Analysis of Municipal Election Timing and the Use of Vote Centers in Indiana

Indiana Secretary of State's Office and the Voting System Technical Oversight Program (VSTOP)

DIEGO MORALES
INDIANA SECRETARY OF STATE

A Letter from Indiana Secretary of State Diego Morales

October 31, 2025

   As your Indiana Secretary of State, I am proud to share the successful completion of our Election Public Meetings held across the state this fall. These meetings provided a valuable opportunity to hear directly from Hoosiers about how we can continue strengthening our elections and ensuring confidence in our process.

   Due to the strong public interest, we added two additional meetings to our original schedule, so more citizens had the opportunity to participate. We hosted meetings in Delaware County, Marion County, Clark County, Vanderburgh County, and Lake County. We livestreamed all of them, so that Hoosiers who were unable to attend in person could still watch the meetings. Additionally, we established a dedicated email that constituents could utilize to provide further input. The engagement and thoughtful feedback we received reaffirmed our shared commitment to fair, secure, and transparent elections in every corner of our state.

   I want to express my sincere gratitude to our dedicated state legislators and hardworking election administrators for their tireless service and partnership. I also extend heartfelt thanks to the counties that graciously hosted these meetings, the team at the Voting System Technical Oversight Program (VSTOP) for their invaluable expertise, and to all the Hoosiers who took the time to attend and share their perspectives.

   It is an honor to continue working alongside so many committed individuals to uphold the integrity of our elections. As we go forward, I remain focused on continuous improvement, collaboration, and serving every Hoosier across our great state.

In service,

Diego Morales

Diego Morales
Indiana Secretary of State

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Part 1: Analysis of Municipal Election Timing

Introduction

House Enrolled Act 1633 (Public Law 108-2025) mandated a study of election issues by the Office of the Indiana Secretary of State ("office"). The office had approximately two months to complete the initial respective analyses prior to the conducting of the public meetings, and a total of four months to submit a complete report of all findings to the Indiana General Assembly (IGA) by November 1, 2025. Dustin Renner, Indiana Secretary of State Election Director, and Kegan Prentice, Indiana Secretary of State Legislative Director, conducted the study for the office.

There were three required public meetings held, along with two additional sessions across the state, to present the study, share its findings, and gather public feedback. These meetings were held in Muncie, Indianapolis, Jeffersonville, Evansville, and Munster. The final report includes comments, opinions, and questions raised by meeting attendees.

This is the office's final report of findings related to the timing of municipal elections, specifically an analysis and an estimate of cost savings and impact on voter turnout that may be realized by (1) requiring all local elections to be conducted in the odd-numbered year immediately preceding a presidential election year; (2) moving the municipal elections to even-numbered non-presidential election years; (3) moving the municipal election to even-numbered presidential election years. This report will overview the goals and scope of the study as directed by the Indiana General Assembly, the previous literature, methods utilized to conduct the analysis, the data and limitations of the analysis, and findings the study produced.

Goals and Scope of Study

The objectives of the study were directed by House Enrolled Act 1633 (Public Law 108-2025). The office was tasked with primarily evaluating the financial impact of (1) requiring all local elections to be conducted in the odd-numbered year immediately preceding a presidential election year; (2) moving the municipal elections to even-numbered non-presidential election years; (3) moving the municipal election to even-numbered presidential election years, as well as the effects this would have on voter turnout. The office conducted a range of tests to analyze the potential implications on the costs of the election and voter turnout under these circumstances.

With respect to elections costs, the office evaluated overall election administration costs and cost-per-vote metrics. With respect to voter turnout, the office evaluated voter turnout rates, potential impacts on voter turnout by aligning election cycles, and ballot drop-off rates. The study also briefly analyzed other state costs impacts on moving municipal elections. Finally, though the study did not do any specific analysis for Indiana there was literature included on the how the overall electorate is represented in municipal elections. There will be no policy recommendations in this report.

Literature Review

While there was no previous literature in the exact context of Public Law 108-2025, there is literature that presents findings on a few factors the office investigated. Including, voter turnout, ballot drop-off rates, and the representativeness of the electorate in local elections.

The literature was consistent that low voter turnout in standalone elections is a nationwide problem. There were two specific studies that evaluated local elections across a wide variety of U.S. cities over an extended period to get an average voter turnout in these standalone municipal or off-cycle elections. First, there was a study of 340 election across 144 cities from 1996 to 2022 for U.S. mayoral election that were not synced with midterm or presidential election which found an average turnout of 25.8% (Holbrook et al., 2014). A second study examined 332 mayoral elections in 38 large U.S. cities over 25 years and found an average turnout of 25.8% (Caren, 2007).

When looking at ballot drop-off rates in off-cycle elections compared to on-cycle elections there was one recent study completed that found that there is a minimal effect compared to a significant increase in voter turnout. The main conclusion was that though ballot fatigue might lead voters to skip lower-profile races on a long ballot, increased the ballot drop off rate, the increased turnout in on-cycle elections outweighs the effects of any drop-off. Having a "main" election draws voters in and increases the likelihood they will participate in "down-ballot" races as well, even if some might succumb to ballot fatigue (Hajnal et al., 2022).

Time and resource constraints did not allow for an Indiana specific analysis on the representativeness of the electorate in local elections and was not completed. But the topic would be important in a wider study or discussion of potential changes and literature on the topic is included.

One book examined the influence of special interest groups on local elections as selective participation produces a voter pool that is disproportionately comprised of those who care most about the issues at state in each election. (Berry, 2009). A separate study looked specifically at off-cycle school board races and found that teachers are seven times more likely to vote in school district elections (Moe, 2006). Finally, studies also showed that voters in local elections are demographically unrepresentative of the electorate overall (Hajnal and Trounstine, 2016).

Data

The office used pre-existing publicly available data and pre-existing non-public data to conduct all analyses. Below are the data sources and the respective years that were analyzed. The data used is for the respective elections listed.

- Indiana State Election Turnout Data
  - Years (Primary and General): 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024

- County CEB-9 Forms
  - Years (Primary and General): 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024

- Individual Voter Turnout Data
  - Years (General): 2022, 2023, 2024

The office is using the data as it was reported by the source. Data verification and reliability are critical for studies to generate legitimate findings. Any data that was incomplete or verified as incorrect was removed or corrected, when applicable, for each analysis. Data sets for each analysis may look different based on the reliability and completeness of the data needed for that specific analysis. Lack of data may narrow the applicability of the findings and may result in a very limited analysis. Any county that has incorrectly reported data on county and state forms could also impact findings.

Data has been approximated in some analyses. All budget data was rounded to the nearest whole cent. For example, $123,456.789 was rounded to $123,456,79. All percentages were rounded to the nearest hundredth if a percent. For example, 9.876 percent would be rounded to 9.88 percent.

Methods

Analysis 1: Overall Election Administration Costs

The analysis looked at the total election costs for primary and general elections in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024. County CEB-9 forms from primary and general elections were used to pull individual county costs. In most years there were a few counties that were missing cost data. Primary elections: 2018 (2), 2019 (2), 2020 (2), 2022 (1), 2023 (1), 2024 (1). General elections: 2018 (3), 2019 (5), 2020 (1), 2022 (1), 2023 (4), 2024 (0).

It should be noted that in municipal primary and general elections there are several counties that do not hold elections, so the data only represents those counties that held elections in those years. Primary elections: 2019 (69), 2023 (66). General elections: 2019 (86), 2023 (86).

The total cost from each county was added together to find the overall election administration cost across each election and subsequently each election cycle.

Analysis 2: Cost Per Vote

This analysis looked at the aggregated cost per vote in each primary and general election. In addition, it looked at each county's cost per vote and included a range and average in county cost per vote. Again, the analysis looked at the total election costs for primary and general elections in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024. Using the election administration cost data

that was compiled in analysis 1, the office combined this with the Indiana turnout data for primary and general elections in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

First, the office took the total aggregated cost of each election and divided that number by the total statewide raw vote to get a statewide cost per vote across each election.

Second, the office took the cost from each county and divided that number by the counties raw vote to get a county cost per vote across each election.

Third, the office took each counties cost per vote and averaged them out to get an average cost per vote throughout all counties in each election.

Finally, the office gathered the high-end cost per vote and the low-end cost per vote to get a county range of cost per vote in each election.

Analysis 3: Voter Turnout Rates

For this analysis, the office took the Indiana turnout data for general elections in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024 and compared the turnout percentage.

The analysis included turnout percentage instead of raw vote numbers as not all voters are eligible to vote in municipal elections compared to midterm or presidential elections. Voters must live within the municipalities that are holding an election to be eligible to vote in those elections.

Only general elections were analyzed as this includes those elections with the highest number of voters.

Analysis 4: Potential Impacts on Voter Turnout by Aligning Election Cycles

Here, the office utilized individual voter turnout data from general elections in 2022, 2023, and 2024. The analysis looked to find the number of municipal elections only voters. The office wanted to find the number of voters that voted in the 2023 municipal general election but did not vote in the 2022 midterm general election. Conversely, the office wanted to find the number of voters that voted in the 2023 municipal general election but did not vote in the 2024 presidential general election.

The idea being this number would give us an idea of the increase of voters you could potentially see by aligning municipal elections with either midterm or presidential elections.

Analysis 5: Ballot Drop-Off Rates

This analysis looked at various ballot drop-off rates across general election in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

In the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections the ballot drop-off rate between the senate race and township trustee races were analyzed. In the 2020 and 2024 presidential elections the ballot drop-off rate between the presidential race and county surveyor races were analyzed. Those were

compared to various ballot drop-off rates in mayor and city council races in 2019 and 2023. In 2019 the office looked at Portage, Ft. Wayne, Zionsville, Beech Grove, and Terre Haute. In 2023 the office looked at Indianapolis, Ft. Wayne, Evansville, Carmel, and Terre Haute.

The office examined uncontested races as a contributing factor to increased ballot drop-off rates.

