Virginia for America First

Election Integrity Manual

Version 9/7/2022

This manual is a work in progress, and will be updated whenever new or additional information is available. If you have any comments, suggestions, or corrections, please send those to Bill Hawkins director@va.foramericafirst.com.

September 2022. This manual was developed and published by Virginians for America First, with resources provided by the American Project. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this manual, but given the variance in procedures by locality, and many recent legal and procedural changes, errors and omissions are inevitable; therefore, only the Code of Virginia and official procedures of the Department of Elections are authoritative.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Virginia's elections are a mess. A mix of ill-defined, non-transparent, inefficient, and constantly changing processes; and this confusion was multiplied through ill-advised changes in procedures in response to the COVID pandemic. Specific concerns include a lack of transparency in processes and procedures; a perception of bias in election administration; inaccurate voting lists and lack of effective voter ID; intimidation and fraud through mail-in voting and ballot harvesting; doubt in the accuracy and security of machine-based voting; and the influence of dark money in campaigns and election processes.

Fundamental reforms in law and procedures are required to restore lasting public confidence in the integrity of Virginia elections, but these reforms will take time. Unfortunately, we don't have much time, as our next election season begins September 23, 2022. In the near term, we believe that the most important action we can take to strengthen the integrity of our elections, and confidence in the democratic legitimacy of our elected representatives, is to increase transparency in electoral processes. Your participation is essential to achieving this goal.

This guide aims to provide you, a citizen, with the knowledge and tools needed to help ensure a free and fair election process for all of Virginia's voters. In the guide you will find information on election reform advocacy, becoming an officer of election, and monitoring election processes; all activities aimed at increasing transparency in the elections, and public ownership of that process.

The American republic was founded on the principle and promise of self-government; a promise that began in 1619 with the establishment of our own General Assembly—the first representative body in the western hemisphere—and culminated in the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Now that promise is threatened by a loss of faith in the integrity of the very process that enables self-government, and the republic that so many struggled and fought and died to establish, is at risk.

Once again, Virginia stands at the pivot of history. Virginians led the way in 1619, and again in 1776. Now, once again, we are called to lead; to secure again the right to self-government for ourselves and our families and our fellow citizens. If we are to save our republic, it must begin here, now, with this election, and build across the country in 2022 and 2024. As has ever been, success will require sacrifice and hard work, but with your help, and the guiding hand of God, it is not too late to restore our republic.

Bill Hawkins
State Director
Virginians for America First

Operation Eagles Wings

Virginia for Election Transparency and Virginia for America First are part of a national initiative called "Operation Eagles Wings" supported by the America Project (TAP), and through the voluntary contributions of individuals committed to the restoration and strengthening of constitutional democracy in America. OEW grew out of the program developed for the 2021 state and local elections in Virginia, creating a template for issue advocacy and election integrity programing which became nationally known as the "Virginia Model".[1]

Virginians for America First (VFAF) launched on 09 March 2021 with the intent to elect an America First majority in the Virginia House of Delegates. Bishop Leon Benjamin, initially supported by Americans for Limited Government (ALG), led the efforts as the founder of Virginians for America First. His courageous stand on America First principles resonated with Virginians of all races and social standing. He was instrumental in bringing unity, building coalitions, and reaching into communities not normally engaged.

Once VFAF launched there was great response with hundreds of sign-ups within hours. This came as a surprise. The *overwhelming* interest of those sign-ups was *election integrity* (EI). It became obvious we must include an EI program component to satisfy the interests of our volunteers.

While I was a political appointee during the Trump Administration at the US Agency for International Development, I had worked with Tim Meisburger, who was appointed to USAID by President Trump in 2017 as a director of USAID's Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG).

Tim is an expert in EI, with 30+ years' experience around the globe working to ensure free and fair elections in third world and developing democracies; so I contacted him, and asked for his help in developing an EI program based on accepted international standards. Tim joined VFAF/ALG and developed the EI program. He generated a manual for election observation specific to Virginia based on recognized international standards.

The EI program in conjunction with the America First voter education component became the complete "Virginia Model." Parts of this model are being shared in states across the nation by others, but only TAP is providing the model in total.

In the summer of 2021 TAP learned of VFAF's project in Virginia and began supporting it financially as the major contributor. TAP recognized early on that this project was making an impact in Virginia, and that what had been effective in Virginia in 2021 could serve as a model for programs in battleground states in 2022.

The EI component of OEW consists of four major parts:

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[1] See Fixing Virginia's Elections to Save America

- Voter education of America First issues concentrating on low-propensity voters. These are voters who are generally not politically engaged but want America First principles in our government.

- Training of poll workers/poll watchers with an in-depth program on election observation, reporting, and the rights of citizens to have free and fair elections.

- Direct citizen observation and review of processes and procedures pertaining to the maintenance of and handling of voter rolls. This is primarily achieved by communicating directly with election officials in each municipality.

- Real time evaluation of absentee ballot processing during election season (45 days of early voting in Virginia). This part of the program will need to be adjusted to correspond with state specific statutes.

The voter education component of the OEW conducts campaigns to inform voters who have historically had little access to information on the America First movement about the of how America First policies can increase their freedom and improve their lives. Increased turnout by new America First voters, particularly in minority communities, was a very important part of the victory in Virginia. We learned through our targeted voter education efforts, and canvassing, that addressing issues that directly affected voters and their families made the difference in turning out minorities to support candidates who embraced America First principles.

Following its successes in Virginia, TAP developed the "Operation Eagles Wings" program to share its approaches with like-minded organizations across the country, and to implement the Virginia Model Template in eight other critical states: Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Wisconsin, Arizona, Texas, and Illinois.

2021 in Virginia was a message sent to every America First Patriot that with dedicated hard work, focus, and a united effort "We the People" can save the Republic for future generations. 2022 offers us the opportunity to repeat a Virginia type victory all around the nation. Join us by going to www.americaproject.com to volunteer for, and donate to this effort.

Mark Lloyd
Director
Operation Eagles Wings

1   Virginians for Election Transparency

1.1   Introduction to VFET

Virginians for Election Transparency is the election integrity arm of Virginian's for America First, and is a non-partisan organization dedicated to the promotion of free and fair elections for all Virginians, regardless of political party. To increase transparency; and to detect issues and concerns with election processes as early as possible so that they can be addressed before the election; VFET has established a comprehensive election observation network similar to those common in the other democracies.

VFET's non-partisan long-term election observers will meet frequently with registrars, boards of election, and security officials before election season begins, to learn more about their plans for ensuring free and fair elections. To ensure the public is fully informed of progress (or lack thereof), VFET will issue frequent reports of its findings state-wide, and at the county or city level. Because Virginia's election law doesn't guarantee access for non-partisan observers, beginning September 23 systematic observation will have to be conducted by poll watchers endorsed bya political party. To enhance transparency and ensure effective observation during the election season, VFET will help recruit, train and equip poll watchers for the 2022 election cycle.

1.2   Pre-Election Observation

Long-term observers at the county and municipal level who will monitor election processes and preparations in the period before the election season begins on September 23. They will hold introductory interviews with local registrars, boards of election, and security officials, and the information they collect will be compiled by the into both public and internal statewide reports that can be used to inform advocacy, and hopefully to improve the integrity of the election process before it begins. The initial registrar questionnaire is included in the section on pre-election observation.

1.3   Election Season and Election Day Observation

Because of the peculiarities of Virginia's election law, we cannot rely on non-partisan observation during the election season, so beginning September 23, all observation will be conducted by poll watchers authorized by county party units. VFET will be engaged in recruiting and training poll watchers and has developed the attached guidance and report forms for poll watchers.

2 Advocacy for Election Reform in Virginia

To restore confidence in the integrity of Virginia's elections will require fundamental reform of election laws and procedures to increase the transparency and security of the entire process. Volunteers should be advocates in their communities and across the state for these simple, commonsense reforms.

2.1 Commonsense Election Reforms

Allow effective observation of all election processes; Transparency is the key to creating voter confidence in the integrity and legitimacy of elections, and to facilitate transparency, allowing effective election observation is a norm in established democracies around the world. In 2020 numerous incidents were reported in Virginia and across the country of observers being prevented from effectively monitoring election processes. Effective observation is an internationally recognized standard for free and fair elections. To enable transparency and increase public confidence in the integrity of elections, the Governor, General Assembly, and state and local election officials must respect international norms and standards and make all election processes open to effective observation by both partisan and non-partisan observers.

End most early and mail-in voting; Supposedly to make it easier to vote, our election day has expanded to election month, but election professionals agree that early voting, mail-in voting, and ballot harvesting all facilitate voter intimidation, impersonation, ballot box stuffing and other forms of fraud. To protect Virginia's elections and restore confidence in their integrity, we must demand that lawmakers return to a single election day. Rather than extending the voting period or using insecure mail-in ballots to increase participation at the expense of election integrity, they may make election day a mandated holiday with absentee voting limited to those with a genuine and provable need.

