民登記資格上作虛假的宣言，這是 C 級刑事重罪。您可被判入獄至五年，或被罰款高達一萬元，或同時被判入獄及罰款。(華盛頓州修訂法 (RCW) 第 29A.08.210 章節)

10 選民宣言
 “在此表上簽名即表示，我在願受發假誓的法律制裁下就此聲明，我有法權參與投票。如我被發現違法參與選舉投票，我可被檢控和/或被罰款。此外，我在此供認我知道，如我被發現違法參與選舉投票，我的姓名及我在記錄上最後的地址將會被轉達至適當的州和/或聯邦部門。”
 (華盛頓州修訂法 (RCW) 第 29A.08.210 章節)
 “我聲明此選民登記表上所填寫的資料均屬實：
 • 我是美國公民；
 • 我現時未有因犯罪受判而失去公民權利；
 • 我在下屆投票時，已在此華盛頓州的地址住滿三十天；
 • 當我投票時，已年滿十八歲。”
 (華盛頓州修訂法 (RCW) 第 29A.08.230 章節)

請在此空格內簽名或寫上記號
X

11 如您身體狀況使您不能在此表上簽名，請幫助您填寫此表的人士提供這些有關您/他的資料：
 姓名 _____
 地址： _____
 簽署日期 _____ / ____ / ____

除掉膠紙，對摺並封口

M-88V1/2006 CH

Source: Election officials.

**Appendix IV: Examples of Bilingual Voting
Written Assistance Materials**

Figure 3: English/Chinese Bilingual Absentee Ballot Request Form - King County, Wash.

 Absentee/Mail-in Ballot Request Form 索取缺席/郵寄選票表格		Mail to: ABSENTEE/MAIL-IN BALLOT <small>請寄至: 郵寄選票</small> King County Administration Bldg., Room 553 500 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104	
BALLOTS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE		選票有英文及中文版本	
<p>TO BE FILLED OUT BY APPLICANT I HEREBY DECLARE THAT I AM A REGISTERED VOTER PLEASE PRINT IN INK 由申請人填寫 我現今聲明我是一登記選民 請用墨筆或原子筆正楷書寫</p>		<p>THESE REQUEST(S) ARE FOR: 此要求是為:</p> <p>ALL FUTURE ELECTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> 為所有未來的選舉。</p> <p>ONE ELECTION ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify which election 一次選舉用。請寫明選舉日期。 _____</p> <p>I DO NOT WISH TO CONTINUE VOTING BY MAIL. I WILL VOTE AT THE POLLS. <input type="checkbox"/> 我不想繼續用郵寄來投票。我將會到投選站投票。</p>	
<p>PLEASE PROVIDE 請提供</p> <p>Registration No. if known 選民登記號碼, 如知道 _____</p> <p>Registered Name 登記姓名 _____</p> <p>Residence Address _____ Apt/Unit # _____ 居住地址 _____ 單位號數 _____</p> <p>City _____ Zip _____ 城市 _____ 郵號 _____</p> <p>Telephone (Day) _____ (Eve) _____ 電話 (日) _____ (晚) _____</p> <p>For identification purposes only: 祇為確証身份用: Birth date _____ 出生日期 _____</p>		<p><i>AN ENGLISH BALLOT WILL BE SENT UNLESS A PREFERENCE FOR A CHINESE BALLOT IS INDICATED BELOW.</i> <i>除特別在下段表明要中文選票外, 寄出的選票皆屬英文版</i></p> <p>CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX(ES), IF YOU WOULD LIKE CHINESE BALLOT AND/OR CHINESE VOTER PAMPHLET: 若要中文選票和/或中文選民手冊, 請勾選適當的方框:</p> <p>CHINESE BALLOT <input type="checkbox"/> 中文選票</p> <p>CHINESE VOTER PAMPHLET <input type="checkbox"/> 中文選民手冊</p>	
<p>TO BE VALID, YOUR SIGNATURE MUST BE INCLUDED 必須簽署姓名方有效</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____ 簽名 _____ 日期 _____</p> <p>DIFFERENT MAILING ADDRESS, SEND BALLOT TO: 請寄選票至以下與居住地址不同的郵遞地址:</p> <p>Street Address _____ 地址 _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____ 城市 _____ 州 _____ 郵號 _____</p> <p>Country _____ New Registration: Yes No 國家 _____ 新登記: 是 <input type="checkbox"/> 否 <input type="checkbox"/></p>		<p>SPECIAL NOTE 特別注釋</p> <p>RCW 29A.40.040, TERMINATION OF ONGOING ABSENTEE/MAIL-IN VOTER STATUS. Status as an ongoing absentee/mail-in voter shall be terminated upon the occurrence of any of the following: 華盛頓州修訂法 29A.40.040, 終止持續性缺席或郵寄選民資格及身份, 若發生下列其中一項, 缺席或郵寄選民資格及身份將會被終止:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The written request of the voter; 選民用書面要求終止缺席或郵寄選民資格; The death or disqualification of voter; 選民身亡或其選民資格被取消; The cancellation of the voter's registration record; 選民登記的記錄被取消; The return of an ongoing absentee ballot as undeliverable. 因郵局無法遞送, 缺席或郵寄選票被退回。 Upon placing a voter on inactive status under RCW 29A.08.620. 當選民在華盛頓州修訂法29A.08.620下被鑑定為一無選舉活動的選民。 	
<p><i>If you have requested an Absentee/Mail-in Ballot or have a permanent request for an Absentee/Mail-in Ballot, please do not submit another application. For inquiries, please call 206-296-8683 or TTD 206-296-0109. You may fax completed forms to 206-205-5080.</i> <i>若你已索取缺席/郵寄選票或已填表格為未來的選舉索取缺席/郵寄選票, 請勿再遞入另一申請表格。如有諮詢, 請致電 206-296-8683。英文雙語特別電話服務專線 206-296-0109。填寫表格可傳真至206-205-5080。</i></p>			