Findings by Analysis

Analysis 1: Overall Election Administration Costs

A comparison of total election cycle costs reveals that municipal elections are approximately as expensive to administer as midterm elections. This is the case even as all 92 counties are not conducting elections during these municipal election cycles. The number of counties that are conducting elections during municipal election years is indicated in the data below.

- **2018 Midterm Election Cycle Cost: $18,992,732.48**
  - Primary: $9,162,534.03
  - General: $9,830,198.45

- **2019 Municipal Election Cycle Cost: $16,561,277.30**
  - Primary: $8,053,272.22 (69)
  - General: $8,508,005.08 (86)

- **2020 Presidential Election Cycle Cost: $27,510,857.57**
  - Primary: $12,699,007.91
  - General: $14,811,849.66

- **2022 Midterm Election Cycle Cost: $18,888,358**
  - Primary: $8,926,789
  - General: $9,961,569

- **2023 Municipal Election Cycle Cost: $18,185,144.55**
  - Primary: $8,757,960.52 (66)
  - General: $9,427,154.03 (86)

- **2024 Presidential Election Cycle Cost: $29,636,079.65**
  - Primary: $13,342,517.65
  - General: $16,293,562

Below is a visual representation of the total cost of each election and the total cost of each election cycle.

Total Cost of Elections (Primary and General)

Total Election Cycle Costs
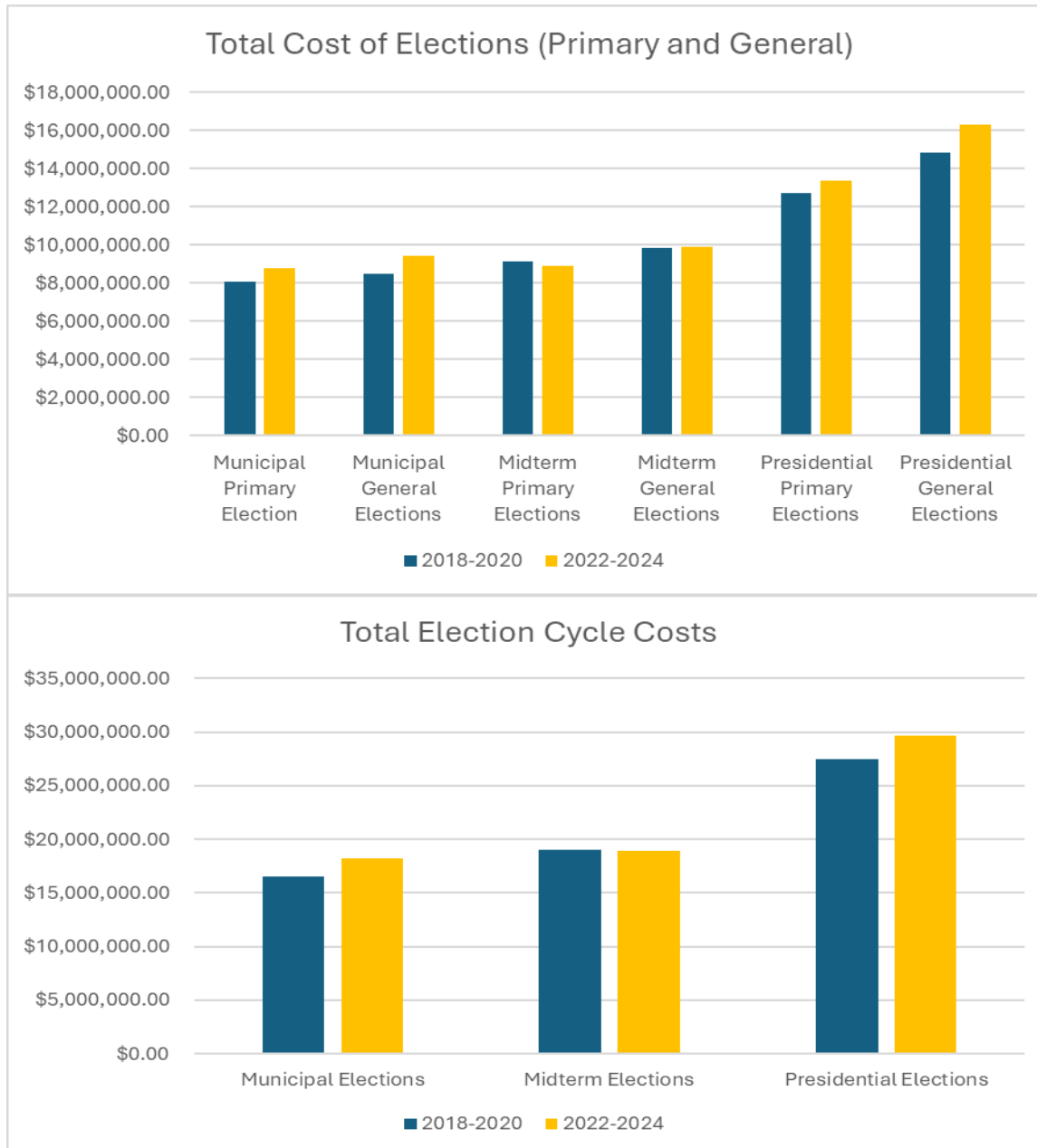
Analysis 2: Cost Per Vote

The cost per vote in municipal elections results in a significantly higher cost per vote. The percentage difference is greater in general elections than in primary elections. Cost per vote varies widely among counties, with municipal elections having the largest range and highest costs.

- **Primary Election Cost Per Vote:**
  - Midterm (2018): $10.57
  - Municipal (2019): $23.30
  - Presidential (2020): $11.71
  - Midterm (2022): $13.43
  - Municipal (2023): $27.81
  - Presidential (2024): $16.25

- **General Election Cost Per Vote:**
  - Midterm (2018): $4.27
  - Municipal (2019): $13.21
  - Presidential (2020): $4.83
  - Midterm (2022): $5.26
  - Municipal (2023): $15.62
  - Presidential (2024): $5.47

Below is a visual representation of the cost per vote in each election.
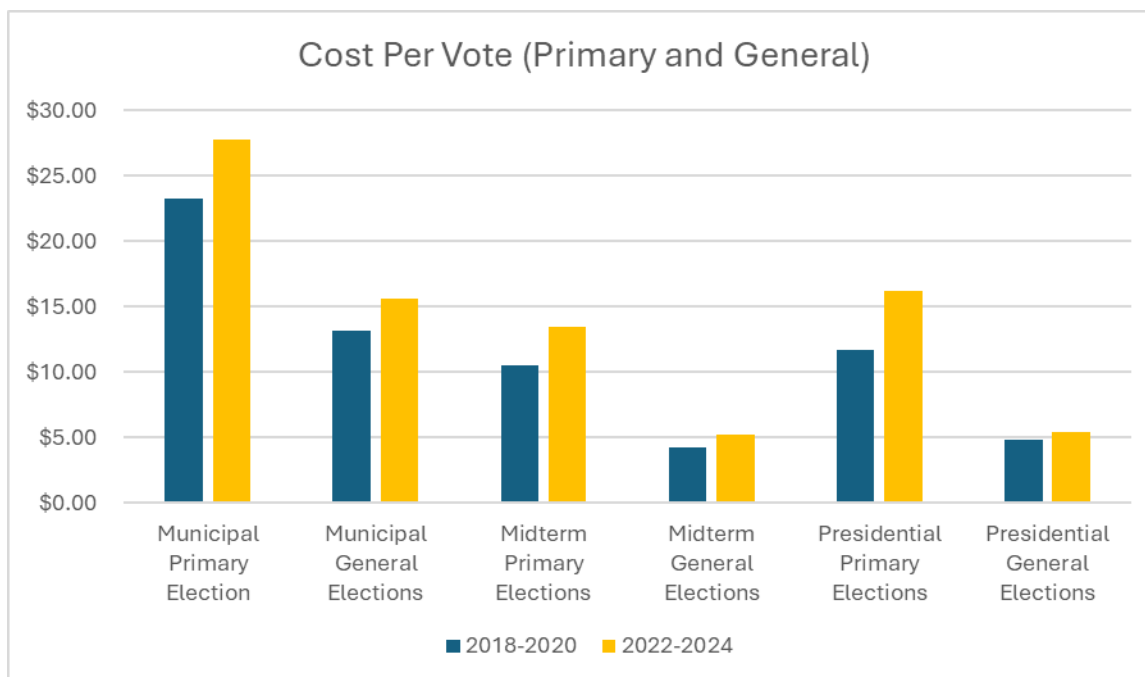
Key comparisons show:

- The 2019 municipal primary election had a **120.45% greater** cost vote than the 2018 midterm primary election and a **98.97% greater** cost per vote than the 2020 presidential primary election.
- The 2023 municipal primary election had a **107.07% greater** cost per vote than the 2022 midterm primary election and a **71.14% greater** cost per vote than the 2024 presidential primary election.

- The 2019 municipal general election had a **209.37% greater** cost per vote than the 2018 midterm general election but saw a **173.5% greater** cost per voter than the 2020 presidential general election.
- The 2023 municipal general election had a **196.96% greater** cost per vote than the 2022 midterm general election but saw a **185.56% greater** cost per voter than the 2024 presidential general election.

