



ILLINOIS BALLOT INTEGRITY PROJECT

NEWS RELEASE

635 Chicago Ave • Suite 127 • Evanston • IL • 60202

Phone: (847) 644-2654 • FAX: (847) 556-0363 • email: wilson@ballot-integrity.org

www.ballot-integrity.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Robert A. Wilson

(847) 644-2654

92% of Americans Oppose Secret Vote Counting

Evanston, August 23, 2006. A new Zogby International poll released yesterday reveals that fully 92% of every single demographic group in America favors the public's right to observe vote counting and to obtain information regarding vote counting from election officials. The August 11-15 Zogby telephone poll sampled 1,018 likely voters nationwide. In a question designed to determine respondent's views about elections and election transparency, 92% of those responding agreed that citizens have the right to view the counting and get information about how our votes are counted.

Question No. 18: In some states, members of the public have the right to view the counting of votes and verify how that process is working. In other states, citizens are in effect barred from viewing vote counting even if they would like to view the process. Which of the following two statements are you more likely to agree with – A or B?

Statement A: Citizens have the right to view and obtain information about how election officials count votes - 92%

Statement B: Citizens do not have the right to view and obtain information about how elections officials count votes. - 6%

Neither/Not sure - 2%

Most all likely voters (92%) agree that citizens have the right to view and obtain information about how election officials count votes (Statement A). Just 6% feel citizens do not have this right (Statement B).

Eighty-six percent or more of people within every demographic group agrees with Statement A. This includes overwhelming majorities of Democrats (93%), Republicans (87%), and independents (97%). Furthermore, no more than 10% of people in any sub-group – with the sole exception of 18-29 year-olds (13%) – agree more with Statement B.

Weighting by region, party, age, race, religion, gender is used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. Zogby International's sampling and weighting procedures also have been validated through its political polling: more than 95% of the firm's polls have come within 1% of actual election-day outcomes.

Attorney Paul Lehto, who commissioned the Zogby Poll, stated, "If there are any American political values that rate any higher than election transparency, we haven't been able to find them. But if such political values exist, they certainly are not under the attack that election transparency is. This attack on transparency and loss of public rights to observe and supervise their own elections has occurred because of widespread government purchases of electronic voting machines that feature software claimed by vendors to be protected by trade secrecy and proprietary rights against any public observation or disclosure. Because of \$4 billion in federal funding to states and counties under the Help America Vote Act of 2002, these new invisible electronic ballots are used by a rapidly increasing majority of Americans

against the wishes of 92% of all Americans, according to Zogby. Under electronic voting run under this regime of trade secrecy, American citizens are never allowed at any time to verify if their elections are open, honest and accurate, and the government actually ends up ganging up with its vendors to fight citizen requests for information about the secret vote counting that is occurring. It is by no means 'progress' to take checks and balances or public oversight out of elections, it is more like the biggest step backwards for democracy imaginable."

Larry Quick, state chairman of the Illinois Ballot Integrity Project, which, along with several other election integrity groups helped fund the poll, said, "The results of the Zogby poll show clearly that Americans want honest, fair and completely transparent elections with citizen oversight throughout." "Every concerned citizen in Illinois ought to get involved in the election process as a judge or poll watcher," he added.

In a related question, Zogby respondents indicated that 61% of Americans are aware of news reports about flaws in electronic voting machines. "The fact that most voters are learning that electronic voting machines, with their invisible ballots and secret software developed by private companies, are unsecure, unreliable and inaccurate is welcome news," said Clare Tobin, chair of the Chicago chapter of IBIP.

"The real solution to open and accurate elections is a return to paper ballots which are a permanent and easily verifiable record of the voter's intent, and can be audited on election night or made available for recount in the event that error or fraud is suspected," said Melissa Urda, IBIP's co-chair of IBIP's DuPage County chapter.

Bob Wilson, chair of the Cook County chapter of IBIP said, "We hope that David Orr and Langdon Neal take very seriously the fact that more than nine out of ten voters in Chicago and Cook County want public oversight of the central counting and tabulation of votes on election night. What goes on in the 'War Room' at 69 West Washington needs to be open to the public and scrutinized with particular care, especially since absentee and early votes are going to be centrally counted rather than returned to the precincts for processing as in prior elections."

The Illinois Ballot Integrity Project, www.ballot-integrity.org, is a not-for-profit, non-partisan civic organization dedicated to the correction of election system deficiencies and ensuring fair, accurate, and completely transparent elections. The Mission of the Illinois Ballot Integrity Project is to inform and educate the public, media and government officials about important election integrity issues and to promote the adoption of legislation and policies designed to secure the democratic process. The Zogby Poll can be viewed at www.ballot-integrity.org/docs/Zogby_Poll_Aug-2006.pdf

####