Require ID and proof of citizenship to vote; Almost every democracy in the world requires photo ID and proof of citizenship to vote. Confidence that only qualified voters can vote is so important to democracy that the US has spent hundreds of millions of dollars (at least, probably billions), helping other countries with voter registration and voter ID. Many countries in Africa and Asia already use biometrics to confirm voter ID. The assertion that Virginia is incapable of providing its citizens voter ID, when developing countries from Bangladesh to Zambia accomplish this easily, only serves to fuel perceptions that these individuals true aim is to facilitate cheating. Virginians deserve confidence that only qualified citizens are voting, and that they are only voting once.

Demand manual rather than machine-based voting and counting processes; Voting and counting machines are inherently non-transparent, prone to malfunction, and are viewed by many computer experts (and by senior politicians of both parties) as highly susceptible to rigging, fraud and abuse. Machine processes cannot be effectively observed and certified by election officials, observers, or ordinary citizens, and as such they have no place in Virginia's elections. To restore confidence in the integrity of elections, Virginia must revert to a simple, transparent, and manual polling and counting processes.

Expose "foreign" funding for campaigns from outside the affected constituency; No country in the world allows foreign funding in their election campaigns, because in a democracy only the citizens
who will be represented should have influence on who is elected. The same principle should apply across constituencies in the US. For example, it is incredibly unfair and undemocratic for Silicon Valley to influence Governor or Delegate races in Virginia. If it is not possible to prohibit these undemocratic practices, "foreign" funding of Virginia elections must be monitoredand exposed, to ensure voters know who is trying to unfairly influence our representatives

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Reforming Virginia's Elections

- *Allow effective observation of all election processes*
- *End most early and mail-in voting*
- *Require ID and proof of citizenship to vote*
- *Demand manual rather than machine-based voting and counting processes*
- *Expose "foreign" funding for campaigns from outside the affected constituency*

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2.2   Taking Action

In 2021, our objective was to elect a Governor and House of Delegates committed to making commonsense election reforms that would ensure that all voters' voices are heard and make it easy to vote and hard to cheat. While we achieved our initial objective, there are still many institutional roadblocks and vested interests to overcome before we can have a transparent and credible election process that all Virginians can have faith in and be proud of. To achieve this goal will require a concerted effort across the state, and volunteers have a key role to play.

First, publicize the Commonsense Election Reforms by preparing posters and/or leaflets to put up or pass out in your AOR. The office will prepare some examples and templates you can use, but feel free to also use your own creativity, and share your creations across the network.

Print the *Commonsense Election Reform Pledge* (in the box at the end of this section) and ask all of your local Delegate candidates to sign the pledge. If any will sign, you can use that as a lever to pressure the others, as the coalition will endorse any candidate that signs the pledge. Please let us know who does sign, and who does not.

Write op-eds and letters to the editor for local papers or social media or get interviewed on local radio. Explain the reforms and endorse the candidates who signed the pledge and question the fitness of those who have refused to do so.

Enjoy the fine weather and hold a rally/barbeque/party for election reform. Invite local leaders, candidates, and press. Hang out with like-minded folks, eating burnt meat and drinking beer. And please let us know about anything you do, so we can share your ideas and activities across the state!

3   Serving as an Election Officer

3.1   Why Serve as an Election Officer?

Although both parties have the right to recommend elections officers for every precinct, in the past Republicans have been less likely to do this, and consequently there are many precincts without Republican officers. When this occurs, it one of the essential checks and balances built into the system is missing, and this contributes directly to many voters' lack of confidence in the integrity of the election process.

Election cheating and fraud simply cannot occur without collusion from election officers, so our number one priority role for those interested in promoting election integrity is to serve as an election officer. The timeline for recruitment for the 2022 elections is tight and it should be a year-round effort, but there will also be additional opportunities in the spring of 2023 for the 2023 elections.

3.2   Appointment of Election Officers

Election officers are appointed by local electoral boards for terms not to exceed three years. At least three officers must be appointed for each precinct with less than 4,000 registered voters, and at least five for precincts above 4000. If practicable, each officer should be a qualified voter of the precinct, but in any case, must be a qualified voter of the Commonwealth.

The officers appointed should represent the two parties, with representation equal in precincts having an even number of officers, and to vary by no more than one in precincts having an odd number of officers. For example, in a precinct with three officers, two will be from one party and one from the other. Officers should be appointed from lists of nominations filed by the political parties, but if needed, the electoral board may appoint additional officers who do not represent

any political party.

It is important to note here that Electoral Boards will be composed (under a Democrat governor) of two Democrats and one Republican, so the additional Election Officer in odd-number precincts will usually be a Democrat (i.e., two Democrats and one Republican in a three-person precinct). If local party units do not nominate enough officers, their positions will be filled by the other party or by independents.

Officers of election serve for all elections held in their respective precincts during their terms of office. For a primary election, officers from the relevant party will manage the process, if possible. On each precinct team, one officer will be designated as the chief, and one the assistant chief, and these should be from different parties, if possible. Each chief officer and assistant will be trained in their duties not less than three or more than 30 days before each election, while all other officers will receive at least some training before each general election.

Upon request and at a reasonable charge not to exceed the actual cost incurred, the secretary of the electoral board or the general registrar will provide a copy of the list of the officers of election, including their party designation and precinct to which they are assigned, to any requesting political party or candidate.

3.3   Process for application

There are several avenues to becoming an election officer, but the preferred is that you apply through your local unit chair. In that way we can ensure that we have true political balance on each precinct team. To find your local unit chair, please visit https://virginia.gop/find-your-local-gop/, or https://vademocrats.org/localities/. To ensure consideration, you may also want to apply through the state (https://apps.elections.virginia.gov/OnlineForms/OfficerofElection), or through your local board of elections.

3.4   Promoting Integrity as an Election Officer

As an election officer, nominated by your party, you have a legal and moral duty to administer elections that are free and fair for all voters. Although it is unlikely, in the performance of your duties you may witness other officials engaging in practices not consistent with law or regulations. These can be irregularities (i.e., failure to follow law or procedure due to ignorance), or malfeasance (intended to undermine the integrity of the vote).

In some cases, it may be difficult to determine whether an incident is an irregularity or malfeasance, but in every case election officers should attempt to rectify the situation. That may be as simple as informing the officer(s) of the correct procedure (with reference to official documentation) or contacting senior election officials (County or City Registrar, or your party representative on the local Board of Elections). In cases of potentially criminal conduct, refer to the specific guidance below.

VFET encourages all Election Officers to fill in and submit a *Poll Worker Report* after the election. The form is printed below, and available online here. This information (but not your name) will be combined with information from other poll workers in a public report and used to evaluate the election process and make recommendations for improving future elections.

3.5   Election Officer Report

Instructions: *fill out the form and send to VFET, or use the online form here: (insert address). If you need additional space for any question, use the back of the form, or attach additional sheets, as needed.*

Name:		Precinct:	
Date Submitted:		County/City:	

	Before the election	
1	Did you receive training before election day?	Yes___ No___ N/A___
2	Was your training provided in person or online?	In person___ Online___
	On election day	
3	Did you receive all required equipment for the polling process?	Yes___ No___ N/A___
	If not, what was missing?	
5	Were poll watchers present during preparations to open?	Rep___ Dem___
6	Were poll watchers present throughout the day?	Rep___ Dem___
7	Were poll watchers present during the closing process?	Rep___ Dem___
8	Where poll workers representing both the Republican and Democratic parties present for all sensitive operations?	Yes___ No___
9	If no, which party had poll workers present for all sensitive operations?	Rep___ Dem___ N/A___
10	Did any non-partisan observers visit your precinct?	Yes___ No___ N/A___
11	Did any media or press visit your precinct?	Yes___ No___ N/A___
12	Was your precinct overcrowded or normal?	Over___ Normal___
13	Did you witness any irregularities or malfeasance during the process? (if yes, please fill in and submit an incident report form)	Yes___ No___ N/A___
14	Please grade the overall <u>efficiency</u> of the polling at your precinct on the scale A-excellent, B-above average, C-average, D-below average, E-failing. If D or E, please provide details on the back.	_____
15	Please grade the overall <u>integrity</u> of the polling at your precinct on the scale A-excellent, B-above average, C-average, D-below average, E-failing. If D or E, please provide details on the back.	_____
	Thank you!	

3.6   Reporting Irregularities and Malfeasance

Irregularities are procedural errors that may be caused by a lack of knowledge or a lack of critical materials. Minor irregularities may not affect the integrity of the process but are indicators of poor training or election management. Some irregularities *can* impact the integrity of the process (such as positioning polling booths so that poll watchers or other voters can see a voter marking a ballot; or preventing poll watchers from effectively observing the election process), and if these are done intentionally, would be considered malfeasance.