- **County Cost Per Vote Ranges (Averages)**
    - 2018 Midterm Primary: $74.95 to $2.12 ($11.06)
    - 2018 Midterm General: $17.91 to $1.15 ($4.76)
    - 2019 Midterm Primary: $500.00 to $4.05 ($31.57)
    - 2019 Municipal General: $106.84 to $2.43 ($20.97)
    - 2020 Presidential Primary: $34.66 to $1.83 ($9.90)
    - 2020 Presidential General: $43.12 to $0.91 ($5.09)
    - 2022 Midterm Primary: $56.78 to $2.93 ($15.41)
    - 2022 Midterm General: $48.96 to $1.39 ($6.51)
    - 2023 Municipal Primary: $473.29 to $3.14 ($45.24)
    - 2023 Municipal General: $557.60 to $1.58 ($33.22)
    - 2023 Presidential Primary: $56.93 to $2.77 ($14.27)
    - 2024 Presidential General: $24.33 to $0.67 ($5.39)

Below is a visual representation of the county ranges in cost per vote in each election.
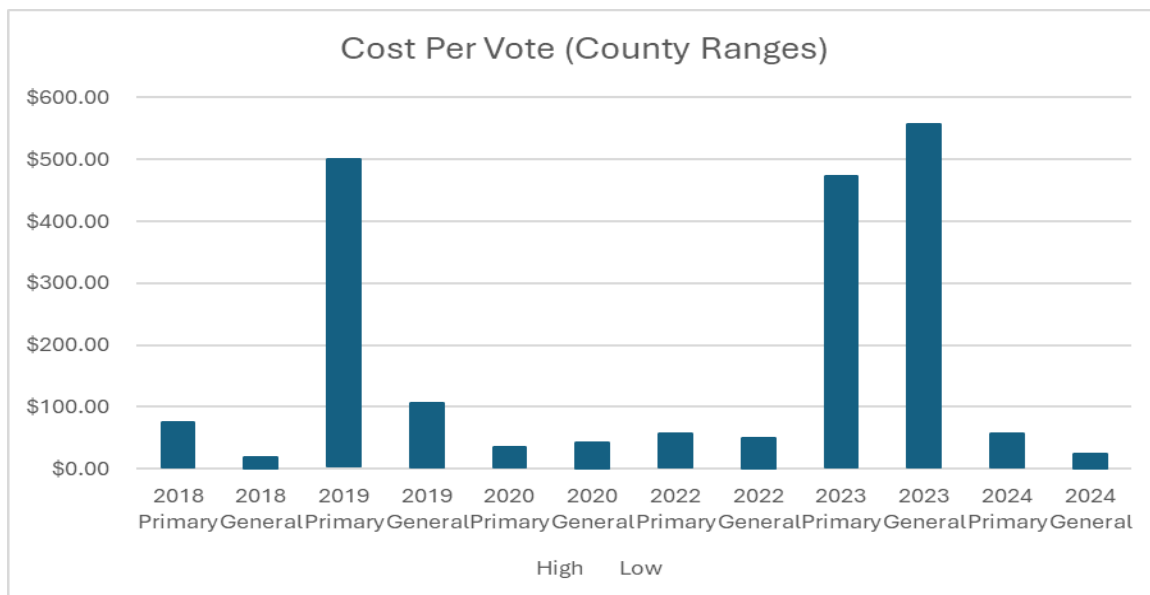
Analysis 3: Voter Turnout Rates

The analysis shows a significantly lower voter turnout rate in municipal general elections than in midterm or presidential general elections.

- **Voter Turnout Rates**
  - 2018 Midterm General: 50.69% (2,299,619 voters)
  - 2019 Municipal General: 22.63% (644,125)
  - 2020 Presidential General: 64.58% (3,068,411)
  - 2022 Midterm General: 39.63% (1,886,810 voters)
  - 2023 Municipal General: 20.6% (603,398 voters)
  - 2024 Presidential General: 61.53% (2,976,600 voters)

Key comparisons show:

- The 2018 midterm general election had a **123% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2019 municipal general election.
- The 2020 presidential general election had a **185.37% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2019 municipal general election.
- The 2022 midterm general election had a **92.38% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2023 municipal general elections.
- The 2024 presidential general election had a **198.69% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2023 municipal general elections.

Below you can see visuals comparing the total cost of elections against voter turnout rates and the cost per vote against voter turnout rates.

Cost Per Vote vs. Voter Turnout
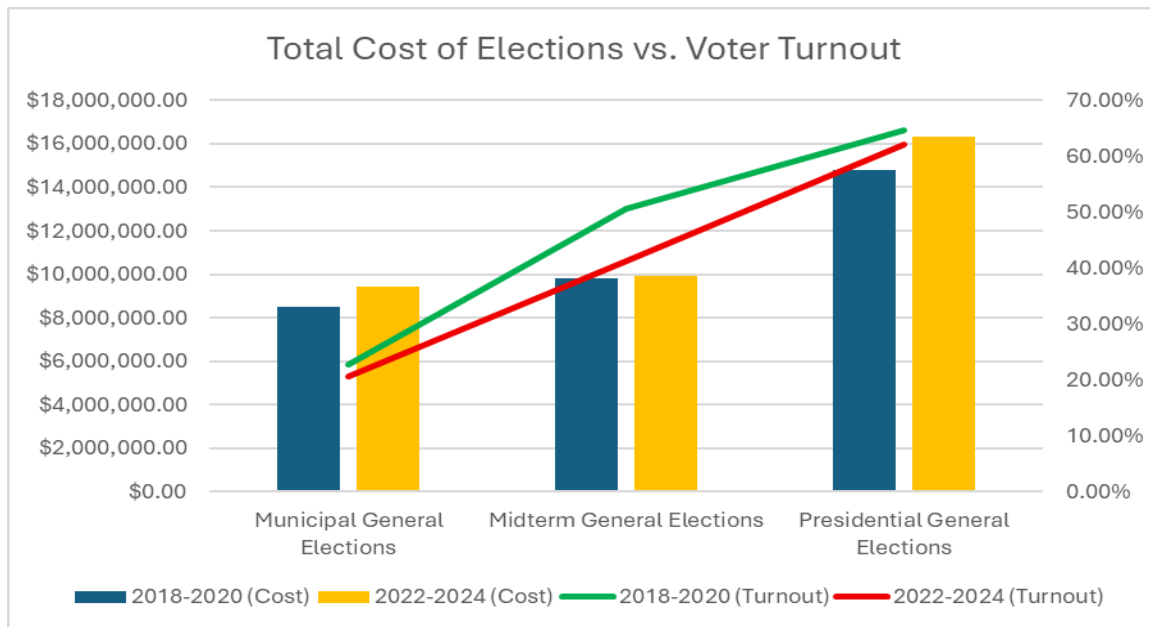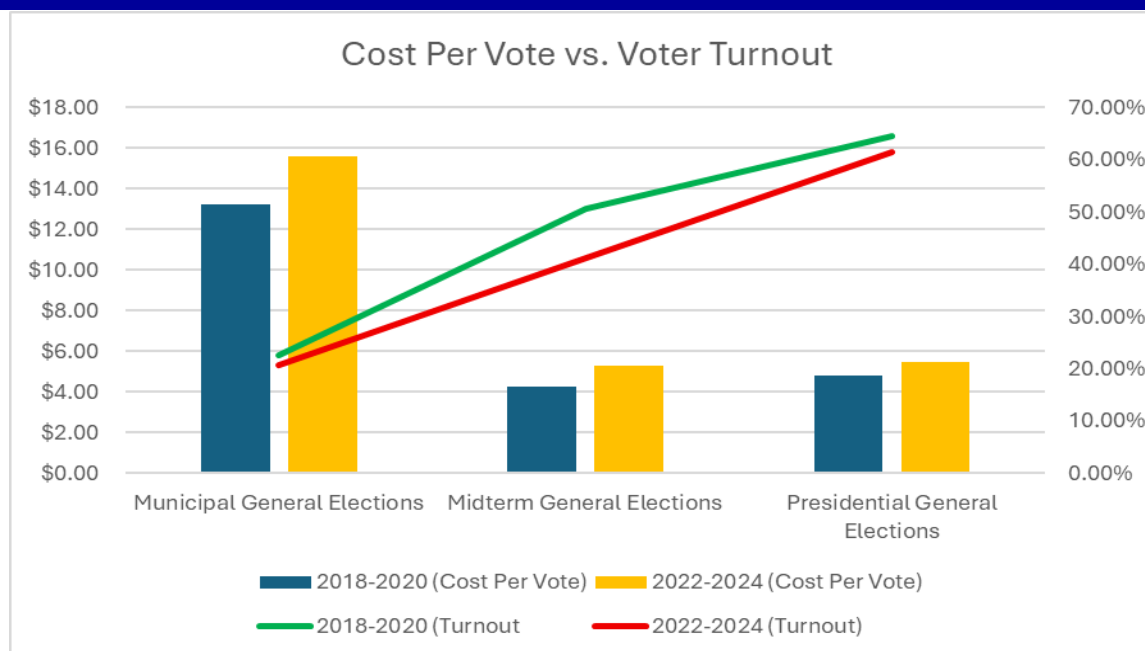
Analysis 4: Potential Impacts on Voter Turnout by Aligning Election Cycles

Aligning municipal elections with larger cycles could modestly increase participation in those elections.

An analysis found that **78,693** voters from the 2023 municipal general did not vote in the 2022 general election. Their participation would have increased turnout by **1.65%**.

Similarly, **23,395** voters from the 2023 municipal general did not vote in the 2024 general election. Their participation would have increased turnout by **0.48%**.

Analysis 5: Ballot Drop-Off Rates

Ballot drop-off rates are greater in midterm and presidential general elections than they are in municipal general elections, but the increase in voter turnout makes up for any increase in the ballot drop-off rate.

- **Municipal Ballot Drop-Off Rates (2019):**
    - Portage Mayor to City Council: 6.25%
    - Ft. Wayne Mayor to City Council: 7.55%
    - Zionsville Mayor to Town Council: 12.11%
    - Beech Grove Mayor to City Council: 1.74%
    - Teer Haute Mayor to City Council: 15.99%

- **Midterm/Presidential Ballot Drop-Off Rates (2018 and 2020):**
    - Senate to Township Trustee (2018): 16.41%
    - President to County Surveyor (2020): 30.92%

- **Municipal Drop-Off (2023):**
  - Indianapolis Mayor to City Council: 8.84%
  - Ft. Wayne Mayor to City Council: 8.73%
  - Evansville Mayor to City Council: 12.29%
  - Carmel Mayor to City Council: 4.09%
  - Terre Haute Mayor to City Council: 21.20%

- **Midterm/Presidential Balot Drop-Off Rates:**
  - President to County Surveyor (2024): 22.74%
  - Senate to Township Trustee (2022): 19.56%

Below you can see a visualization of the ballot drop-off rates compared to the number of total voters in each of the elections. The number of raw voters were used instead of a voter turnout percentage because here it is important to see the raw vote in each election compared to voter turnout.

