

# BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE

## VOTER REGISTRATION MODERNIZATION IS POSSIBLE NOW: STATE EXPERIENCES

State experiences show that voter registration modernization is feasible, cost-effective, and will save taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

### EACH COMPONENT OF VRM IS CURRENTLY BEING USED SUCCESSFULLY IN MULTIPLE STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY:

- At least 17 states—Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Washington—have fully or substantially **automated the voter registration process** at DMVs.
- 38 state DMVs **automatically register** all eligible young men for the Selective Service, as do a variety of other federal and state agencies.
- 8 states—Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington—have **systems of permanent registration** that allow registered voters who move to cast valid ballots even if they do not update their registrations before Election Day.
- 8 states—Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Wyoming—offer **Election Day registration**, allowing eligible citizens to register or update their records on Election Day. A number of other states offer same day registration in some circumstances or allow voters to correct registration errors on Election Day.
- 34 states allow citizens to look up their **voter registration information online**.
- 11 states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington—currently or will soon offer **online voter registration**. North Carolina is considering implementing online registration.
- Thanks to a 2002 federal law, every state now has (or soon will have) a computerized statewide voter registration database capable of sharing information in some form with other government databases.

### EVERY STATE THAT HAS IMPLEMENTED ELEMENTS OF VRM HAS SAVED MONEY:

- VRM is a modest investment, and it will pay for itself, saving states millions of dollars a year.
- Washington spent about \$280K to automate voter registration at DMVs and introduce online registration. The Secretary of State's office saved over \$125K in the first year, and the counties saved even more.
- Online registration cost Arizona less than \$100K, and automating DMV registrations cost only an additional \$30K.
- In Maricopa County, Arizona (which includes Phoenix), processing a paper voter registration form costs 83¢, compared to 3¢ for applications received electronically from the DMV or through the online system.

- In 2008, Maricopa County saved data entry costs equivalent to the cost of eight full-time employees.
- Delaware recently improved its electronic voter registration system at DMVs, saving over \$200,000 a year from its election budget.
- State election officials estimate that VRM could reduce election costs by one third.
- Canada **fully recouped** the cost of its VRM system in one national election.

#### **AUTOMATED TRANSMISSION OF VOTER REGISTRATIONS INCREASES REGISTRATION RATES:**

- In Washington and Kansas, the number of voter registration transactions at DMVs **doubled** after the system was automated.
- In South Dakota, the number of registrations at DMVs increased almost **eight-fold** after automation.
- In Delaware, which partially automated voter registration at DMVs over a decade ago, 81% of all registrations come from DMVs, compared to 38% nationally.