We generally think of malfeasance as an intentional effort to undermine the integrity of the election process; that is defined as a crime in the Virginia election law. Examples of criminal malfeasance include:
- Knowingly falsifying registration applications or accepting multiple registration applications from the same person (up to ten years in prison).
- Knowingly allowing unqualified people to vote (up to five years in prison)

- Refusing to permit a qualified voter to vote, or refusing to count the vote of a qualified voter ($1000 fine per affected voter)
- Counterfeiting ballots (up to ten years in prison)
- Tampering with registration or voting equipment with the intent to influence the election outcome (up to ten years in prison)
- Aiding or abetting absentee ballot fraud (up to ten years in prison)
- Conspiracy against the rights of citizens to vote (up to ten years in prison) - False statements made to enable election fraud (up to ten years in prison)

If you witness serious malfeasance or what you think may be criminal behavior in the election process, you could file a complaint through the Virginia Department of Elections, or your local registrar. Virginia does not have a specific unit for investigating election crime, but you can report election crime to your local sheriff's office, and/or submit an *VFET Incident Report Form*. This form has been designed by legal professionals to ensure sufficient information is collected to form the basis of a legal declaration or affidavit that can be used in any needed follow up. VFET's legal team will review all incident reports, and follow up with legal action, if warranted. A print version of the Incident Report Form is attached below.

If you are employed by Virginia as an election official and worry that reporting malfeasance might affect your employment status or personal life, you should know about the protections afforded by Virginia's "whistleblower" law. Like most states, Virginia has had whistleblower laws for some time, but provisions protecting whistleblowing employees where dramatically strengthened in April 2020, when Governor Northam signed into law HB798; which prohibits employers from taking any retaliatory action against the employee, including firing, acts of discipline, making threats, discrimination, or any other retaliatory action that goes to the employee's compensation, terms, conditions, privileges, or work location.

Whistleblowers - Did you know?

HB798 protects a Virginia employee who:
- Acts in good faith to report any violation of state or federal law to a supervisor or government official, including a law enforcement officer. This protection also applies if the employee has someone act on their behalf to report the wrongdoing.
- Participates in a government investigation, hearing or inquiry at the request of a government official or law enforcement officer.
- Refuses to commit a criminal act that would get the employee into legal trouble.
- Refuses to commit any activity that would violate a state or federal law and the employee notifies the employer they are refusing to engage in that activity for that reason.
- Provides information or testifies before any government body or official as a part of an investigation, hearing or inquiry into the employer's alleged wrongdoing.

There are specific instances that are not protected, that include:
- Revealing information or data protected by law or privilege.
- Making a statement that is known to be false or made in reckless disregard to the truth.
- Disclosing information in violation of state or federal law, including information that would compromise the confidentiality of someone else's legally protected communications.

3.7   Election Incident Report Form

Instructions: Please fill in the form as completely as possible as soon as possible after (or during) the incident. Take the time to collect names and contact details of other witnesses. If you collect electronic evidence (picture, video or audio recording), make a copy of the file and submit with your report, but retain the original on your phone or other electronic device. Submit the completed form as soon as possible to: VFET

REPORTER INFORMATION

Reported by:	Phone:
Position (voter, poll worker, poll watcher, etc.):	Email:

DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT

Date of incident:	Time of incident:	Were the police notified: Yes / No
Location of incident:		

Description of the incident: (What happened, how it happened, etc. Be as specific as possible. Continue on back if needed and attach additional sheets if necessary)

Is there electronic evidence of the incident? Yes___ No___ Is the evidence in your possession? Yes___ No___	What type of evidence is it? Phone photo__ video__ audio__ CCTV___ Other_____
Did you witness the incident? Yes___ No___	If no, list the person who reported the incident to you below, along with details of any other witnesses. Attach additional sheets if needed.

WITNESSES

Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:
Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:
Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:
Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:

PARTIES INVOLVED IN INCIDENT

Name:	Phone:
Role:	Email:
Name:	Phone:
Role:	Email:
Name:	Phone:
Role:	Email:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4   Monitoring Elections

4.1   Introduction

To help ensure a free and fair election for all voters, volunteer observers will monitor election processes and procedures throughout the election cycle. Observers can deter malfeasance and cheating, or by detecting and formally documenting such malfeasance, can deny legitimacy to fraudulent elections and provide evidence for lawsuits and other post-election court cases. By increasing the transparency of the election, observers can enhance public confidence in the integrity of the election process.

Observation will be conducted in phases, beginning with *Pre-Election Observation*. During the pre-election phase observers will look at the voter list, election administration, the legal framework and procedures for elections, and the broader election environment. Pre-election observation seeks to confirm the process, or to highlight potential problems or concerns so that they can be addressed prior to the election. Internationally, pre-election observers are usually referred to as Long-Term Election Observers or LTEOs. LTEOs often play an important role in recruiting, training, and managing the larger number of volunteers needed for election observation.

Pre-election observers are non-partisan. In contrast to partisan observers, they do not represent a specific party. Instead, they represent all voters, and their primary objective is ensuring a free and fair process for all voters, regardless of outcome. Non-partisan observers are normal in other democracies, but still relatively rare in the US, where we have primarily relied on partisan observers.

Although it is late for the 2022 elections, we anticipate significantly expanding the non-partisan observation element for 2023 and future elections. Non-partisan observation provides any voter, regardless of party, the possibility to support free and fair elections; allowing participation by independent voters (who currently have no role in election integrity and are a plurality of voters), and by neutral groups (like church groups) that want to support a fair process, but don't want to affiliate with a particular party.

Election Season Observation – Election observation (poll watching) used to be largely confined to election day, but with long periods of advance voting (six weeks in Virginia), and all the opportunities that creates for malfeasance and fraud, we must develop new approaches to strengthening transparency and deterrence. The primary innovations of this approach are deployment of poll watchers during the advance voting, and the expectation that poll watchers will file regular reports throughout the election season.

Under current Virginia law, only partisan observers (called poll watchers or party agents) have the right to observe all aspects of the polling process, so support for observation during the election season (September 23-November 8) will primarily be focused on the provision of training and/or materials for party-endorsed poll watchers. Coordinators will also work with local party units to ensure that enough volunteer poll watchers are recruited andtrained.

Election season poll watchers will monitor and report on early in-person voting, absentee voting,

and drop boxes, at registrar offices and satellite election offices. Daily reports will be aggregated and synthesized by VFET, and form the basisfor regular press releases, op-eds, and other outreach efforts. Poll watchers will also have access to a legal hot line for reports on incidents that might require an immediate legal response. The primary objective of the election season observation is early identification of issues and concerns to improve the quality and integrity of the election while it is in process.

Observing Election Day and the Counting Process – Although the actual election day in Virginia is not as important as it used to be, because of the long election season, it will still require more poll watchers and other election personnel than any other day. Poll watchers will be recruited and trained by party units, and county and municipal Coordinators and teams. The objective is to detect and deter malfeasance through complete coverage of and reporting from all precincts inthe state.

Poll watchers may work in shifts organized before election day. They will arrive before the precinct opens to observe set up of the precinct and machines, and will watch the polling process throughout the day, then the counting process after the poll. Each precinct poll watcher (or team) will have a checklist and report form to facilitate monitoring, and the collection of data that can be used to validate of delegitimize the election process at the precinct after the election. In addition, poll watchers will have access to the legal hot line to report irregularities or malfeasanceas they happen.

Post-Election Audits and Reports – After the election, we will continue to monitor any post-election audits or court cases. Pre-election, election season and election day reports will be synthesized, and used to develop a comprehensive narrative report on the integrity of the entire election process, with recommendations for needed reforms in advance of the 2022 national elections.

4.2   Pre-Election Observation

We will recruit, train, and manage the initial LTEO teams. Each team will be made up of 3-4 volunteers and will be responsible for implementing activities in several counties and/or municipalities during the first phase of observation. Teams will establish and maintain good relations with election officials, and other relevant government and security officials, in theirarea of operations (AOR). These teams will also facilitate the recruitment and training of additional observers. As the network is built out, we hope to identify coordinators and team members for every county and city in the state. To learn more about how you can volunteer for this effort, please visit vfet.us.

4.3   Registrar Survey

An initial registrar survey should be conducted in each city and county. LTEO teams should request a meeting with each Registrar in their Area of Operations. A sample request letter is included below. The letter should be sent by email, and immediately followed up by a phone call. Contact details for each Registrar in the State of Virginia can be found here: https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/PublicContactLookup. Use the sample letter as a guide for the call, explaining who you are and who you represent, and that you are election observers interested in learning more about the election process in the relevant county.

Ideally, all interviews should be conducted within a week of the initial call, so request an early date. If they try to put it off, note that you have a deadline for reporting, and that it would be a shame if they were not represented in the state report. During the interview, be respectful, non-confrontational, and non-partisan. Express our common objective of excellent elections that are accepted by all as fair and credible.

Prior to conducting the interview, you will be provided with an online video briefing on the questionnaire by staff. The questionnaire is attached in Annex Five. During the interview, please record responses directly on the form, using additional pages if required. After completing the questionnaire, you may want to ask additional questions specific to your AOR, but don't take up too much time. Make arrangements with the Registrar to follow up by email or phone to collect any information that wasn't available during your visit. Thank the registrar for his/her time and note that you look forward to remaining in touch throughout the election cycle.

After leaving the office, please photograph your forms, and email them to report@vfet.us. As soon as possible, please enter the information from the form into the electronic form on the www.vafet.us website. Staff will also schedule a video debrief for your team so that you can provide feedback on the survey implementation, suggestions for improvements and/or additional follow up questions and share experiences and lessons-learned with other teams.