Utilizing a comparison between 2020 presidential election and 2019 municipal election will show why the number of total voters was utilized. Even though the 2020 election had a 30.92% ballot drop off rate in the races analyzed compared to an 8.73% ballot drop off rate in the races analyzed in 2019, the 2020 election shad significantly more raw votes down ballot. In 2020, even with the higher ballot drop off rate there were still over 2,000,000 voters voting down ballot which is significantly more than the total turnout of 644,125 in the 2019 municipal general election.

Ballot Drop Off Rate vs. Total Voters (2022-2024)

A major contributing factor to the higher drop-off rates is the number of uncontested down-ballot races.

In 2020, 78% of the county surveyor races were uncontested. Compared with 20% of the Portage City Council, 33% of the Ft. Wayne City Council, 40% of the Zionsville Town Council, 0% of the Beech Grove Council, and 67% of the Terre Haute City Council races in 2019. The number of township trustee races that were uncontested could not be identified based on the data available.

In 2022, 85% of the township trustee races were uncontested. In 2024, 87% of the county surveyor races were uncontested. Compared with 40% of the Indianapolis City Council, 50% of the Ft. Wayne City Council, 50% of the Evansville City Council, 17% of the Carmel City Council, and 83% of the Teer Haute City Council races in 2023.

Below you can see that across all the races that were analyzed the higher the number of uncontested races there were on the ballot, the higher the ballot drop off rate there was in a specific election

Ballot Drop Off Rate vs. Uncontested Races (2018-2020)

Ballot Drop Off Rate vs. Uncontested Races (2022-2024)
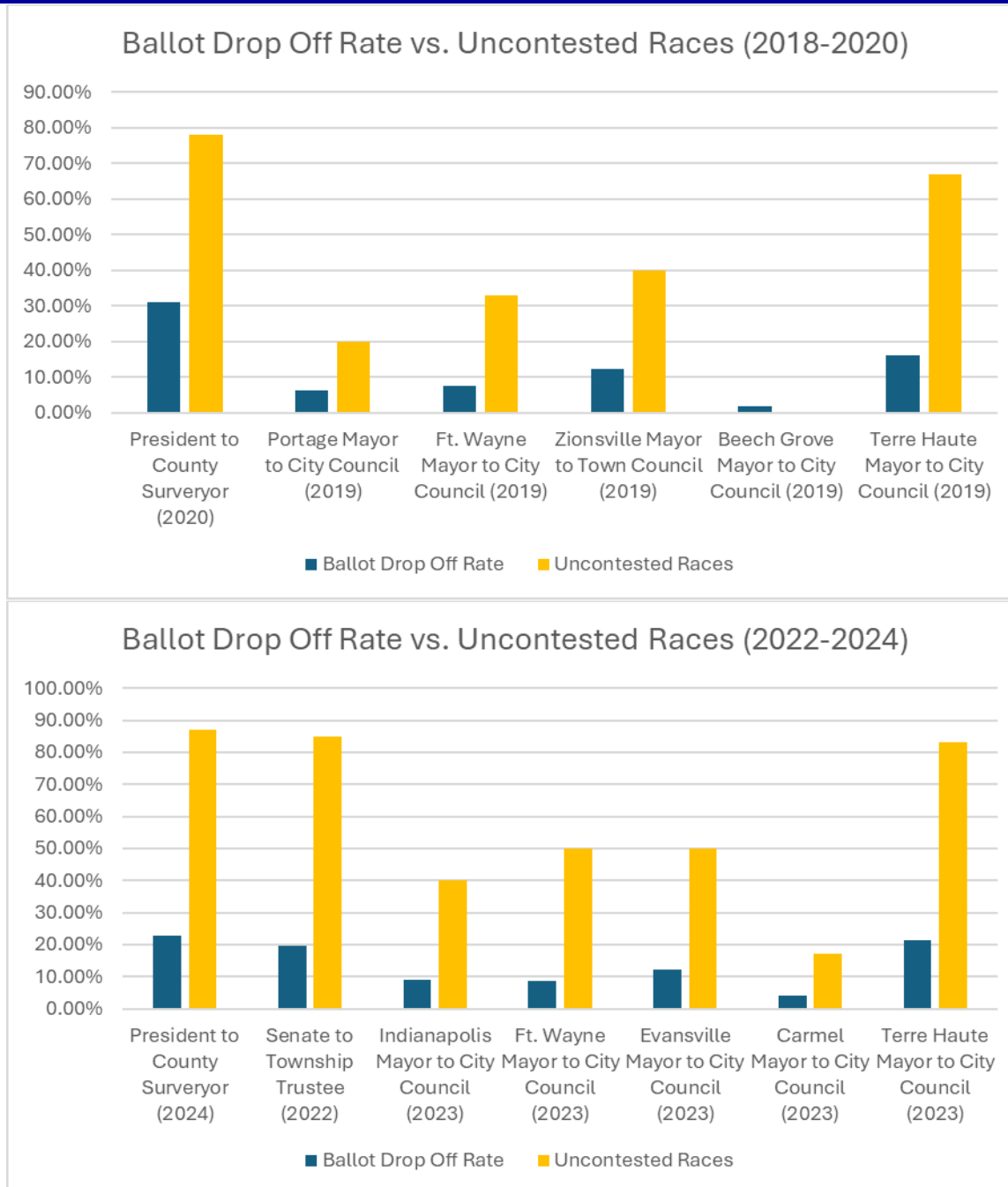
Analysis 6: State Cost Impacts

Holding separate municipal elections incurs additional costs for the state beyond county-level expenses. These include:

- Costs for the BMV to remain open for extended hours prior and on election day.
- Costs for Democracy Live to provide accessibility services for voters ($50,000 per election).
- Costs for the Statewide Voter Registration System Vendor's Help Desk to operate for extra hours prior to an on-election day.

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- Costs for Homeland Security and law enforcement support prior to an on-election day.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Recognition of these limitations provide critical context and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with moving municipal elections.

The election costs and voter turnout analyses capture a high-level overview, but cannot control for the array of election complexities. Data could not be reasonably or reliably collected for the following factors. These factors could assist in showcasing a more complete picture:

- Campaign finance data for municipal elections.
- TV and radio time costs for municipal elections compared to midterm/presidential elections.
- Missing data from counties on election costs.

Summary of All Findings

The analysis indicates that municipal elections are characterized by election costs that are in-line with their midterm and presidential election counterparts but see a significantly low voter turnout and thus a high cost per vote when compared to midterm and presidential elections.

The analysis did not address the potential effects on cost savings or voter turnout by requiring all local elections to be conducted in the odd-numbered year immediately preceding a presidential election year. This is because this is when most municipal elections are already held. The only exception is small towns that have the choice to hold their elections in a general election year. Requiring the small towns to move back would increase total costs and cost per vote as small towns see lower turnouts than larger municipalities in standalone elections.

While moving municipal elections to even-numbered years would likely result in a modest increase in total voter turnout in those midterm and presidential elections, it would lead to significant increases in voters voting for municipal contests.

Though combining municipal elections with either midterm or presidential elections can lead to higher ballot drop-off rates, the significant increase seen in voter turnout more than makes up for the voter lost through ballot fatigue.

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Note: Identical forms for all 92 counties from 2018 were collected.

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Note: Identical forms for all 92 counties from 2018 were collected.

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Note: Identical forms for all 92 counties from 2023 were collected.

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Note: Identical forms for all 92 counties from 2023 were collected.

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Part 2: Analysis of Vote Centers

Introduction

The Voting System Technical Oversight Program (VSTOP), under the authorization of the Office of the Indiana Secretary of State (office), was tasked with assisting in the Study on Election Issues as mandated by House Enrolled Act 1633 (Public Law08-2025). Pursuant to this directive, VSTOP conducted an analysis of vote center implementation and usage within the State of Indiana. VSTOP had approximately two months to complete their initial respective analyses prior to the conducting of the public meetings, and a total of four months to submit a complete report of all findings to the Indiana General Assembly by November 1, 2025. Dr. Chad Kinsella, VSTOP's Executive Director, and Mr. Matthew Housley, VSTOP's Election Systems Audit Specialist, conducted the study on behalf of VSTOP.

This is VSTOP's final report of findings related to any cost savings of administering vote center elections and any effects vote centers have on voter turnout. This report will overview the goals and scope of the study as directed by the Indiana General Assembly, the previous literature and methods utilized to conduct the analysis, the data and limitations of the analysis, and findings the study produced.

Goals and Scope of Study

The objectives of the study were directed by Public Law 108-2025. VSTOP was tasked with examining the comparative costs of precinct-based and vote center election models, as well as the effects of each model on voter turnout. VSTOP considered a range of factors with potential implications for both election administration costs and voter turnout. With respect to election costs, VSTOP evaluated staffing requirements, equipment utilization, voting locations, and overall election expenditures. With respect to voter turnout, VSTOP analyzed turnout data across both vote center and precinct-based models and examined voter experience associated with each model. VSTOP's objective was to complete an analysis and present any applicable findings. There will be no policy recommendations in this report.

Literature Review

There has not been a statewide published study on the administrative and turnout effects of vote centers in the last decade. While there was no previous literature in exact context of Public Law 108-2025, there is literature that presents findings on a few of the factors VSTOP investigated. A few of these studies are older, with two looking at Indiana specifically. The other research reviewed was completed out-of-state and was isolated to the local level.

The literature on vote centers and voter turnout is inconclusive and non-definitive. Initial studies of vote centers in Colorado and Texas identified modest increases in voter turnout

particularly among infrequent voters (Stein & Vonnahme, 2008, 2012). Research conducted in California similarly associated vote centers with modest gains in turnout (Bryant, 2019; McGhee et al., 2019).

