



GAO Releases Report on Election Access

On Tuesday, October 27, the Government Accountability Office released their report "VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES: Additional Monitoring of Polling Places Could Further Improve Accessibility." This report is based on a national survey of polling places during the 2008 election assessing both physical and technological access. Read below for an excerpt from the report highlights.

Additional Monitoring of Polling Places Could Further Improve Accessibility

What GAO Found

Compared to 2000, the proportion of polling places without potential impediments increased and almost all polling places had an accessible voting system. In 2008, based upon our survey of polling places, we estimate that 27.3 percent of polling places had no potential impediments in the path from the parking to the voting area-up from 16 percent in 2000; 45.3 percent had potential impediments but offered curbside voting; and the remaining 27.4 percent had potential impediments and did not offer curbside voting. All but one polling place we visited had an accessible voting system-typically, an electronic machine in a voting station-to facilitate private and independent voting for people with disabilities. However, 46 percent of polling places had an accessible voting system that could pose a challenge to certain voters with disabilities, such as voting stations that were not arranged to accommodate voters using wheelchairs.

Most states have established accessibility requirements and funded improvements to help facilitate accessible voting, and all states reported that they required local jurisdictions to offer alternative voting methods. In 2008, 43 states reported that they required accessibility standards for polling places, up from 23 states in 2000. Additionally, most states reported that they used federal HAVA funds to improve the physical accessibility of polling places. Further, all states reported that they required local jurisdictions to offer alternative voting methods, such as absentee voting. At the same time, 31 states reported that ensuring polling place accessibility was challenging.

[>>> For the Full Highlights](#)
[>>> For the Full Report](#)

Action Step: If you know of an inaccessible polling place report it to the Civil Rights Enforcement Division of the DOJ at 1-800-253-3931 or for TTY 1-888-305-3228 or by email at Voting.Section@usdoj.gov.

About the Disability Vote Project

DVP works in a non-partisan manner to eliminate the barriers to voting and, in close collaboration with coalition partners in states around the country, to increase political

participation for individuals with disabilities. DVP aims to get people with disabilities registered to vote; strives to educate them on how to get to their polling places and what their rights are at the polling places; and works to make polling places accessible to voters with all disabilities.

About AAPD

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is the largest national nonprofit cross-disability member organization in the United States. It organizes the disability community to be a powerful force for change - politically, economically, and socially - and recognizes the value of working in broad coalitions to foster unity, leadership and impact. AAPD is dedicated to achieving total equality for and full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of society, recognizing that this is the social justice issue of our time.

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