

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **PRELIMINARY VOTING MACHINE ALLOCATION REPORT RELEASED; IMPORTANCE OF ABSENTEE VOTING STRESSED**

**July 30, 2008 (Columbus, Ohio):** The Franklin County Board of Elections today announced the release of a preliminary report containing voting machine allocation recommendations for the November 4, 2008 General Election. A public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, August 14 at 6:30 p.m. to accept public comment on the draft proposal.

"We're trying to reduce the possibility of long lines that could result this fall from record turnout and a long ballot that will take time for voters to complete," said Dennis L. White, Director of the Franklin County Board of Elections. "Voting machine allocation is just one part of our strategy for mitigating waiting times."

Ted Allen, associate professor of industrial and systems engineering at The Ohio State University and project manager for the Board's consultant, Sagata, Ltd., studied election data from 2004, 2006, and 2008 to produce preliminary recommendations to the Board. "We've documented the time it actually takes to vote a mock 2008 General Election ballot and the frequency with which voters have arrived at the polls in the past to determine voter servicing times and to predict possible waiting times."

Both Director White and Dr. Allen stressed, however, that while the projections are

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based upon simulations and defensible formulas, voting and waiting times could be longer or shorter than estimated. “More than anything, this report underscores the critical importance for Franklin County to vote early by mail using an absentee ballot,” said Director White. “The only way to guarantee you won’t have to wait in line is to vote early by mail.”

Deputy Director Matthew Damschroder noted that the Board has changed several of its Election Day procedures to streamline Election Day voting to reduce waiting times. “Voters now sign-in by the first letter of their last name instead of having to remember their precinct name or figuring out in which precinct’s line to stand.” The new procedure was implemented in March to positive reviews from voters and poll workers alike.

In addition to making the check-in process more efficient, Director White said that a voter will be able to use any machine in the voting location. Before this year, a voter had to wait to use a voting machine assigned to the voter’s precinct while machines assigned to another precinct in the same location may have sat idle. The Board is also seeking supplemental funding from the County Commissioners to rent additional voting machines, in the event that rental units are available.

The Columbus-based consulting team included the team from Sagata, Ltd, Dr. Ted Allen and Dr. Mikhail Bernshteyn, and Chris Rockwell of Lextant, a local research and user-experience firm.

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