The type of election has also been shown to influence the impact of vote centers, with greater effects observed in off-year constitutional elections compared to midterm or presidential elections (Cortina & Rottinghaus, 2019). Conversely, other studies examining counties in Indiana as well as a southern municipal election, found no measurable effect of vote centers on turnout (Folz, 2014; Scheele et al., 2009). Generally, regardless of voting model, when an election is administered well, voters are generally happy with their election.

When investigating voter satisfaction with election models, some studies report high levels of voter satisfaction with vote centers (Folz, 2014; Scheele et al., 2009). Evidence from Colorado highlights differences in county experiences: Larimer County reported more efficient elections and better-trained personnel (Stein & Vonnahme, 2012), while Denver County experienced challenges during implementation, including longer lines (Montjoy, 2008). Similarly, research in Harris County, Texas, found that voters reported more negative experiences due to longer wait times and less helpful poll workers (Chen, Sadeghpour, & Lamb, 2021). The rollout, planning, logistics, and communications of vote centers tends to have a high impact on voters' perception, experience, and overall satisfaction.

Numerous studies on vote centers and election costs have shown consistent findings of savings in the cost to administer vote center elections over precinct-based models. For some jurisdictions, the sheer number of precincts presents significant administrative challenges in conducting elections. Precinct-based voting on Election Day has been found to be both increasingly expensive and labor intensive (Alvarez & Hall, 2008). A study of Colorado counties during the November 2008 election compared Election Day vote centers to precinct-based voting and found that counties utilizing vote centers averaged $2.83 less per registered voter than those relying on precinct-based voting ($7.92 vs. $10.75 per registered voter) (Stein & Vonnahme, 2009). Similarly, the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute (2010) concluded that vote centers could generate substantial cost savings for all counties, with particularly pronounced benefits for jurisdictions with fewer registered voters per precinct. A case study of Farragut, Tennessee, further supported this conclusion, finding that vote centers were a viable strategy for lowering election costs (Folz, 2014).

Data

VSTOP used pre-existing publicly available data and original primary information collected from the Secretary of State survey to conduct all analyses. Below are the data sources and the respective years that were analyzed. The data used is for the respective general election in a given year. VSTOP's study did not investigate primary or municipal elections. A general election is a county's largest and most costly election within the cycle. It will show the most accurate and representative effects on the studied factors. It can be implied that findings would have a similar but scaled down effect on primary, special, and municipal elections.

- U.S Election Assistance Commission Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS)
  - Years: 2016, 2018, 2022, 2024

- Indiana State Election Data
  - Years: 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, 2024

- MIT Survey on the Performance of American Elections
  - Years: 2012, 2014, 2016, 2022, 2024

- 2025 Secretary of State Survey to County Election Officials
- County CEB-9 Forms
  - Years: 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, 2024

For the study, the year 2020 was omitted from all analyses that were completed on the factors investigated. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was abnormal in the way it was administered (locations, poll worker needs, layouts, and social distancing etc.), and how people chose to vote. It would be considered an outlier when compared to the standard administration of the other years, so it was excluded. VSTOP wants to ensure the study is truly representative of the quantitative reality of election administration and turnout.

VSTOP is using the data as it was reported by the source. Data verification and reliability are critical for studies to generate legitimate findings. Any data that was incomplete or verified as incorrect was removed or corrected, when applicable, for each analysis. Data sets for each analysis may look different based on the reliability and completeness of the data needed for that specific analysis. Lack of data may narrow the applicability of the findings and may result in a very limited analysis. Any counties that have incorrectly reported data on county and state forms could also impact findings.

Data has been approximated in some analyses. When completing the analysis, location and poll worker data that was averaged, divided, multiplied, summed, or subtracted was rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, 1.3 locations would be rounded to 1 or 1.78 poll workers would be rounded to 2. All budget data was rounded to the nearest whole dollar. For example, $154,845.28 was rounded to $154,845. All cost-per voter data averaged, divided, multiplied, summed, or subtracted was rounded to the nearest cent. For example, $5.037698 would be rounded to $5.04 or $2.64388 would be rounded to $2.64. All percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, 32.85 percent would be rounded to 33 percent. This generates rounding errors and should be acknowledged. The way this data was analyzed, any present rounding errors do not have significant implications on the study's validity.

Methods

Analyses 1 & 2: Presidential and Midterm Switch Poll Worker Comparisons

The presidential analysis investigated poll worker staffing differences in counties that used a precinct-based model in one presidential general election and switched to a vote center model for the following election. The 2016 and 2024 general elections were used. Counties were separated into "switch" and "control" counties. All counties with complete data that used a precinct-based model in 2016 and a vote center model in 2024 were eligible for inclusion as "switch" counties. Counties with complete data that used a precinct-based model in 2016 and 2024 were eligible for inclusion as "control" counties. 36 counties met the criteria for "switch" counties and 22 counties met the criteria for "control" counties. Those counties were:

- *Switch Counties:* Benton, Daviess, Dearborn, Decatur, DeKalb, Dubois, Fountain, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hendricks, Jackson, Jasper, Knox, Kosciusko, Laporte, Lawrence, Madison, Marion, Morgan, Pike, Porter, Posey, Putnam, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Shelby, Spencer, St. Joseph, Starke, Steuben, Sullivan, Tipton, and Warrick

- *Control Counties:* Allen, Brown, Clark, Delaware, Gibson, Hamilton, Harrison, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Lake, Martin, Monroe, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Union, Warren, and Whitley

The midterm analysis investigated poll worker staffing differences in counties that used a precinct-based model in one midterm general election and switched to a vote center model for the following election. The 2018 and 2022 midterm general elections were used. Counties were separated into "switch" and "control" counties. All counties with complete data that used a precinct-based model in 2018 and a vote center model in 2022 were eligible for inclusion as "switch" counties. Counties with complete data that used a precinct-based model in 2018 and 2022 were eligible for inclusion as "control" counties. 19 counties met the criteria for "switch" counties and 23 counties met the criteria for "control" counties.

- *Switch Counties:* Dearborn, Decatur, DeKalb, Dubois, Fulton, Grant, Jackson, Jasper, Knox, Kosciusko, Pike, Posey, Shelby, Spencer, St. Joseph, Starke, Steuben, Tipton, and Warrick

- *Control Counties:* Allen, Brown, Clark, Delaware, Hamilton, Harrison, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Lake, Martin, Monroe, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Union, Warren, Washington, and Whitley

The total number of poll workers used for those counties were collected from the 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024 general elections. The difference in the total poll workers (2016 to 2024 / 2018 to 2022) were calculated as whole numbers and as percentages. Percentages standardized the data, allowing for clearer comparisons across the 92 counties. Raw counts can present an incomplete or misleading picture, as similar totals may represent substantially different proportions depending on the county's size. Using percentages highlights relative impact, simplifies interpretation of complex data, and provides a more accurate view of trends.

An aggregated percent change for the "switch" and "control" counties was calculated for both the presidential and midterm cycles. The final findings were reached by subtracting the "control" county average percent change from the "switch" county average percent change to get an accurate representation of the difference of poll workers utilized in a presidential and midterm general election.

Analyses 3 & 4: Presidential and Midterm General Election Switch Comparisons by Voter Turnout Size

The same presidential and midterm analyses described in Analyses 1 & 2 were also conducted with counties organized by jurisdiction size. This approach allowed for a more detailed comparison of election staffing among counties with similar levels of voter turnout. Counties were grouped into four categories based on their eight-year average turnout, calculated using data from the 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024 election cycles.

<u>For the Presidential General Election Switch Comparison:</u>

The 35 small counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.

- *20 small switching counties:* Benton, Daviess, Decatur, Franklin, Fountain, Fulton, Greene, Jasper, Knox, Pike, Posey, Putnam, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Starke, Steuben, Sullivan, and Tipton

- *15 small control counties:* Brown, Gibson, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Union, Warren, and Whitley

The 15 medium counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.

- *12 medium switching counties:* DeKalb, Dearborn, Dubois, Grant, Jackson, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Lawrence, Madison, Morgan, Shelby, and Warrick

- *3 medium control counties:* Clark, Delaware, and Harrison

The 4 large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.

- *3 large switching counties:* Hendricks, St. Joseph, and Porter

- *1 large control county:* Monroe

The 4 extra-large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 100,000+ voters.

- *1 extra-large switching county:* Marion

- *3 extra-large control counties:* Allen, Hamilton, and Lake

For the Midterm General Election Switch Comparison:

The 26 small counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.

- *10 small switching counties:* Decatur, Fulton, Jasper, Knox, Pike, Posey, Spencer, Starke, Steuben, and Tipton

- *16 small control counties:* Brown, Crawford, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Union, Warren, Washington, and Whitley

The 11 medium counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.

- *8 medium switching counties:* DeKalb, Dearborn, Dubois, Grant, Jackson, Kosciusko, Shelby, and Warrick

- *3 medium control counties:* Clark, Delaware, and Harrison

The 2 large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.

- *1 large switching county:* St. Joseph

- *1 large control county:* Monroe

The 3 extra-large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 100,000+ voters.

- No extra-large county met the switching criteria

- *3 extra-large control counties:* Allen, Hamilton, and Lake

Analysis 5: 2024 Poll Worker Comparison

This analysis examined the 2024 general election in greater detail to assess differences in election staffing between vote center counties and precinct-based counties. Counties were categorized by jurisdiction size based on their 2024 voter turnout data, and all 92 counties were included in the analysis.

For each county, the total number of poll workers utilized in the 2024 general election was recorded. Aggregate averages were calculated separately for vote center counties and precinct-based counties, and the two models were compared. In addition, the 2024 turnout data for each county was divided by the number of poll workers used, producing a voters-per-poll-worker ratio. Aggregate averages of these ratios were then calculated for both vote center and precinct-based counties, enabling a direct comparison between the two models.

The 47 small counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.