Tips for getting an appointment with a registrar for the survey

- *Get ready*
- *Confirm with the State LTEO Coordinator (Elizabeth Block) that the county is available*
- *Gather information for your county: registrar name, phone number, email, physical address*
- *Start a page in a notebook for each registrar office that you plan to visit*
- *Let your team know that you are hoping to get some appointments and that you will need immediate feedback to confirm their availability.*
- *Remember*
- *Be confident, polite, and friendly.*
- *It's absolutely our right to ask questions, but we don't want to be confrontational.*
- *We want to establish a relationship, and don't want to burn any bridges Contact the registrar*
- *Preferable to call - they can't avoid you as easily, and you can keep it informal and friendly*
- *Email is a good way to follow up to let confirm the appointment Introduce yourself*
- *Explain that you are working with VFAF on a statewide initiative to visit every registrar.*
- *"We are a non-partisan group looking to educate citizens about our election process"*
- *"We want to show people some of the behind the scenes aspects and help them gain confidence in our election process"*
- *So far we've met with about 5 (this number will be growing obviously) Definitely mention if you have met with another registrar nearby*
- *Ask for the interview*
- *"We have developed a survey with about 25 questions"*
- *"I think it should take about an hour at the most"*

- *"How about tomorrow or later this week" Document the call*
- *Record the date and time you called*
- *Who you spoke to, when/if you need to call back*

Tips provided by Johanna Carrington, Lancaster County

Tips for an Office Visit

- *Prepare before arrival*
- *Questions printed*
- *Roles assigned*
- *Equipment ready*
- *Enter*
- *Wait your turn*
- *Introduce yourself*
- *Ask to see the registrar*
- *Record the names and positions of the people with whom you speak*
- *Calmly ask the questions and collect the responses*
- *If they refuse to provide documentation, inform them you will return in a few days to give them time to collect the documents, and thank them for their time*
- *If they do provide documentation, thank them for the help, leave a treat*
- *If they provide service, write a thank you note and mail it that day*
- *Report to the organizers the results of the visit*
- *Return to the organizers any and all documentation collected*

Tips provided by Diana Shores, Lynchburg

Sample Meeting Request Letter

From: Virginians for Election Transparency (county or city) Observer Team (email address)

To: Registrar (county or city) (email address)

Subj: Request for meeting
Date: XXXXXX

Dear Registrar,

Virginians for Election Transparency is a non-partisan organization dedicated to transparent and credible election processes. We are engaging students, first time voters, and other citizens in learningmore about the process in hopes they will continue to be

part of our elections either as poll workers, poll watchers, or volunteers.

Our findings will be shared publicly in hopes that it will increase transparency and public confidence inelection processes, and to provide the public with the information needed to accurately evaluate the integrity of current processes and procedure.

As part of our civic engagement work, we are conducting a survey of registrars across the state and would like to request a meeting with you this week to conduct that survey, and to introduce our team. These meetings will facilitate greater learning for our network, allowing them to act as a sort of "ambassador" to other groups regarding the local operations. This is meant to be a positive experience,with positive outcomes, for both citizens and local Registrar's office. We anticipate the meeting in total will last about 45 minutes. Please email or call me to confirm a suitable time.

Sincerely,   XXXXXX
Coordinator

VFAF Registrar Survey Form 2022

County/City_____

Observers_____

Time and date of initial call or email to set this meeting: _____
Time and date of response to set this meeting: _____

1.) Is this your first interview with VFAF?

2.) What is your biggest concern about the upcoming election?

3.) Any other major concerns?

4.) Do you feel like you have the resources, equipment, personnel, and training needed to run an effective election in November?
Yes_____ No_
Don't Know _____

   If no, what is missing?

5.) Do you have an adequate number of precinct staff that meet the requirements of having equally declared Republicans and Democrats?

   If no, how do you plan to ensure there is party equality in poll staffing?

6.) Did each precinct in your county/city have partisan observers for that last election (primary and general election)?

7.) Does the county Health Department send a list of deceased people to your office every month so that they can be removed from the voter rolls?
If no, why not?

8.) What do you do when a relative notifies you that a family member is deceased and needs to be dropped from the voter rolls?

9.) During the last election cycle (primary or general) did you have complaints from voters that someone had voted in their name? For example, was a mail in ballot received and the voter claimed they did not cast the mail in vote? Was there any "you already voted" scenarios?

10.) Do your absentee voter drop boxes have video monitoring that is monitored 24/7? If so, who is reviewing the video to ensure there are no issues?

11.) Are all drop boxes emptied with the witness of sworn officers of the election, with more than one sworn officer present?
    a.) Are party Chairmen notified of when drop boxes are emptied to have the option of sending partisan observers?

12.) Did the party Chairmen of both parties get invited to calibrate the machines during the last election (primary and general election)
    a.) Did they accept and attend? (add any details here about who attended)

13.) How are your voting machines stored and secured between elections?
    a.) Are they always in a locked storage facility?
    b.) Who has access to where voting machines are stored?
    c.) Are there logs maintained of who accessed the storage area?
        i.)   Where are those logs stored?
        ii.)   Who has access to those logs?

14.) How are your voting machines and ballots stored and secured once they are sent to the voting precinct?

15.) Who delivers the voting machines to the voting precinct? What is the procedure?

16.) Who delivers the ballots to the voting precinct? What is the procedure?

17.) Does your county/city utilize touch screen voting or paper ballots?

18.) When the post-election day canvass is conducted, and there are discrepancies, are

there counts of ballots themselves or just a reading of the computer-generated report? If no, why not?

19.) House Bill 150 that goes into effect July 1, 2022, requires that public body meetings, such as the Electoral Board meetings, to be posted on an official government website within 7 days of the final approval of minutes. This is in addition to existing require- ments that meeting dates, times, and locations must also be posted in advance. How is your office meeting this requirement?

20.) Senate Bill 211 and House Bill 55, both of which go into effect July 1, 2022, require that the State Registrar of Vital Records transmit a weekly list of deceased individuals (previously this was monthly). General Registrars will be required to promptly cancel the registrations of persons known to be deceased or otherwise disqualified from vot- ing. How will your office address this new requirement? Who will be in charge in mak- ing sure that registrations are promptly canceled?

4.4 Logic & Accuracy (L&A) for Voting Machine Scanners

Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing is the process by which voting equipment is configured, tested, certified for accuracy, and secured with seals prior to an election. This pre-election testing is conducted at the county level. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the software has been set up properly to accurately count the specific ballots for that election.

L&A [Logic and Accuracy] testing proofs the ballot and proves that the system is properly adding votes to each candidate in the same quantity as the votes cast. L&A testing increases the confidence that the system correctly attributes each vote to the candidates and that the tally will be conducted correctly each time the system has a ballot scanned through it.

The third-party vendors support the logic and accuracy testing by providing any firmware and software updates for the election, programmed ballots, thumb drives and the physical USB security devices (vDrives) required for scanner operation. Sometimes the vendors conduct the L&A themselves as a service to the locality.

The L&A test ideally encompasses the entire set of possible ballots, types, styles, precincts, and vote opportunities in the universe of possibilities. These ballots are the Test Deck. Each combination of vote opportunities should ideally be tested, selected for Undervote and Overvote, in each OVAL position. If ballots are created on a Ballot Marking Device (BMD), typically used by Disabled voters (ADA), those ballots should also be in the Test Deck, all combinations. Ballots representative of By-Mail Absentee should also be included because they are FOLDED, so these too should be part of the Test Deck. Ballots should be like election day, and in Virginia hand marked. It is essential for the Test Deck ballots to be hand marked as on election day, rather than arriving from the vendor preprinted. This is because image programming exists which can place an unseen pattern that a scanner can read into a pixel array and enable a different function to occur.

L&A testing happens after the ballot styles are prepared and approved. Preparing the ballots for

election day occurs after the candidates and the associated districts are set for which they are running are set. In many localities, they use the vendor ballot template to place the candidates on the ballots next to the appropriate oval. The election ballot template is then sent to the vendor for the barcodes to be placed on each ballot corner. The barcodes are needed for the scanner to geometrically calculate the location of the oval filled next to the candidate's name, and count that filled in oval as a vote.

When the ballots are completed by the vendor, they are sent to the Department of Elections for approval. After the Department of Elections approves the ballots, a notification is sent to both the vendor and the locality, and Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing is scheduled. New in 2022, the ballot barcode on each corner of the ballot has the precinct of the voter tied to the ballot the over gets upon pollbook check-in, which was not the case in 2020 or 2021.

The preparation and testing of voting equipment is to be open to members of the public to observe; however, members of the public shall not in any manner interfere with the preparation and testing. Notice of the L&A testing comes to the party chairs, who can then ask for observers to be present. A test plan process should be provided to the observers upon arrival. Local election integrity teams can work with the general registrar and Electoral Board to improve testing as well.

It is advised to find software programmers/engineers to observe and make notes on areas for improvement and to ask questions. Pay careful attention to protocols for thumb drives, vDrives, open ports, whether are security seal is placed on the vDrive compartment after testing and that the serial number of the machine is logged alongside the security seal number for each machine. Also note whether the machine sets for each precinct are kept in individual locked cages.