Source: Election officials.

**Appendix IV: Examples of Bilingual Voting
Written Assistance Materials**

Figure 4: English/Vietnamese Bilingual Sample Ballot - Boston, Mass.

SPECIMEN BALLOT LÁ PHIẾU MẪU

PENALTY FOR WILLFULLY DEFACING, TEARING DOWN, REMOVING OR DESTROYING A LIST OF CANDIDATES OR SPECIMEN BALLOT.

FINE NOT TO EXCEED ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

HÌNH PHẠT DÀNH CHO HÀNH VI BÔI XÓA, THÁO GỖ, LẤY ĐI HOẶC PHÁ HỦY DANH SÁCH ỨNG CỬ VIÊN HOẶC LÁ PHIẾU MẪU. PHẠT TIỀN KHÔNG QUÁ MỘT TRĂM ĐÔ LĂ.

CITY OF BOSTON / THÀNH PHỐ BOSTON
SPECIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION / BẦU CỬ ĐẶC BIỆT CỦA THÀNH PHỐ
SPECIMEN BALLOT / LÁ PHIẾU MẪU
TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2007 / THỨ BA, NGÀY 15 THÁNG NĂM, 2007

<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">DISTRICT 2 / QUẬN 2</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Ward/Phường</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Precincts/Khu Bầu Cử</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>7 & 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>1, 2 & 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>1 - 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>1 - 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>1 & 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	Ward/Phường	Precincts/Khu Bầu Cử	3	7 & 8	4	1, 2 & 3	5	1	6	1 - 9	7	1 - 9	8	1 & 2	9	1		<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;"> <i>Michael P. Chiu</i> <i>Nguyen K. Huong</i> Board of Election Commissioners </p>
Ward/Phường	Precincts/Khu Bầu Cử																	
3	7 & 8																	
4	1, 2 & 3																	
5	1																	
6	1 - 9																	
7	1 - 9																	
8	1 & 2																	
9	1																	

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTER / CHỈ DẪN DÀNH CHO CỬ TRI

TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice: ●
To vote for a person not on the ballot, write that person's name and residence in the blank space provided and fill in the oval.

ĐỂ BỎ PHIẾU, tô kín HÌNH BẦU DỤC bên tay PHẢI của tên người quý vị muốn chọn: ●
Để bỏ phiếu cho một người không có tên in trên lá phiếu, viết tên và nơi thường trú của người đó vào khoảng trống và tô kín hình bầu dục.