- *Precinct-based counties:* Brown, Crawford, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Rush, Union, Vermillion, Warren, and Washington

- *Vote center counties:* Adams, Benton, Blackford, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Daviess, Decatur, Fayette, Fountain, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Miami, Owen, Pike, Posey, Pulaski, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Starke, Sullivan, Switzerland, Tipton, Wabash, Wells, and White

The 31 medium counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.

- *Precinct-based counties:* Delaware, Gibson, Harrison, and Whitley

- *Vote center counties:* Bartholomew, Boone, Dearborn, DeKalb, Dubois, Floyd, Grant, Hancock, Henry, Howard, Huntington, Jackson, Jasper, Knox, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Lawrence, Marshall, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Putnam, Shelby, Steuben, Vigo, Warrick, and Wayne

The 9 large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.

- *Precinct-based counties:* Clark and Monroe

- *Vote center counties:* Elkhart, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Porter, Tippecanoe, and Vanderburgh

The 5 extra-large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 100,000+ voters.

- *Precinct-based counties:* Allen, Hamilton, and Lake

- *Vote center counties:* Marion and St. Joseph

Analysis 6: Equipment Usage

This analysis sought to identify potential differences in election equipment usage and equipment costs between vote center counties and precinct-based counties. However, upon review, the absence of reliable equipment counts and the complexity of equipment usage and equipment contracts at the county level rendered this analysis not feasible.

Analysis 7: Voting Locations

This analysis compared precinct and voting location counts across voting models, with all 92 counties included. Using 2024 turnout data and the same county categorizations applied in Analysis 5, aggregate averages of precincts and voting locations were calculated for both vote center and precinct-based counties, and the results were compared to identify differences between the two models.

Analysis 8: 2024 Poll Worker Cost Comparison

This analysis compared poll worker costs by voting model, using data from 50 counties that completed the 2025 Secretary of State's survey by August 11, 2025. Of these, 32 counties utilized a vote center model and 18 utilized a precinct-based model. It should be noted that the analysis is missing 42 counties as they did not complete the survey to be included.

- *Vote center counites:* Adams, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Cass, Daviess, Dearborn, Dubois, Elkhart, Fayette, Floyd, Howard, Jasper, Kosciusko, Lawrence, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Pike, Porter, Posey, Putnam, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Shelby, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Wabash, Wells, and White

- *Precinct-based counties:* Allen, Crawford, Delaware, Gibson, Hamilton, Harrison, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Monroe, Newton, Parke, Rush, Union, Washington, and Whitley

Poll worker pay was calculated using the lowest reported base rate in each county, providing a low-end estimate of costs and potential savings. Approximate base pay expenditures were calculated by multiplying the base rate by the number of poll workers used. Voters per poll worker were determined by dividing each county's 2024 turnout by the number of poll workers reported for the general election. County election budget estimates, as reported on the CEB-9 forms, were attributed to each county.

Finally, poll worker costs were expressed as a percentage of total election expenses by dividing base pay total expenditures by each county's estimated election budget.

Analysis 9: 2012-2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

This analysis compared the cost per voter across voting models, incorporating all 92 counties, with the exception of those missing data in respective election years. For each county, cost per voter was calculated for the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024 election cycles by dividing the county's CEB-9 estimated election cost by its total voter turnout as recorded in the State's official election results. Each county was coded annually according to whether it operated under a vote center or precinct-based model, and average costs per voter were calculated for both models across all years. A comparison of both models' election costs was completed to identify cost differences.

Analysis 10: 2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

This analysis compared the 2024 cost per voter across voting models, with the data further organized into similar jurisdiction categories as Analysis 5 and by the type of election equipment. All 92 counties were included. For each county, cost per voter was calculated for the 2024 general election by dividing the county's CEB-9 estimated election cost by its total voter turnout, as reported in the State's official election results. Counties were then coded according to their voting model (vote center or precinct-based) and by their primary election equipment type, Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) or Optical Scan, based on VSTOP records. Aggregated averages for cost per-voter were calculated for each voting model by jurisdiction size and equipment type and were compared for differences.

Analysis 11: Voter Turnout

An often-cited reason to adopt vote centers is to increase turnout. Based on this, turnout data was collected from 2010 to 2024, both midterm and presidential elections, again, except for 2020. Counties were labeled as either being a vote center or a non-vote center county for each year. The total votes cast were obtained for each county for each election, along with the total number of registered voters and the total number of people who are voting age. This was done to calculate two different turnout figures to account for the possibility of some counties purging their voter rolls at various times. A difference-in-differences analysis was used to determine if the addition of vote centers had any effect on turnout. Difference-in-differences allows us to compare counties before and after the implementation of vote centers. The analysis estimated the difference between observed mean turnout for counties with and without vote centers before and after they were implemented.

Analysis 12: Voter Experience

Another reason vote centers are adopted is to provide convenience to voters. Determining if voters found vote centers more convenient is difficult in Indiana since no surveys were completed exclusively in the state for vote center and non-vote center counties. Overcoming this

problem was done by using the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Survey of the Performance of American Elections. This is a national survey that has been done since 2012, during almost every midterm (unfortunately, the survey was not conducted in 2018) and presidential election. The questions used by MIT serve as the basis for all other surveys done, including those used in other studies on vote center convenience. Each survey completed by MIT had between 200-300 respondents from Indiana and listed the county in which they reside, enabling us to code whether they have vote center or not. Using four key questions, a t- test was performed between vote center and non-vote center residents to see if there was any difference between how they answered these commonly used polling place voter experience questions.

Limitations and Public Concerns

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Recognition of these limitations provides critical context and develops a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with vote centers' effects on election administration costs and voter turnout.

The election costs and voter turnout analyses capture a high-level overview, but cannot control for the array of election complexities. With 92 counties having local control over their elections, there are 92 different ways elections are administered across the state. Data could not be reasonably or reliably collected for the following factors. These factors could assist in showcasing a more complete picture of election administration across the state:

- Hours worked and paid to each poll worker across all 92 counties for the 2024 general election.
- Standardly reported wait times for the 1,626 locations that were deployed in the 2024 general election.
- The reported aggregate and line-itemed budgets for all 92 counties for the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024 general elections.
- A total list of election equipment programmed and deployed for the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024 general elections for all 92 counties.
- What considerations influenced the county election board's decision to adopt a vote center model, and what challenges or concerns have prevented precinct-based counties from transitioning?
- What feedback have voters given about their county's model?
- For vote center counties: Would the county ever go back to a precinct-based model?
- Original data collected from Indiana voters about the voting experience, process, and attitudes on their county's voting model.
- County-level documentation outlining staffing reductions, equipment adjustments, or overall cost savings directly attributed to the transition from precinct-based voting to vote centers.

The poll worker analysis utilized the total number of poll workers employed for the 2024 general election. This includes poll workers used for early voting and election day. While EAVS did provide poll worker data specifically for early voting, counties have local control on many administrative aspects of early voting including equipment, staffing, and locations. Due to significant variation in the implementation of early voting, it was not conducive to be analyzed independently. Early voting location data, and specific cost breakdowns for early voting versus election day data were not available.

The poll worker switch analyses examined the 2016 and 2024 presidential general elections, as well as the 2018 and 2022 midterm general elections. While the analysis revealed several noteworthy findings, the absence of detailed context and primary county-level data complicates the interpretation. Without adequate context, it is difficult to determine the specific conditions under which each voting model may have influenced poll worker usage.

This limitation constrains the ability to establish causation and make it challenging to draw firm conclusions about differences in staffing needs between the two models on a statewide level.

All analyses conducted for this study were quantitative in nature. Although the MIT data set includes information on qualitative factors, the data available for use in this report was presented in quantified form. Due to time constraints, the study did not include focus groups, individual interviews, or qualitative surveys of voters or election administrators. Such qualitative research could have provided additional insight into the perspectives, attitudes, expectations, and concerns of both election administrators and the voting public regarding the implementation of vote centers.

Lastly, members of the public expressed concerns that the quantitative nature of this study did not capture the "voter" aspects of voting and elections. The study's directives focused specifically on identifying potential cost savings and impacts on voter turnout, not on voting accessibility or the voter and administrator experiences at the county level. As such, these broader considerations were outside the study's scope. However, public feedback suggests that incorporating qualitative context alongside quantitative data could offer a better understanding of how different voting models affect voters and election administrators.

During public meetings, several participants shared feedback and critiques of the study's approach and scope. While VSTOP maintains confidence in the quality and validity of the research conducted within the limited timeframe, it was important to acknowledge and document this public input. Common themes from the feedback included:

- Concern that the study reduced the value of civic participation to dollar amounts, which some felt was disrespectful to voters' sense of civic duty.
- Worries that the study neglects details on vote center placement details, socioeconomic concerns, and transportation challenges that could affect voter convenience and accessibility.

- Fears that the study might be used to justify changes that could diminish local control of elections, without incorporating perspectives from voters or county election officials.
- A belief among some participants that the study was unnecessary, as they were satisfied with their county's current election process, summed up by the sentiment: "If it isn't broke, don't fix it."
- Concerns that each county operates uniquely and that applying a statewide, uniform approach might overlook local needs and circumstances.
- Frustration that the study did not separately analyze early and absentee voting, focusing primarily on election day operations.

Findings by Analysis

Analysis 1: Presidential General Election Switch Poll Worker Comparisons

Both vote center and precinct-based counties used fewer poll workers in the 2024 general election compared to the 2016 general election. On average, vote center counties reduced their poll worker usage by approximately 63 individuals, while precinct-based counties reduced poll worker usage by approximately 44 individuals. This represents a reduction of roughly 32 percent for vote center counties compared to 13 percent for precinct-based counties. When considering precinct-based counties as a control group, counties that transitioned from a precinct-based model to a vote center model utilized approximately 19 percent fewer poll workers in 2024 than counties that remained precinct-based.