The local election integrity group/party should ask for the serial numbers and security seal numbers for every machine L&A tested and approved for the election, to include backup machines. During the election, observers should look to see the security seal number without touching the machine, or ask a Chief to do get the number, and note that the umbers match those provided after L&A. If they do not match, then someone has opened the scanner compartment improperly and this must be reported.

Important L&A process questions to ask include:
- What is the role of the Electoral Board/GR with respect to equipment security
- Who are the individuals on the test teams? Are they from the machine vendor? The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) recommends that the vendor not be on the test teams.
- Who prepares the test script?
- Who is programming the election?
- Who is conducting the pre-election testing? It should not be same person who programmed the election.
- Who is proofing the test? It should not be the programmer or the person who conducted the test.
- Are L&A pre-marked test deck ballots or hand-marked ballots used for the test?

- Digital Ballot Image Storage, is there a setting done during L&A testing

Locality L&A testing for each machine used in an election can be time consuming. Sometimes they also must load new software, after the firmware is installed by the vendor. If a locality must load new software and test for 100 precincts, it can take a week, with 4 to 5 full time staff running the L&A. For this reason, the time it takes to run a larger number of ballots for testing.

Virginia Code and new State Board Regulation 1VAC20-60-70 require localities to certify to ELECT that they have performed L&A testing and certification on all voting systems and EPBs. http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol37/iss01/v37i01.pdf This is public information that can be FOIA'd.

References:
- GREB book https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/grebhandbook/2020-individual-chapters/4_Voting_Equipment_(2020).pdf
- EAC recommendations https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/eac_assets/1/6/Chapter_6__Pre-Election_and_Parallel_Testing.pdf

4.5 Electronic Pollbook (EPB) Logic and Accuracy Testing

The Logic and Accuracy testing of the Electronic Pollbooks (EPB) must confirm that will that the voting equipment is provides accurate and secure voting record as defined with the Code of Virginia § 24.2-611 Form and signing of pollbooks; records of persons voting; electronic pollbooks.

Specifically, the logic and accuracy testing must do the following:

1. The logic and accuracy testing must confirm that the appropriate election-specific data files were downloaded to the electronic pollbook. In dual primary elections, localities must show that applicable voter registration files were downloaded from both political parties so that the combined data files contain all voters and all absentee ballot information for voters eligible to participate in the election.
2. The logic and accuracy testing must confirm that the electronic pollbooks for each election are set to the correct type of election being held in that jurisdiction. For example, the data on the electronic pollbook must correlate with whether the upcoming election is a primary (single or dual) or general election.
3. The logic and accuracy testing must show that all precincts will provide the correct ballot styles to voters in the precincts. The locality must provide certification to the Department of Elections that all EPBs being used in an election have been tested in compliance with this section.

4.6 Other Possibilities for Pre-Election Observation

Your county election board has public meetings about election issues, and you should send observers to those to ask questions, and report on issues discussed. These meetings may also be a good time to raise specific concerns you have with the transparency or integrity of the election process.

A sample report format for such a meeting is included below:

1. Name of county/city
2. Did the county/city hold a meeting this month? If no, end report. If yes,
3. Agenda of meeting (this is often included in the meeting notice)
4. Decisions of the meeting
5. Any other issues

At the state level, VFET leadership may conduct similar interviews with relevant officials from the Election Division.

To gain a deeper understanding of the pre-election environment, you may wish to conduct interviews with political party chairs in your county. These interviews may be conducted in person or by phone. A sample questionnaire is provided below.

4.6.1 County Political Party Chairs - Pre-Election Report	
County:	Name of County Chair interviewed:
Name of Observer:	Political Party Affiliation: Republican ___ Democrat ___ Libertarian ___ Other _____
Instructions: Please fill in the form and submit on _____ to report@afet.us	

1	What is your greatest concern about the upcoming election?
1	Did the Recorder post the location and hours of operation for in-person early voting at his office and any satellite voting centers by _____? Yes ___ No ___
2	Are you concerned that satellite voting centers may have been cited for partisan reasons (i.e., to advantage one political party)? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, please provide details:
2	Have you been able to recruit and train enough poll watchers to cover election day and early voting? If not, what are the particular constraints you face in training and recruitment?

3	Do you have enough poll observers to ensure a visit at closing to each location for every day of the election season? Yes ___ No ___
4	Have you been able to meet in person or online with the poll observers to provide appointment letters, any needed training or materials, and to develop an observation plan for in-person voting and absentee/mail-in ballot counting? Yes ___ No ___
5	Have you discussed with your County Chair a notification protocol for absentee/mail-in ballot counting so that you can send a poll observer to watch every time it occurs? Yes ___ No ___
6	How many days advance notice will your County Recorder provide of intent to count absentee/mail-in votes? _____
7	Are you satisfied with the notification protocol? Yes ___ No ___
8	Have you reviewed the absentee/mail-in voter application list and application forms at your County Recorder's office? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, were there any anomalies you think should be followed up on? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, please describe those (attach additional sheets or an Incident Report Form, if needed):
8	What additional support (if any) do you need from VFET?

5   Election Season Observation

5.1   What is Election Season?

Elections in the United States used to take place on one day, as required by the Constitution, with very limited exceptions for absentee voting. Over the last decade, and especially since the creation of the COVID virus, early and absentee voting has expanded dramatically, so that now 44 states and the District of Columbia have no excuse absentee voting, for an average period of 22 days. We have defined this period of legal voting before election day as the *election season.*

In Virginia, election season is 43 days long (three days short of the longest election season). Advance voting begins September 23 and from that date any registered voter in Virginia can vote absentee by mail or drop box, or by visiting an advance voting site.

Unfortunately, expanding the election from one day to 43 days decreases the transparency and credibility of its election process. Throughout the election season, chain of custody and chain of observation are regularly broken for long periods, reducing the transparency needed to reassure

voters that the process is fair and accurate. Extending the election period also places an unsustainable physical and financial burden on overworked election officials, and the party representatives tasked with ensuring the integrity and legitimacy of the election process.

This imperfect system falls far short of accepted norms and standards for transparent and credible elections and will require fundamental legal and procedural reforms to ever meet or exceed those standards. Until these reforms can be made, the only means to enhance transparency and public confidence in the integrity of the process will be through increased public scrutiny of every stage of the process to the extent possible.

Election season observation may be conducted by poll watchers authorized and coordinated by county or city party unit chairs, and in some cases by independent observers. The VFET program seeks to increase election season observation by providing training and materials for poll watchers and observers.

Daily Election Season Observer Form (Submit by email to report@vfet.us)
County/City:_Date:_Time: Closing__ Midday   Opening Observer(s):__Location: RO __ or SO: _____
At the Registrar's Office or a Satellite Election Office
1 Were you allowed to observe all processes at the office? Yes_____No ___ If no, please provide details (use additional sheets or the incident form, if needed):
2 How many people voted in-person today? __
3 How many of those voted using the statement or address process? _
4 How many provisional ballots were provided today? _____
5 Were two officers of election from different parties present at the office? Yes_____No ___ If no, was the registrar or assistant registrar present? Yes   No
6 Were the absentee ballots received during the day counted, or stored securely?Counted __ Stored securely _____

5.2   Concerns with Mail-In and Drop-Box Absentee Voting

One of the reasons absentee voting has previously been limited is because it is inherently insecure. Absentee voting enables cheating through ghost voters and ballot (or drop) box stuffing, political pressure and intimidation, vote buying and selling, and other forms of fraud. When it was limited primarily to soldiers and diplomats on duty for the US government, plus very limited exceptions for individuals with provable need, the risks were deemed acceptable; but with the introduction of widespread and often universal (as in Virginia) postal voting, these gaps in security can be easily exploited to alter election outcomes.

Because postal voting occurs in private, malpractice is difficult to monitor and control. A spouse or relative in an abusive relationship, or workers on a farm or in a factory, or the elderly and

patients confined in a care facility, may be forced to apply for an absentee ballot, and then be forced to vote the ballot for a particular candidate or party, all out of sight of monitors or law enforcement officials. Postal voting also enables vote buying.

Controlling abuse in the home is difficult, but some deterrence can be expected from public education on the right to vote in secret and to vote your conscience; with a contact number or hotline provided to report abuse. For large farms, factories, businesses, and especially care homes; observers should visit (or recruit a patriot insider) and ask the following questions:

1. *Has anyone asked or required or offered to help you apply for an absentee ballot?*
2. *Has anyone offered to help you fill in an absentee ballot?*
3. *Has anyone tried to force you, or pay you, to vote a particular way?*

Answers to these questions will help you determine if there is a possibility that organized vote fraud is occurring in the location.

Regrettably, homes for the elderly and those requiring cognitive care are particular targets for vote thieves, so it may be important to recruit patriot insiders in these institutions who can monitor and record the activities of people offering to "help" with applications or voting. The best deterrent for this form of theft, which is a felony, is to ensure the thieves know we are watching, and know they will go to prison if caught. If possible, post leaflets in care home that alert residents to potential abuse and provide hotlines for reporting criminal acts.

If concerning issues are discovered, please document these by filling in and submitting an [incident report form](#).

