Transparency in United States Election Law

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Voter confidence in U.S. elections was shaken by the Bush v. Gore (2000) incident and the national implementation of direct-recording electronic, voting machines. International voting transparency standards are practiced in most democratic countries. In the United States, however, Federalism allows each state to develop and monitor its own election process independent of overarching international or even national standards. As a result, the states' election processes vary depending on the political culture of the state. States with transparency laws that favor voters rather than political parties were shown to have higher voter confidence in election results.

My research with Dr. Hall focused on recording and comparing state statutes and regulations that define the practice and limits of election transparency across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This study is part of a larger study commissioned by the Election Assistance Commission comprehensively comparing election laws across states. This research identified benchmark and best practices in eight guiding principles (including transparency) for vote counting as defined by the International Administration and Cost of Elections Project.