Analysis 2: Midterm General Election Switch Poll Worker Comparisons

Both vote center and precinct-based counties used fewer poll workers in the 2022 midterm election compared to the 2018 midterm election. On average, vote center counties reduced their poll worker usage by approximately 78 individuals, while precinct-based counties reduced poll worker usage by approximately 63 individuals. This represents a reduction of roughly 39 percent for vote center counties compared to 17 percent for precinct-based counties. When considering precinct-based counties as a control group, counties that transitioned from a precinct-based model to a vote center model utilized approximately 22 percent fewer poll workers in 2022 than counties that remained precinct-based.

Analysis 3: Presidential General Election Switch Comparisons by Voter Turnout Size

This analysis used the same methods as Analysis 1, but further sorted the counties into groups (small to extra-large) based on the combined average voter turnout from 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024.

On average, small counties that switched from a precinct-based model to a vote center model reduced their poll worker usage by approximately 41 individuals, while precinct-based counties reduced poll worker usage by approximately 13 individuals. This represents a reduction of roughly 37 percent for vote center counties compared to 12 percent for precinct-based

counties. When considering precinct-based counties as a control group, small counties that transitioned from a precinct-based model to a vote center model utilized approximately 25 percent fewer poll workers in 2024 than counties that remained precinct-based.

On average, medium counties that switched from a precinct-based model to a vote center model reduced their poll worker usage by approximately 91 individuals, while precinct-based counties reduced poll worker usage by approximately 97 individuals. Even though precinct-based counties had a greater average reduction in poll worker usage, the reduction was not as substantial when broken down into percentage change. This represents a reduction of roughly 28 percent for vote center counties compared to 26 percent for precinct-based counties. When considering precinct-based counties as a control group, medium counties that transitioned from a precinct-based model to a vote center model utilized approximately 2 percent fewer poll workers in 2024 than counties that remained precinct-based.

Only four large counties were eligible for inclusion which limits the ability for a comparison analysis. On average, when Hendricks, Porter, and St. Joseph Counties switched from a precinct-based model to a vote center model it reduced poll worker usage by approximately 234 individuals. This represents a reduction of roughly 34 percent. Large counties that transitioned from a precinct-based model to a vote center model utilized approximately 34 percent fewer poll workers in 2024 than in 2016. Monroe County, the only precinct-based county in this category used 170 more individuals, a 27 percent increase from 2016. Verified by the Monroe County election supervisor, the sharp increase was due to adding additional voting locations for 2024.

Only four extra-large counties were eligible for inclusion which limits the ability for a comparison analysis. When Marion County switched from a precinct-based model to a vote center model it increased poll worker usage by approximately 348 individuals. This represents an increase of roughly 14 percent. Allen, Hamilton, and Lake, the three extra-large precinct-based counties in this category used approximately 219 fewer individuals, a 15 percent decrease from 2016.

Analysis 4: Midterm General Election Switch Comparisons by Voter Turnout Size

This analysis used the same methods as Analysis 2, but further sorted the counties into groups (small to extra-large) based on the combined average voter turnout from 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024.

On average, small counties that switched from a precinct-based model to a vote center model reduced their poll worker usage by approximately 40 individuals, while precinct-based counties reduced poll worker usage by approximately 11 individuals. This represents a reduction of roughly 37 percent for vote center counties compared to 14 percent for precinct-based counties. When considering precinct-based counties as a control group, small counties that transitioned from a precinct-based model to a vote center model utilized approximately 23 percent fewer poll workers in 2022 than counties that remained precinct-based.

On average, medium counties that switched from a precinct-based model to a vote center model reduced their poll worker usage by approximately 80 individuals, while precinct-based counties reduced poll worker usage by approximately 107 individuals. Even though precinct-based counties had a greater average reduction in poll worker usage, the reduction was not as substantial when broken down into percentage change. This represents a reduction of roughly 41 percent for vote center counties compared to 29 percent for precinct-based counties. When considering precinct-based counties as a control group, medium counties that transitioned from a precinct-based model to a vote center model utilized approximately 12 percent fewer poll workers in 2022 than counties that remained precinct-based.

Only two large counties were eligible for inclusion which limits the ability for a comparison analysis. When St. Joseph County switched from a precinct-based model to a vote center model it reduced poll worker usage by approximately 438 individuals in 2022 when compared to 2018. This represents a reduction of roughly 47 percent. Monroe County, the only precinct-based county in this category used 48 fewer individuals, a 13 percent decrease from 2018.

No extra-large counties, 100,000+ average voter turnout, were eligible for inclusion so an analysis could not be completed.

Analysis 5: 2024 Poll Worker Comparison

On average, in the 2024 general election, small vote center counties had a higher average turnout than small precinct-based counties. There is no significant evidence that the county having a vote center was a driving factor for higher turnout. Small vote center counties used approximately 2 fewer poll workers and serviced approximately 58 additional voters per poll worker when compared to small precinct-based counties.

On average, medium vote center counties had a higher average turnout than medium precinct-based counties. There is no significant evidence that the county having a vote center was a driving factor for higher turnout. Medium vote center counties used approximately 41 fewer poll workers and serviced approximately 80 additional voters per poll worker when compared to medium precinct-based counties.

On average, large vote center counties had a higher average turnout than large precinct-based counties. There is no significant evidence that the county having a vote center was a driving factor for higher turnout. Large vote center counties used approximately 198 fewer poll workers and serviced approximately 94 additional voters per poll worker when compared to large precinct-based counties.

On average, extra-large vote center counties had a higher average turnout than extra-large precinct-based counties. There is no significant evidence that the county having a vote center was a driving factor for higher turnout. This analysis includes Marion County which would be an outlier due to its significant size, even when compared to the other extra-large counties. Extra-large vote center counties used approximately 654 more poll workers and serviced approximately

41 fewer voters per poll worker when compared to large precinct-based counties. Based on this analysis, extra-large precinct-based counties run the most efficient election out of all counties when analyzing poll worker staffing and servicing voters per-poll worker.

Analysis 6: Equipment Usage

Equipment costs vary substantially across counties. There are significant differences in county/vendor service contracts, support contracts, maintenance contracts, and new/additional equipment contracts. Transitioning from a precinct-based model to a vote center model is likely to yield minimal cost savings, as counties have already acquired sufficient equipment to meet the needs of their voter populations. Counties using Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) systems will continue to require comparable amounts of equipment to maintain standard election operations. While counties utilizing optical scan systems may need fewer scanners and ballot-marking devices, variations in county preferences and deployment practices are too significant to draw definitive conclusions. Numerous county clerks have reported they are deploying similar amounts of total equipment for an election regardless of the voting model the county utilizes.

With respect to election equipment costs, while the analysis could not produce conclusive findings on potential savings, it is important to recognize the potential for increased expenditures associated with transitioning to a vote center model. As an example, Lake County election officials expressed concern that, if precinct-based counties were required to implement vote centers, it currently lacks the necessary election technology infrastructure to do so. A vote center transition would require substantial upgrades or the purchase of new election technology, resulting in significant cost implications at a time when county budgets are already strained.

Analysis 7: Voting Locations

It is expected that vote center counties will deploy and operate fewer locations than precinct-based counties. The fact that many precinct-based counties deploy "super precinct" voting locations encouraged VSTOP to investigate the 2024 general election precinct and location counts to find any differences between the two models.

On average, in the 2024 general election, small vote center counties had approximately 26 precincts and deployed 7 locations compared to 18 precincts and 9 deployed locations for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties deployed 2 fewer locations on average than precinct-based counties.

On average, medium vote center counties had approximately 45 precincts and deployed 12 locations compared to 48 precincts and 21 deployed locations for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties deployed 9 fewer locations on average than precinct-based counties.

On average, large vote center counties had approximately 106 precincts and deployed 26 locations compared to 79 precincts and 30 deployed locations for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties deployed 4 fewer locations on average than precinct-based counties.

On average, extra-large vote center counties had approximately 369 precincts and deployed 113 locations compared to 286 precincts and 137 deployed locations for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties deployed 24 fewer locations on average than precinct-based counties.

Analysis 8: 2024 Poll Worker Cost Comparison

This analysis found that the average base pay for poll workers in Indiana was approximately $139 in vote center counties and $136 in precinct-based counties. On average, vote center counties utilized 113 poll workers, whereas precinct-based counties employed 199 poll workers during the 2024 general election, an average difference of 86 fewer poll workers.

Both voting models dedicated roughly 19 percent of their projected election budgets to poll worker pay. However, due to greater staffing requirements, precinct-based counties had an approximately 44 percent higher poll worker cost than vote center counties. On average, vote center counties spent $15,912 on poll worker pay, compared to $28,325 for precinct-based counties. When accounting for the difference of 86 additional poll workers at an average base pay of $139, the resulting $11,954 closely aligns with the $12,413 average difference in total poll worker expenditures between the two models.

These findings suggest that the primary cost savings associated with vote centers are realized through reduced staffing needs. This analysis provides the clearest evidence of estimated cost savings observed in the study and reinforces existing literature indicating that vote centers can reduce the overall cost of administering an election.

Analysis 9: 2012-2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

The overall trend in election costs has moved in a similar direction in each election for both vote center and precinct-based counties. Over time, however, the cost trajectory for vote center elections trends downward, while precinct-based elections trends upward. Due to the trend line for this data only being 6 elections over 12 years, a definitive conclusion on the cost trajectories of both models cannot be made.

- In 2012, vote center counties spent approximately $5.71 per voter compared to $4.13 per voter for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties spent approximately $1.58 more per voter than precinct-based counties.

- In 2014, vote center counties spent approximately $6.60 per voter compared to $7.05 per voter for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties spent approximately 45 cents less per voter than precinct-based counties.

- In 2016, vote center counties spent approximately $3.67 per voter compared to $4.55 per voter for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties spent approximately 88 cents less per voter than precinct-based counties.

- In 2018, vote center counties spent approximately $4.05 per voter compared to $5.07 per voter for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties spent approximately $1.02 less per voter than precinct-based counties.