5.3   Monitoring In-Person Absentee Voting

In Virginia, in-person early voting is accomplished by visiting an early voting location, then casting a ballot in the same manner as a voter on election day. Early voting locations are normally the county election office, and any satellite election offices that have been established in the county. Hours of operation are at the discretion of the county elections board and may include weekends and night. You can find the hours of operation and early voting locations for your county [here](#).

Poll watchers can monitor the process at early voting locations as they would at a polling station on election day. If it is not possible to have poll watchers continuously at all early voting locations, then visits can be conducted at any time during hours of operation, and when possible, please vary the times of your visits. Please use the monitoring forms provided in the section below for election day poll watchers, and if concerning issues are discovered, please document these by filling in and submitting an [incident report form](#).

When you arrive at the office, introduce yourself to the staff, explaining your purpose. If you are refused entrance, or not allowed to witness any process (except marking a ballot), include that in your report. For example, if you are visiting an office, but when you arrive are told you cannot enter for any reason (no space, not authorized, closed early, etc.), please submit an incident report with the date, time, place, and reason given.

5.4   Drop boxes for absentee ballots

The use of drop boxes for absentee ballots increased dramatically during the COVID-19 elections of 2020. Drop boxes have been shown to enable election fraud, and should be eliminated, but until that is accomplished, they should be monitored closely. Drop boxes will be located at county and satellite election offices and may be in other areas like city and municipal facilities, public libraries, county facilities, or any other locations decided by the county elections board. The location of drop boxes should be available at the website of your county elections office.

It is difficult to monitor drop boxes effectively, which is one reason so few people have confidence in their security. No provisions are made for poll watchers or others to review the video tapes in Virginia law. Ballots will be collected at least once a day during the work week by two election officials. Collection times may be available from your county election board (if not, please note that in your report). Ballots collected will then be transported to the county election board by the officials.

This is a remarkably insecure process, that would be unacceptable in any normal democracy. Unless poll watchers can be at the drop box when the ballots are collected every day, and then allowed to accompany the ballots to the election office, there is nothing to prevent ballot box stuffing or other malfeasance during transport of the ballots.

Poll watchers visiting advance voting sites may want to observe collection of ballots at drop boxes from time to time as well, to confirm ballot transport boxes are sealed with individually numbered tamper evident seals prior to departure. Record the number of the seal and time of departure and share that with any poll watchers monitoring the arrival of ballots at the county election office.

For drop boxes that have video surveillance, request to review the tapes daily or weekly. If not allowed to review the tapes, include that in your county report. For places where there is no video monitoring, or poll watchers are not allowed to review tapes, some volunteers may wish to install hidden motion-activated game cameras, or tiny pinhole video recorders, to record activity at the drop boxes. Additional cameras on the street to capture car models and license plates could also be useful. In person monitoring of drop boxes through the night may not be feasible, but if undertaken, should be done with caution, and well-armed, as criminals caught in the act can be dangerous.

The online Drop Box Observer Form can be accessed here. A print version is below. If you witness any serious problems during the day or at night, please document those by filling in and submitting an incident report form.

Drop Box Observer Form	
County/City:_____**Date:**_____**Time:** Closing__ Midday___ Opening____	
Observer(s): Location:	
1	Is the drop box in a secure location inside a building where it can be observed continuously during normal working hours and secured after working hours? Yes__ No__
2	If no, is the drop box under 24 hour video surveillance? Yes_____No __
3	Is the video footage regularly reviewed by officers of election from two parties and poll watchers from both parties? Yes_____No ___
4	Were you notified in advance when the ballots from the drop box would be collected? Yes No
5	Were two officers of election from different parties present when the drop box was emptied? Yes___No ___
6	If no, was the registrar or assistant registrar present? Yes__No ___
7	How many ballots were collected from the drop box today:
8	Were the ballots collected from the drop box counted or stored securely? Counted _____ Stored securely _____
9	How many ballots were sent to be cured: ___

6 Observing the Voting and Counting Processes on Election Day

6.1 Before you Go
Before election day, please read through the observation guidelines. Prepare a lunch or dinner, if needed, and you might like a thermos of coffee or tea. Make sure you have the contact details for your coordinator, and your ID card and designation letter, and an email address or phone number for the registrar responsible for your polling place. Fully-charge your phone, and don't forget a pencil or pen, and your manual and checklist (some may have those on their phone).

6.2 Before Opening
If you will be in a precinct all day, or have the first observation shift, you should plan to arrive at your assigned precinct by 5:30 am, a half hour before opening, so you can observe preparations. On entering a precinct, show your ID card and designation letter to the chief election officer. During your time in the precinct be calm and respectful and avoid talking to voters. If you have questions or concerns, address those to the chief.

Between 5:00 and 5:30 the polling staff will arrive at the polling location and begin setting up

the station. If any party representatives (poll watchers) are present, the Chief Election Officer will require they prove their identity and their registration status. The Chief will then lead the staff in the Oath of Election, then will sign and have the staff sign the Oath of Election form. The staff will check to ensure all required materials are present, then arrange tables, chairs, and machines, set up the electronic or paper poll book, and post required signs.

After setting up the polling place, with any poll watchers present in attendance, the election officers will confirm the seals on the voting machines are unbroken, and that the numbers on the seals match those in the log, then will open the machines to confirm there are no ballots in the main storage area and the emergency storage area.

The Chief will then confirm the public count and print a zero-tape report for each machine. The reports should list all candidates for the election, with vote totals of zero. The Chief and Assistant Chief Each election officer must sign the zero tape to certify the poll opening count. You should be able to confirm that all candidates who should be on the ballot are listed on the zero tape, and that the totals for each candidate are zero; and if they are not, challenge that, and file an incident report.

The Chief will then confirm that the ballots provided are for the precinct, and match the sample ballots, then will confirm that the number of ballots on hand equals the number provided by the Electoral Board.

At 6:00 the chief will announce the polls are open and allow voters waiting outside into the precinct.

> Observer Note: For elections to be transparent and credible, poll watchers must be able to effectively observe all election processes and record their observations. If you are prevented from or hindered in observing any process (except a voter in the process of marking a ballot) at any time during the polling or counting, that is a serious offence, and should be challenged. If the challenge does not result in immediate relief, record the circumstance on an incident report form, and submit that immediately.
>
> One of the security measures of Virginia's election process is hiring of polling staff from each major party, but sometimes that is not possible. Ask the Chief Election Officer if they were able to hire team members representing each major party.
>
> If you are working in shifts, you may want to use a printed checklist, rather than fill in the form on your phone, as then this checklist can be passed on to poll watchers on later shifts, with the last poll watchers transcribing responses from the paper form and submitting one form only for the precinct. Check with your coordinator for practice in your county.

6.3 Voting Process

When a voter arrives, they will say their name and present their ID, and the pollbook officer will find their name in the Pollbook. If the person's voter registration record is not listed in the poll book, they can check the supplemental poll book pages (if any). The voter will then sign the poll book, and an election officer will hand the voter a paper ballot and direct them to the next available voting machine. After marking their ballot, the voter will insert it into the scanner, confirm it has been accepted, and then leave the polling location.

Checking Voter ID

Virginia has a nominal voter ID requirement, but in practice the requirement is meaningless, as someone lacking one of the approved forms of ID listed below, merely has to sign an ID Confirmation Statement to be allowed to cast a provisional ballot for any registered voter.

- Virginia driver's license
- Virginia DMV-issued ID card
- Valid employee ID card, containing a photograph,
- U.S. Military ID
- Valid student ID
- Valid U.S. passport or passport card
- Government-issued ID card from a federal, Virginia, or local political subdivision
- Voter ID card issued by the Department of Elections
- Voter confirmation documents
- Valid tribal enrollment or other tribal ID
- Nursing home resident ID
- Current utility bill, bank statement, government check, or paycheck containing the name and address of the voter
- Any other current government document containing the name and address of the voter

Provisional Ballot – There are three types of provisional ballots that can be cast on election day: not-registered provisional; no-ID provisional; and other provisional. A log by type of any provisional votes cast will be maintained throughout the day, and poll watchers should record the totals of each type in the report. Pay particular attention to voters who are required to vote a provisional ballot because someone has already voted in their name, as this is evidence of fraud.

6.4   Closing the Poll and the Counting Process

At 6:45 the Chief will announce that the polls will be closing in fifteen minutes. At 7:00 the Chief will announce the polls are closed, and prevent anyone else from joining a line, but anyone in line at closing will be allowed to vote.

When all waiting voters have cast their ballots, the team will open and run any absentee ballots through the scanners, then close the machines and print results reports. Poll watchers should be able to view the tabulation reports and may want to photograph them. The Chief or a designated officer will then call the registrar and report unofficial results and the number of provisional votes cast by type. Any poll watchers or media present during the counting process are not permitted to leave until the counting is complete.

The Chief will then announce the unofficial results inside the polling station and outside the station if anyone is waiting outside (media, voters, etc.). Once the unofficial results have been announced, any poll watchers or media present are permitted to leave. The team will then complete two copies of a Statement of Results, and a printed Return Sheet, and all officers present will sign the Return Sheet.