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">CITY COUNCILLOR DISTRICT 2 NGHĨ VIÊN HỘI ĐỒNG THÀNH PHỐ QUẬN HAI</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: x-small;">(For Unexpired Term) / (Cho nhiệm kỳ chưa hết hạn)</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">VOTE FOR ONE / BẦU CHO MỘT NGƯỜI</p>	○	
<p>BILL LINEHAN 128 G Street District 2/QUẬN 2</p>	○	
<p>SUSAN M. PASSONI 127 Chandler Street District 2/QUẬN 2</p>	○	
<p>(Write in) (Tô đến tên ứng cử viên)</p>	○	

Source: Election officials.

**Appendix IV: Examples of Bilingual Voting
Written Assistance Materials**

Figure 5: English/Spanish Bilingual Official Ballot - Boston, Mass.

<p>CITY OF BOSTON / CIUDAD DE BOSTON SPECIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION / ELECCIÓN MUNICIPAL ESPECIAL OFFICIAL BALLOT / PAPELETA OFICIAL TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2007 / MARTES, 15 DE MAYO DE 2007</p>																				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">DISTRICT 2 / DISTRITO 2</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Ward/Circunscripción</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Precincts/Precintos</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>7 & 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>1, 2 & 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>1 - 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>1 - 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>1 & 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DISTRICT 2 / DISTRITO 2		Ward/Circunscripción	Precincts/Precintos	3	7 & 8	4	1, 2 & 3	5	1	6	1 - 9	7	1 - 9	8	1 & 2	9	1		<p><i>Michael P. Chariton</i> <i>Ryan A. Harrison</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Board of Election Commissioners</p>
DISTRICT 2 / DISTRITO 2																				
Ward/Circunscripción	Precincts/Precintos																			
3	7 & 8																			
4	1, 2 & 3																			
5	1																			
6	1 - 9																			
7	1 - 9																			
8	1 & 2																			
9	1																			
<p>INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTER / INSTRUCCIONES PARA EL VOTANTE</p> <p>TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice: ● To vote for a person not on the ballot, write that person's name and residence in the blank space provided and fill in the oval.</p> <p>PARA VOTAR, rellene completamente el ÓVALO a la DERECHA de su selección: ● Para votar por una persona que no está en la papeleta, escriba el nombre y la dirección de esa persona en el espacio provisto y rellene el óvalo.</p>																				
<p>CITY COUNCILLOR DISTRICT 2 CONCEJAL MUNICIPAL DEL DISTRITO 2 (For Unexpired Term) / (Para periodo que no haya expirado) VOTE FOR ONE / VOTE POR UNO</p>																				
<p>BILL LINEHAN <small>128 G Street District 2/Distrito 2</small></p>	<input type="radio"/>																			
<p>SUSAN M. PASSONI <small>121 Chandler Street District 2/Distrito 2</small></p>	<input type="radio"/>																			
<p><input type="radio"/></p> <p><small>(Write-in) (Escriba el nombre)</small></p>																				

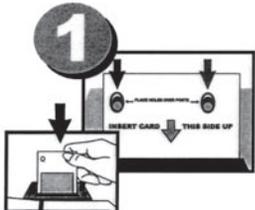
Source: Election officials.

Figure 6: Spanish Voting Instructions - Los Angeles, Calif.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS VOTANTES

Sistema de votación InkaVote

1



Inserte la boleta electoral.
Asegúrese de que los orificios en la boleta encajen en los pasadores rojos.

2



¡Marque su selección!
Inserte el marcador (provisto en la casilla) junto a su selección de voto. Presione para llenar el círculo.

3



Revise su boleta.
Cerciórese de que los círculos estén claramente marcados con tinta. Coloque la boleta electoral en la solapa de secreto y entréguela al funcionario de elecciones.

PARA VOTAR POR UN CANDIDATO

- Llene el círculo junto al nombre(s) del candidato.
- No vote por más candidatos que el número estipulado. Esto resultará en una sobrevotación y su voto para ese cargo no será contado.