Poll watchers should confirm the results on the tape correspond to the results on the Statement of Results, then record those results on their report form, along with the total number of provisional votes cast by type. If you are not allowed to collect the results, immediately submit an incident report. When this process is over, your observation is complete. Please fill in the observation form, if you have not already, and add the results, then submit immediately.

Thank you for your dedication to free and fair elections in Virginia!

6.5   Poll Watcher Report Forms

During your observation you can use a cell phone or tablet to review and complete your checklist, but if you are working shifts, you may also want to take a paper copy of the forms and guide, so that you can pass the form to a subsequent poll watch, with the understanding that the last shift will fill in and submit just one electronic form for the precinct (check with your coordinator for practice in your county). A paper form may also be useful as a backup, in case your phone gives out.

We prefer that you submit your report, and any incident reports, using your phone, tablet or laptop, as that saves us time; but if that is not possible for any reason, please do not hesitate to fill in and submit the paper forms, as it is most important that we get your information in any format. Print versions of the Poll Watcher Report Form and Incident Report Form are included below.

The online Poll Watcher Report form is available here

6.5.1 *Virginia Poll Watcher Report Form*				
Precinct:		**Name:**		
Address:		**Phone No:**		
City/		**Email:**		
County:		**Arrival:**		**Departure:**
Representing: Democratic party ___ Republican Party ___ Non-partisan or other observer ___				

Instructions
Read the questions carefully. Please make a check (✔) in the appropriate box. If you cannot answer the question, or it is not relevant, leave it blank. If clarification is required, briefly explain in the comment section of the form. If at any time you re prevented from observing any process, please challenge this to the judge, and if the challenge is not resolved, immediately file an incident report.

	Before Opening	**Yes**	**No**
1	Were you allowed to observe the set-up of the precinct before opening? (if no, file an incident report)		
2	Are all polling team members and required materials present?		
3	Are there poll workers from both major parties on the polling team?		
4	Did the poll workers swear an oath to conduct fair elections prior to opening?		
5	Did the polling staff confirm the seals on the machines were unbroken, and that the numbers on the seals matched the numbers in the log?		
6	Did the poll workers open the tabulators and show you that the main and emergency boxes were empty, before resealing the machines?		
7	Was a zero tape printed and shown to poll watchers?		
8	Were you able to confirm the zero tape listed all candidates, and showed no votes?		
9	Did the precinct open on time (7:00 AM)?		

	The Polling Process	**Yes**	**No**
10	Were you able to see each voter's name in the poll book?		
11	Was each voter's name called out so it could be heard by all poll watchers?		
12	Were any provisional votes cast? (if yes, provide number and relevant details in the data section below)		
13	Did any voters complain that someone had already voted in their name? (if yes, provide number and relevant details in the data and comment sections)		
14	Did any voters vote using only an ID Confirmation Statement? (if yes, provide number and relevant details in the data and comment sections)		
15	Could voters mark and cast their ballots in secret, without anyone seeing how they voted? (if no, give details in the comment section)		
16	Were there any problems with the voting machines? (if so, provide details in the comment section)		
17	Were poll watchers present from both major parties?		

	Closing the Poll and the Counting Process			**Yes**	**No**
18	Did the polling place close at 7:00 PM?				
19	Were voters in the line at closing time allowed to vote?				
20	Were there any ballots in the emergency (auxiliary) ballot storage area of the tabulator? (if yes, question Chief, and provide explanation in comment section, or file incident report)				
21	Was a results report run on the scanner?				
22	Were you allowed to copy the results tape from the scanner? (if no, file an incident report).				
23	Were you allowed to observe all aspects of the polling and counting process? (If no, file an incident report)				
24	Record the total number of voters from Poll Book		Record the total number of ballots cast from scanner		
25	Did the total number of votes cast from the tabulator report equal the total number of voters checked off in the Poll Book? (If no, provide details in the comment section, or file an incident report).				
26	Record total provisional ballots by type: not-registered		no-ID other		
27	Record the total number of voters that complained that someone had already voted in their name				
28	Record the total number of voters that voted using only an ID Confirmation Statement				

Please record each candidate and the total votes below					
Candidate Name	Votes	Candidate Name	Votes	Candidate Name	Votes
Comments					

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6.5.2   Virginia Poll Watcher Incident Report Form
Instructions: Please fill in the form as completely as possible as soon as possible after (or during) the incident. Take the time to collect names and contact details of other witnesses. If you collect electronic evidence (picture, video or audio recording), make a copy of the file and submit with your report, but retain the original on your phone or other electronic device. Submit the completed form as soon as possible to: VFET

REPORTER INFORMATION

Reported by:	Phone:
Position (voter, election inspector, poll watcher, etc.):	Email:

DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT

Date of incident:	Time of incident:	Were the police notified: Yes / No

Location of incident:

Description of the incident: (What happened, how it happened, etc. Be as specific as possible. Continue on back if needed and attach additional sheets if necessary)

Is there electronic evidence of the incident? Yes___ No___ Is the evidence in your possession? Yes___ No___	What type of evidence is it? Phone photo__ video__ audio__ CCTV___ Other_____
Did you witness the incident? Yes___ No___	If no, list the person who reported the incident to you below, along with details of any other witnesses. Attach additional sheets if needed.

WITNESSES

Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:
Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:
Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:
Name of Witness:	Phone:
Role of Witness:	Email:

PARTIES INVOLVED IN INCIDENT

Name:	Phone:
Role:	Email:
Name:	Phone:
Role:	Email:
Name:	Phone:
Role:	Email:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.6 Observing a Central Absentee Voting Precinct

§ 24.2-712 of the Code of Virginia requires that every governing body of a city or county establish one or more central absentee voter precincts (CAP) to receive, count, and record absentee ballots. Central absentee voting precincts are one of the many "reforms" enacted in recent years that have universally weakened the security of Virginia elections. By separating the counting of precinct votes into two locations and creating a non-transparent central location for counting absentee votes, this process makes ensuring the integrity of precinct voting difficult at best, and at worst, enables the mass "laundering" of illegally cast votes. Nevertheless, until such a time as we have a reform-minded legislature and executive, it will be important for poll watchers to do all they can to enhance the transparency and credibility of central absentee voting precincts.

Absentee votes delivered by mail, in person, or through drop boxes, will be counted at the CAP on election day. The CAP cannot begin counting until 7:00 am on election day but can open later than that if so directed. A CAP will be manned by at least three election officers. To determine where CAPs will be in your area, and their hours of operation, contact your county registrar.

In a process identical to that used to count absentee ballots at a regular precinct, absentee ballots will be processed by the officers of election prior to the closing of the polls, but no ballot count totals can be transmitted outside of the central absentee voter precinct until after the closing of the polls. To maintain secrecy, the use of cellphones or other communication devices is prohibited until the closing of the polls, and any person present in the central absentee voter precinct must sign a statement under oath that he will not transmit any counts prior to the closing of the polls.

As soon as the polls are closed in the county or city, if the counting is complete, the officers of election at the central absentee voter precinct will report results to the registrar, as they would from a regular precinct.

The chief officer and the assistant chief officer, appointed to represent the two political parties, are always on duty; and no officer, political party representative, or other candidate representative shall leave the precinct after any ballots have been counted until the polls are closed and the count for the precinct is completed and reported.

The online Virginia Central Absentee Precinct Report form is available here

6.6.1 *Virginia Central Absentee Precinct Report Form*			
CA Precinct:	**Name:**		
Address:	**Phone No:**		
City/	**Email:**		
County:	**Arrival:**		**Departure:**
Representing: Democratic party ___ Republican Party ___ Non-partisan or other observer ___			

Instructions			
Read the questions carefully. Please make a check (✔) in the appropriate box. If you cannot answer the question, or it is not relevant, leave it blank. If clarification is required, briefly explain in the comment section of the form. If at any time you re prevented from observing any process, please challenge this to the judge, and if the challenge is not resolved, immediately file an incident report.			

	Before Opening	**Yes**	**No**
1	Were you allowed to observe the set-up of the precinct before opening? (if no, file an incident report)		
2	Are all polling team members and required materials present?		
3	Are there poll workers from both major parties on the polling team?		
4	Did the poll workers swear an oath to conduct fair elections prior to opening?		
5	Did the polling staff confirm the seals on the machines were unbroken, and that the numbers on the seals matched the numbers in the log?		
6	Did the poll workers open the tabulators and show you that the main and emergency boxes were empty, before resealing the machines?		
7	Was a zero tape printed and shown to poll watchers?		
8	Were you able to confirm the zero tape listed all candidates, and showed no votes?		
9	Did the precinct open on time (7:00 AM)?		

	The Counting Process	**Yes**	**No**
10	Were absentee ballots still in their outer envelopes when processed?		
11	Were you able to confirm that the information on the inner envelope matched the voter information in the poll book?		
12	Were all of the ballots for a district processed before tabulation began?		
13	Did anyone in the CAP use a cell phone, laptop, or other communication device before results were announced? (if yes, file an incident report, and provide relevant details in the comment sections)		
14	Did anyone leave the CAP at any time before results were announced? (if yes, file an incident report, and provide relevant details in the comment sections)		
	Were there any problems with the voting machines? (if so, provide details in the comment section)		
	Were poll watchers present from both major parties?		