ABC WATER DISTRICT	CANDIDATE SMITH Police Officer	○
	CANDIDATE JOHNSON Airline Pilot	○
	CANDIDATE LOPEZ Educator	○
Vote for No More Than Two		

PARA VOTAR POR UNA INICIATIVA DE LEY

- Llene el círculo junto a la palabra SÍ o NO.
- No vote por SÍ y NO a la vez. Esto resultará en una sobrevotación y su voto para esa iniciativa de ley no será contado.

A	Shall Los Angeles County be declared the sun and leisure capital of the world?	YES	○
		NO	○

PARA VOTAR POR UN JUEZ ASOCIADO DE LA SUPREMA CORTE • JUEZ COMPETENTE O JUEZ ASOCIADO DE LA CORTE DE APELACIÓN

- Llene el círculo junto a la palabra SÍ o NO.
- No vote por SÍ y NO a la vez. Esto resultará en una sobrevotación y su voto no será contado.

For Associate Justice, Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Nine. Shall Associate Justice CANDIDATE JONES be elected to the office for the term as provided by law?	YES	○
	NO	○

PARA VOTAR POR UNA PERSONA QUE NO FIGURA EN LA BOLETA
(Los votos agregados son válidos para candidatos calificados únicamente)

- Anote el título del cargo y el nombre del candidato calificado para voto agregado en el espacio en blanco que se suministra dentro de la solapa de secreto.
- El número total de votos, incluyendo candidatos agregados, no debe exceder el número máximo de votos permitidos por contienda o su voto no contará para la contienda en cuestión.

Office	90th Water District
Candidate	Candidate Doe

Si comete un error al marcar la boleta, solicítele una nueva al funcionario de elecciones.

Source: Election officials.

**Appendix IV: Examples of Bilingual Voting
Written Assistance Materials**

REGULACIONES ELECTORALES

CÓMO MARCAR Y EMITIR SU VOTO

- Debe votar en una casilla designada utilizando el dispositivo provisto.
- Antes de salir de la casilla, revise sus opciones en la boleta.
- Si está satisfecho,* coloque la boleta dentro de la solapa de secreto de color gris y entréguesela al colaborador del recinto.
- El colaborador del recinto desprenderá el comprobante y se lo entregará a usted.
- Su boleta (dentro de la solapa de secreto) será depositada en la urna electoral.

* (NOTA: Si comete un error en su boleta electoral, colóquela dentro de la solapa de secreto de color gris, entréguesela al colaborador del recinto y comuníquelo que cometió un error. El colaborador del recinto escribirá la palabra "malograda" ("spoiled") en la boleta y le entregará otra boleta electoral y una solapa de secreto. Para este propósito, sólo puede recibir tres boletas electorales, incluida la original.

CONTEO DE BOLETAS ELECTORALES

Cualquier persona puede observar los procedimientos de cierre de las urnas electorales. Tan pronto se cierren las casillas electorales, los colaboradores del recinto contarán todas las boletas que no fueron utilizadas, las colocarán en el recipiente original, sellarán la caja y luego procederán a abrir las urnas electorales y contar las boletas sufragadas. El número de boletas electorales sufragadas debería ser igual al número de firmas en la lista de votantes. Los colaboradores del recinto deben continuar los procedimientos de cierre sin interrupciones hasta que finalicen.

DESTRUCCIÓN O REMOCIÓN DE MATERIALES

Durante la elección, ninguna persona puede malograr o remover ningún material de la votación, incluyendo carteles, listas o instrucciones fijadas dentro o fuera del lugar de votación.

LEYES ELECTORALES

Ninguna persona puede:

- (1) Solicitar a un votante que firme una petición de iniciativa, referéndum, destitución, nominación o para cualquier otro propósito, en un radio de 100 pies del lugar de votación.
- (2) Solicitar un voto o pedirle a los votantes sus votos en un radio de 100 pies del lugar de votación. Excepción: El personal de los medios informativos acreditados puede realizar coberturas a la salida de las casillas electorales, pero deberán permanecer a una distancia de 25 pies del lugar de votación.
- (3) Hablar a los votantes o colocar carteles con carácter proselitista (excepto según lo estipulado en el Código Electoral 14216) en un radio de 100 pies del lugar de votación.
- (4) Hacer proselitismo el día de la elección en un radio de 100 pies del lugar de votación.
- (5) Solicitar, recibir o votar una boleta electoral, excepto en el recinto electoral que se le haya asignado.
- (6) Entregar o recibir una boleta electoral que no provenga de un colaborador del recinto.
- (7) Marcar una boleta con fines de identificación.
- (8) Mostrar a nadie una boleta electoral una vez que haya votado en ella.
- (9) Entregar al colaborador del recito una boleta electoral diferente de la que se le proveyó.
- (10) Pedir a los votantes que enseñen sus boletas electorales.
- (11) Retirar ninguna boleta electoral del lugar de votación.

Ningún colaborador del recinto puede:

- (1) Divulgar por quién ha votado una persona.
- (2) Colocar en la urna electoral una boleta que todavía tenga adherido el comprobante para el votante.

SANCIONES POR CONTRAVENCIONES A LAS LEYES ELECTORALES

Toda persona que de alguna manera interfiera con la realización de la elección o el conteo de los votos por parte del colaborador del recinto; o que perturbe a los votantes que ejercitan su legítimo derecho al voto en una elección, e impida la celebración de la elección o el debido recuento de los votos, será penada con reclusión en una prisión estatal por un periodo de 16 meses a tres años.

CONDADO DE LOS ANGELES

4/03

Source: Election officials.

Figure 7: Bilingual Polling Place Signs - King County, Wash.



Source: Election officials.

Figure 8: Bilingual Poll Worker Nametags and Buttons - Orange County, Calif.



Source: Election officials.

Appendix IV: Examples of Bilingual Voting
Written Assistance Materials

Figure 9: Multilingual Tally Card - Los Angeles, Calif.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

PRECINCT NUMBER: _____

Inspectors! On Election Day, please help us keep track of how many voters requested assistance in:
 (1) another language in order to vote and
 (2) voters who required other special assistance.
 (Examples: Mandarin I, III, Wheelchair Users: III)

Chinese/Mandarin _____ Spanish _____

Chinese/Cantonese _____ Tagalog _____

Japanese _____ Vietnamese _____

Korean _____ No request in any language.

Other Language (Please specify): _____

Voters using wheelchair _____

Blind, visually or hearing impaired voters _____

(PLEASE RETURN IN GREEN STRIPE ENVELOPE)
 (See Reverse Side)

If you needed an **additional Pollworker** in any language, please specify below:

Language _____

Source: Election officials.

Appendix V: Additional Challenges to Evaluating the Usefulness of Bilingual Voting Assistance

In addition to the three key issues discussed earlier in this report, other difficult issues also face election offices in evaluating the bilingual voting assistance they provide, including: (1) how to appropriately sample, or select, polling places and language minority voters to include in an evaluation; (2) the receptivity of language minority voters to participation in a study; (3) having data collectors who can speak fluently the specific language, and possibly dialect, of language minority voters in a jurisdiction; (4) having the necessary staff and technical expertise to conduct a methodologically sound evaluation; and (5) the likely expense of an evaluation.

- Determining how to sample: When determining how to gather data from the language minority voting population, a jurisdiction must decide whether to conduct a census (collect data from everyone) or to select a sample of the population from whom to get information. Depending on various factors, including the numbers of precincts and the numbers of voters in the jurisdiction, collecting information from all members of a given population, such as all language minority voters could be very costly, as well as logistically difficult to do in evaluating the usefulness of bilingual voting assistance. Therefore, selecting a probability or nonprobability sample can be a more cost-effective alternative.¹ For example, if a jurisdiction was unable to collect data from all voters on Election Day, it could select a probability sample of voters in an exit poll. To be able to generalize the results to all language minority voters, such an exit poll would need to be based on a probability sample of precincts in the jurisdiction and voters voting within each selected precinct throughout Election Day. Alternatively, jurisdictions could collect information from language minority voters through methods such as comment cards soliciting feedback about bilingual voting placed on tables in precincts on Election Day, or they could log individuals' calls to a telephone hotline to report voting problems. While useful information could be obtained, there would be no guarantee that the voters who completed the cards or called the hotline were statistically representative of all voters who used the bilingual voting assistance. As a result, a jurisdiction would need to be

¹ A probability sample, sometimes referred to as a statistical or random sample, is a sample in which each member in the population has a known chance, or probability, of being selected. If the objective of an evaluation is to make generalizations or draw conclusions about an entire population, without using a census, a probability sample could be used to do this. In a nonprobability sample, members in the population have no chance, or an unknown chance, of being selected. The major limitation of nonprobability samples is that the results cannot be used to make inferences, or generalizations, about a population.

cautious about interpreting the information obtained from this source because the information could be biased.