Tabulation and Reporting		**Yes**	**No**
Were there any ballots in the emergency (auxiliary) ballot storage area of the tabulator? (if yes, question Chief, and provide explanation in comment section, or file incident report)			
Was a results report run on the scanner?			
Were you allowed to copy the results tape from the scanner? (if no, file an incident report).			
Were you allowed to observe all aspects of the CAP process? (If no, file an incident report)			
Record the total number of voters from Poll Book		Record the total number of ballots cast from scanner	
Did the total number of votes cast from the tabulator report equal the total number of voters checked off in the Poll Book? (If no, provide details in the comment section, or file an incident report).			

Please record each candidate and the total votes below					
Candidate Name	Votes	Candidate Name	Votes	Candidate Name	Votes

Comments
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7   Voter Registration Audits

7.1   Introduction

An accurate and complete voter roll is the foundation of secure and credible elections. Although relatively uncommon in the U.S., voter registration audits are a common tool used in other democracies by legislators, election administrators, election observers, and other stakeholders to assess the overall accuracy of a voter register, and to provide the information needed for effective reforms. Voter registration audits can also provide evidence of some forms of election malpractice.

A typical audit will include an initial assessment of the registration process as defined in law and regulation; an IT-based audit of the register (if appropriate); and random sample-based surveys of voters to assess the accuracy of the register. The scope and focus of the surveys can be general, or targeted at specific aspects of the register, depending on the priorities of sponsor.

Voter registration audits are of particular interest to civil society-based election integrity organizations because, unlike other types of election audits, they can be conducted without the participation of local government or election officials.

7.1.1   General Voter Registration Audit

The survey portion of a comprehensive voter registration audit may include two different tests, referred to as *list-to-people* and *people-to-list*. Whether one or both tests are included in an audit would be determined by priorities and available resources.

The *list-to-people* test involves surveying a random sample of voters drawn from the voter list to determine the accuracy of the list, including the percentage of moved or deceased voters on the list. The *list-to-people* test can also reveal fraud if voter history is included in the survey. For example, if the surveyor finds a voter has moved or died or never lived at the address, that shows error in the list; but if the same voter is listed as having cast a ballot in an election after they moved or died, that shows fraud.

The *people-to-list* test measures the proportion of eligible citizens listed on the list (comprehensiveness). For example, if you survey a random sample of 1000 citizens who would be eligible to vote, and confirm 780 are on the voter list, you have a registration rate of 78%. If you know the total number of citizens in an area who meet the age and residence requirements to vote from the census, and calculate 78% of that total, then that number should equal (within the margin of error) the total number of registered voters on the voter list.

Typically, the number of voters on the list will be greater than the number calculated from the census, because the list still includes some voters who have moved or died. The percentage over your calculated number will be the magnitude of error or bloat in the list. A well-maintained list might be just a few percent off, while a poorly maintained list could contain 50 or 100% more names than actual voters. This is important, as a bloated list can be used to facilitate fraud, and also skews turnout percentages.

A general voter registration audit with a *list-to-people* test, or both a *list-to-people* and a *people-*

to-list test, would be most appropriate when the priority is to drive reform of the voter registration process.

7.1.2   Targeted Audit

A targeted audit is primarily focused on just one aspect of the voter list, or one period in time. A targeted audit would normally be based on the voter list, so would be a *list-to-people* test.

An example of a targeted audit was conducted in Virginia in 2021. The election commission reported weekly the names of people who had returned absentee ballots during Virginia's 45-day voting season, and after the first week an election integrity organization ran that list through commercial software to identify suspect addresses, then drew a sample from that list and sent surveyors to confirm that the submitted ballots came from qualified voters. They found that at least 5.7% of absentee ballots submitted during the first week of polling came from addresses where the voter was unknown or was known but had moved well before the election.

A targeted audit can be conducted at any time using this method, not just during the advance voting period or for absentee ballots. A voter list with voter history is processed through commercial software that identifies a likely mismatch between the voter's listed name and address, and their actual address. A sample from the processed list is then surveyed, and the percentage confirmed as bad addresses during the election period in question can then be applied to the whole list to yield a minimum number of fraudulent votes (this is a minimum number because the commercial software may not catch all bad addresses, and because fraud may have occurred in other ways).

A targeted audit might be most appropriate when the priority is to prove that this type of fraud occurred in a previous election. This type of audit would be less effective at driving reform of registration processes than a general VRA.

7.1.3   IT-Based Audit

An IT audit might be an examination of the machines and processes used for voter registration or could be a machine-run analysis or test based on available data. The list screening process for bad addresses described above is one type of IT-based audit. IT audits can be easier and cheaper to conduct because they don't require fieldwork, but are less accurate and therefore less credible than more intensive audits; making them most useful when an overview is needed, or as part of a more in-depth audit.

Types of IT Based Audits
- Comparison of voter registry with obituaries.
  Comparison of voter history across states to detect double voting
- Compare the voter registry with census data
  Compare voter history with post-election registry to identify registrants who voted and then were purged from the list

7.1.4   Sampling

Surveys or canvassing without a sampling frame can reveal the existence of errors or fraud, but not their prevalence, and consequently such surveys have less impact in driving reform than

sample-based surveys. While it is slightly more difficult to survey using a robust sampling methodology, doing so will allow accurate characterization of the area being surveyed, so it is well worth the extra effort.

If it is too difficult to do a random sample of a whole state, you can use a multistage random sampling methodology. For example, a random sample of counties, then a random sample of precincts, then a random sample of voters. It's a bit more complicated than that, but the science is well-known, and accessible, as it is used by polling firms all the time.

Another option is to limit the size of the survey area. If the auditing organization is strong in only some parts of the state, several counties can be selected as sampling areas. For example, if you do three counties across the state, you can accurately (authoritatively) characterize the situation in each of those counties, compare and contrast results across those counties, and hypothesize about the causes of similarities and differences. This is enough for a good report and may be enough to spur reform, or further investigation.

While a limited but rigorous and representative audit is more useful than no audit, or an unrepresentative audit, a comprehensive audit is preferred is possible. A comprehensive audit provides the most possible useful data; but can also be a tool for the organization to build out and strengthen their network across the state.

7.2 Conducting a Voter Registration Audit
7.2.1 *Process Map*
  a. Decide what type of audit you want to do. Consider your priorities (voter list reform or revealing previous malpractice). Also consider what types of data are available.
  b. Decide the area you will audit (state-wide or counties/municipalities).
  c. Acquire relevant data.
  d. Draft the questionnaire. Most of this should be off-the-shelf, with minor changes based on priorities and local conditions. While drafting questionnaire, also do an outline of the report. This will help ensure your questionnaire captures the information you need for your report.
  e. Draw the sample.
  f. Test the questionnaire
  g. Build questionnaire app for iPad or cellphone (primarily off-the-shelf)
  h. Recruit and train enumerators/canvassers.
  i. Field work and data collection.
  j. Analysis and report.
  k. Develop recommendations.
  l. Present report (press, radio, TV, election commission, executive and legislative branches, and judicial branch/law enforcement if significant violations have been found).

7.2.2 *General Voter Registration Audit*
Sample – Either households or individual voters. If households, could any registered voter be the respondent, or do we need something like a kish grid? Timing? How do we manage "no one home" or "voter not home"? I think we will probably just have to over-sample, and record limitations in the methodology.

Draft Questionnaire

    a.   Does the address exist?   Y/N   if Y, go to next field, if N, record and end
    b.   Did someone respond to the knock? Y/N   if Y, go to next field, if N, record and end
    c.   Can I speak to X?   If home, wait. If not home, ask any inhabitant
    d.   Did you, or anyone else present now, live here during the fall of 2020? (if no, end)
    e.   I'm checking the accuracy of the voter roll, which lists the following people as registered voters at this address (show list). Can you tell me if they lived here during the fall of 2020?

           Responses: don't recognize
                           Yes, lived here
                           Used to live here, but moved before period in question
                           Died
    f.   I don't want to know who you voted for, but can you tell me, did you vote in 2020?

This questionnaire should yield percent of voters on the list who have moved or died or are unknown at the address (error in the list), and (if we have voter history) the percent of fraudulent votes cast in the missing voters' names.

7.2.3   *Targeted Voter Registration Audit*

The exact shape of a targeted audit would depend on specific local priorities, but one similar to that done in Virginia could be conducted by screening the relevant voter register to identify voters that likely did not live at the listed address but were shown as having voted in the last election. This set would be potential fraudulent votes. A representative sample of these addresses would then be canvassed to verify information and collect affidavits.

In the 2021 Virginia statewide elections, the IT-based audit suggested 7.5% of absentee ballots submitted in the first week of polling came from suspect addresses, and that was further refined to 5.7% though canvassing. This formed the floor for fraudulent votes, as the initial screen likely missed some people that moved or died, as it incorrectly identified some who had not moved. If fraud occurred throughout the polling period at a similar rate, it would have totaled about 19,000 fraudulent votes.