- Identifying willing participants: It is necessary to have language minority voters who are receptive to participation in an evaluation. In some locations, language minority voters may be sensitive about their English language skills, and consequently, there may be some embarrassment about needing to use bilingual voting assistance or about the extent to which the assistance is helpful. In these instances, it may be difficult to get language minority voters to cooperate, or, if they do cooperate, difficult to obtain accurate information about their experiences in using the assistance provided.
- Obtaining data collectors with language skills: Any evaluation of bilingual voting assistance must use individuals trained in data collection methods. These individuals would also need to speak fluently the specific language, and possibly dialect, spoken by language minority voters in a jurisdiction in order to effectively communicate with language minority voters asked to participate in a study.
- Having the necessary staff: Election offices face the difficult issues of having the necessary staff and technical expertise to conduct methodologically sound evaluations in evaluating the effectiveness of the bilingual voting assistance provided. Since the purpose of election offices is to conduct elections, it is unlikely that election offices will have staff available who either have the time or professional expertise to conduct an evaluation. Therefore, election offices would likely need to seek outside professional assistance, such as through a contract with a consultant, to do so.
- Having sufficient resources: Efforts to evaluate program effectiveness can be expensive. Unless an election office received special funding to evaluate its bilingual assistance program, it would likely have to rely on existing operating budgets that may already be limited. Officials in five jurisdictions said they had no money or staff to evaluate the assistance they provided. The election administrator in one jurisdiction stated that their top funding priorities were for operational needs, not for conducting such a study.

Appendix VI: Comments from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission



U. S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
1225 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC. 20005

December 21, 2007

Mr. William O. Jenkins, Jr.
Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC20548

RE: Comments regarding proposed GAO-08-182 Report

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

The U.S. Election Assistance (EAC) is grateful for the opportunity to comment on GAO's report, *Bilingual Voting Assistance: Selected Jurisdictions' Strategies for Identifying Needs and Providing Assistance* submitted to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) on December 13, 2007. The EAC appreciates GAO's research into the area of election language accessibility and plans to make use of the report in planning future EAC studies and research activities. The EAC is committed to providing election officials with resources that address the needs of voters with limited English proficiency.

As noted in your report, the EAC supports State and local election officials in the area of bilingual voting assistance through its Language Accessibility Program (LAP), Election Management Guidelines Program (EMG), and research activities under Section 241 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). These programs have already produced resources that are available to election officials and the public, including:

- *Glossary of Key Election Terminology [English/Spanish – Spanish/English]* - This glossary contains more than 1,800 terms and phrases used in elections across the United States. The glossary assists election officials in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate translations to voters with limited English proficiency. It also contains a Spanish to English section as a tool for voters seeking to familiarize themselves with election terminology in English.
- Spanish version of the National Mail-In Voter Registration Form prescribed by the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).
- *Successful Practices for Poll Worker Recruitment, Training, and Retention* – This guidebook presents a variety of field-tested techniques, which can be adapted by election jurisdictions of varying sizes and demographics, to aid in recruitment, training, and management of bilingual poll workers.
- *A Guidebook for Recruiting College Poll Workers* – The guidebook includes a chapter on recruitment of minority and bilingual students to serve as poll workers on Election Day.

**Appendix VI: Comments from the U.S.
Election Assistance Commission**

- *Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections* – This report provides best practice samples for the design of ballots and voter information materials, including best practices for developing materials in multiple languages.

All of these publications and reports are available on the EAC's Web site at www.eac.gov.

Additionally, the EAC is in the process of developing a number of new tools for elections officials. These include:

- Translation of the *Glossary of Key Election Terminology* into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese (expected May 2008).
- Translation of the National Voter Registration Form prescribed by NVRA into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- Development of the brochure *A Voter's Guide to Federal Elections* - The goal of this publication is to inform voters about the Federal election process, providing information concerning voter registration, polling places, absentee ballots, provisional ballots, poll workers, and similar topics. This brochure will be available initially in English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese; the EAC will also examine the feasibility of providing this information in audio format to Native American and Alaska Native voters.
- Development of a chapter (and accompanying brochure) on language accessibility in the EAC's *Election Management Guidelines*. The chapter will seek to provide election officials recommendations for addressing the particular challenges jurisdictions face in providing bilingual assistance throughout voter registration and election activities, including assistance to Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

These recent and upcoming activities are just the beginning of the EAC's efforts to be the source for information on bilingual voting assistance. The EAC will continue to seek feedback from election officials, interest groups, Federal agencies, and the general public to identify resources and materials the EAC may provide in this area.

GAO's final report will be an invaluable resource to election officials as they strive to meet the needs of all voters. The EAC sincerely appreciates the opportunity to provide information for this report. If you need further information or have any questions regarding EAC's language accessibility activities, please do not hesitate to contact us at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas R. Wilkey
Executive Director

Appendix VII: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

William O. Jenkins, Jr. (202) 512-8777 or jenkinswo@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to those named above, Dawn E. Hoff, Assistant Director; David Alexander, Assistant Director; Claudia K. Becker; Natalie Chaney; Geoffrey Hamilton; Linda Miller; Hugh C. Paquette; Deena D. Richart; and Clarence Tull, Sr., made key contributions to this report.

Related GAO Products

Elections: Further Testing Could Provide Increased but Not Absolute Assurance That Voting Systems Did Not Cause Undervotes in Florida's 13th Congressional District. [GAO-08-97T](#). Washington, D.C.: October 2, 2007.

Elections: Status of GAO's Review of Voting Equipment Used in Florida's 13th Congressional District. [GAO-07-1167T](#). Washington, D.C.: August 3, 2007.

Elections: Action Plans Needed to Fully Address Challenges in Electronic Absentee Voting Initiatives for Military and Overseas Citizens. [GAO-07-774](#). Washington, D.C.: June 14, 2007.

Elections: All Levels of Government Are Needed to Address Electronic Voting System Challenges. [GAO-07-741T](#). Washington, D.C.: April 18, 2007.

Elections: All Levels of Government Are Needed to Address Electronic Voting System Challenges. [GAO-07-576T](#). Washington, D.C.: March 7, 2007.

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Election Reform: Nine States' Experiences Implementing Federal Requirements for Computerized Statewide Voter Registration Lists. [GAO-06-247](#). Washington, D.C.: February 7, 2006.

Elections: Views of Selected Local Election Officials on Managing Voter Registration and Ensuring Eligible Citizens Can Vote. [GAO-05-997](#). Washington, D.C.: September 27, 2005.

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Department of Justice's Activities to Address Past Election-Related Voting Irregularities. [GAO-04-1041R](#). Washington, D.C.: September 14, 2004.

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Comparison of Voting Age Population to Registered Voters in the 40 Largest U.S. Counties. [GAO-01-560R](#). Washington, D.C.: March 23, 2001.

Elections: The Scope of Congressional Authority in Election Administration. [GAO-01-470](#). Washington, D.C.: March 13, 2001.

Bilingual Voting Assistance: Assistance Provided and Costs. [GAO/GGD-97-81](#). Washington, D.C.: May 9, 1997.

Puerto Rico: Confusion over Applicability of the Electoral Law to Referendum Process. [HRD-93-84](#). Washington, D.C.: May 28, 1993.

Related GAO Products

Voting: Some Procedural Changes and Informational Activities Could Increase Turnout. [PEMD-91-1](#). Washington, D.C.: November 2, 1990.

Bilingual Voting Assistance: Costs of and Use during the November 1984 General Election. [GGD-86-134BR](#). Washington, D.C.: September 15, 1986.

Justice Can Further Improve Its Monitoring of Changes in State/Local Voting Laws. [GGD-84-9](#). Washington, D.C.: December 19, 1983.

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