- In 2022, vote center counties spent approximately $6.14 per voter compared to $7.48 per voter for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties spent approximately $1.34 less per voter than precinct-based counties.

- In 2024, vote center counties spent approximately $4.80 per voter compared to $6.84 per voter for precinct-based counties. Vote center counties spent approximately $2.04 less per voter than precinct-based counties.

Across the six election years analyzed, the relative cost per voter between vote center and precinct-based counties shifted uniformly over time. In 2012, vote center counties spent more per voter than precinct-based counties, but from 2014 onward, vote center counties consistently spent less. The cost gap in favor of vote centers widened over time, reaching its largest difference in 2024, when vote center counties spent just over $2 less per voter than precinct-based counties. Across all six election cycles combined, vote center counties saved on average $1.48 per voter compared to precinct-based counties.

Analysis 10: 2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

As previously mentioned, the 2024 cost per voter for vote center counties was approximately $2.04 less than precinct-based counties. Below shows the cost per voter differences between the two voting models and the two different types of voting equipment deployed for use in Indiana.

- Small vote center counties using DREs had an average cost of $4.71 compared to $5.51 for precinct-based counties using DREs.

- Medium vote center counties using DREs had an average cost of $2.96 compared to $5.23 for precinct-based counties using DREs.

- Large vote center counties using DREs had an average cost of $3.18. There are no large precinct-based counties using DREs.

- Extra-large precinct-based counties using DREs had an average cost of $2.96. There are no extra-large vote center counties using DREs.

- Small vote center counties using optical scan systems had an average cost of $7.37 compared to $9.70 for precinct-based counties using optical scan systems.

- Medium vote center counties using optical scan systems had an average cost of $4.01 compared to $6.86 for precinct-based counties using optical scan systems.

- Large vote center counties using optical scan systems had an average cost of $9.15 compared to $7.13 for precinct-based counties using optical scan systems.

Extra-large vote center counties using optical scan systems had an average cost of $9.33. There are no extra-large precinct-based counties using optical scan systems.
In most cases, regardless of size, vote center counties using DREs have the lowest average cost per voter and precinct-based counties using an optical scan system and a precinct- based model have the highest average cost per voter.

Analysis 11: Voter Turnout

The results of the difference-in-differences analysis indicate that, throughout the study period, non–vote center counties consistently exhibited slightly higher voter turnout rates than vote center counties. However, this gap in turnout has gradually narrowed as the number of vote center counties has increased over time. When controlling for key demographic variables derived from the U.S. Census Bureau including: total population, percentage of residents with a college degree, percentage of residents aged 18 to 34, and median household income, no statistically significant difference was observed between the turnout of vote center and non–vote center counties during the periods analyzed. These findings align with existing research on the effects vote centers have on voter turnout.

	Non Vote Center Registered Voter Turnout	Vote Center Registered Voter Turnout	Diff	Non Vote Center Voting Age Voter Turnout	Vote Center Voting Age Voter Turnout	Diff
2010	44.68	41.27	3.41	39.54	32.02	7.53
2012	59.21	56.78	2.42	53.9	50.01	3.89
2014	36.24	30.29	5.95	33.18	26.74	6.44
2016	60.44	60.03	0.41	57.28	54.54	2.73
2018	53.29	52.26	1.03	47.26	44.44	2.82
2022	43.52	40.86	2.66	39.46	36.68	2.78
2024	65.47	64.1	1.37	59.91	58.79	1.12

Difference on Difference Analysis Results from 2010-2024

Analysis 12: Voter Experience

Using the MIT Survey of the Performance of American Elections, four questions were used to determine voter experience:

- How difficult was it to find your polling place to vote?
- How well were things run at the polling place where you voted?
- Approximately, how long did you have to wait in line to vote?
- Please rate the job performance of the poll workers at the polling place where you voted.

Of the total number of respondents from Indiana, typically around 150 voted in person and were included in the analysis. A t-test is a simple statistic used to determine if there is a

difference, on average, between two separate groups. In this case, those groups are respondents who lived in vote center counties and those in precinct-based counties. In 2012 and 2014, respondents to this survey reported significantly lower wait times in vote center counties than non-vote center counties; however, these differences are no longer significant by 2016. In 2022, respondents in vote center counties were significantly, although slightly so, more likely to report that it was easier to find their polling place. Otherwise, there was no significant difference between voter experiences in vote center counties versus precinct-based counties.

Election Year	N	How difficult was it to find your polling place to vote?	How well were things run at the polling place where you voted?	Approximately, how long did you have to wait in line to vote?	Please rate the job performance of the poll workers at the polling place where you voted.
2012	172	-1.405	1.802	-2.180*	1.486
2014	145	.974	-.910	-3.605***	.214
2016	170	.135	.617	-.396	.652
2022	133	-2.507*	1.527	.109	-1.197
2024	159	-.706	-.748	-1.319	.721

T-Test Results for the Four Survey Questions Analyzed from 2012-2024

Summary of All Findings

After examining multiple factors influencing the cost of election administration, the findings align closely with existing research. Vote center counties generally demonstrate greater efficiency than precinct-based counties, particularly in staffing. By operating fewer locations, vote center counties are able to conduct elections with fewer poll workers, especially on Election Day. While the analysis of equipment-related savings was inconclusive, discussions with county election officials indicate that most counties deploy comparable amounts of equipment regardless of voting model. Therefore, the most notable cost savings are associated with reduced poll worker pay, as vote center counties require fewer personnel to operate effectively.

Beyond poll worker costs, no other major areas of election administration appear to be significantly affected by the adoption of a vote center model. It is also important to recognize that Indiana's election administration framework prioritizes local control. Consequently, this analysis does not capture the range of qualitative factors such as: local preferences, administrative philosophies, and political considerations that influence a county's decision to adopt or maintain vote centers.

When examining turnout, there is little evidence to suggest that vote centers made a major contribution to any increases in turnout during the time period studied. When controlling for demographics that are known predictors of turnout, such as age, income, and education, there seems to be no significant difference in turnout between vote center and precinct-based counties in either presidential or midterm general elections. Furthermore, despite early indications that voters experienced shorter wait times in vote center counties and once, in 2022, reported that it was easier to find their voting place, there was little difference in voter experience between vote center and precinct-based counties.

In Closing

VSTOP extends its appreciation to the Indiana Secretary of State's Office for its partnership in completing this study. As one of the first comprehensive statewide analyses of its kind, this report provides an examination of Indiana's historical and present-day election administration practices. The study explores the cost, operational impacts, and effects on voter turnout of two different election models.

Through this study, VSTOP seeks to provide data-driven insights regarding the administrative cost differences and voter turnout effects of both voting models. The findings complement the Secretary of State's concurrent report on the costs of municipal elections, together contributing to a broader understanding of the financial considerations that shape Indiana's electoral system. Should the Legislative Council or any member of the General Assembly have any questions, comments, or requests for additional information related to this report, VSTOP may be contacted at vstop@bsu.edu.

Terminology

Cost-Per Voter – Using the CEB-9, it's the total estimated expenses spent on conducting an election divided by the number of voters who participated.

Difference-in-Differences Statistical Method (DiD) – A statistical technique used to estimate the effect of a policy or treatment by comparing changes over time between a group that experienced the change (treatment group) and one that did not (control group).

Direct Record Electronic Voting Machine (DRE) – A type of voting machine where voters make selections using a push-button interface, and votes are recorded directly into electronic memory and recorded on a voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT). MicroVote is Indiana's vendor for DRE systems.

Jurisdiction Size – For this study, all mentions of jurisdiction size are in relation to county's size based on voter turnout, not voting population.

Non-Vote Center County – A county that is using a precinct-based voting model. This term is used interchangeably with "precinct-based".

Optical Scan Voting System (OpScan) – A paper-based voting system where voters mark choices on a paper ballo card that is then scanned and counted electronically using an optical scanner. ES&S, Hart InterCivic, and Unisyn are Indiana's vendors for optical scan systems.

Poll Worker – A temporary election official trained to manage polling locations. For this study, a poll worker was defined as a temporary election official that facilitated voting at early voting sites, absentee voting methods, central count tabulation, and election day polling locations.

Precinct-Based Voting Model – A traditional voting system where voters are assigned to a specific polling place based on their residential address and must vote there on Election Day.

Statistical Significance – A measure indicating that the results of a statistical test are unlikely to have occurred by chance alone, typically assessed using a p-value threshold (often $p < .05$).

Statistical T-Test – A statistical test used to compare the means of two groups to determine whether the difference between them is statistically significant.

Vote Center Voting Model – A voting model that allows registered voters in a county to cast their ballot at any designated vote center within the county rather than being limited to a single assigned precinct.

Voting Location – The physical site where voters go to cast ballots during an election, which may be a precinct polling place or a countywide vote center. For this study, voting locations were limited to election day voting locations only.

Voter Turnout – For this study, voter turnout was calculated on a county level. The percentage of eligible or registered voters who actually cast a ballot in an election divided by the total number of registered voters.

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Appendix A

Analysis of Municipal Election Timing
Public Presentation

Indiana Secretary of State
Diego Morales

**Public Law 108-2025
Study of Election Issues**

Indiana Secretary of State
Diego Morales

Municipal Elections

Cost of Running Municipal Elections

2019 Primary
- $8,053,272.22 (69/92)
- 2 counties with no cost data

2023 Primary
- $8,757,960.52 (66/92)
- 1 county with no cost data

2019 General
- $8,508,005.08 (86/92)
- 5 counties with no cost data

2023 General
- $9,427,154.03 (86/92)
- 4 counties with no cost data

2019 Total municipal election cycle cost - $16,561,277.30
2023 Total municipal election cycle cost - $18,185,144.55

Cost of Running Midterm Elections

2018 Primary
- $9,162,534.03
- 2 counties with no cost data

2022 Primary
- $8,917,250
- 1 county with no cost data

2018 General
- $8,926,789
- 3 counties with no cost data

2022 General
- $9,961,569
- 1 county with no cost data

2018 Total midterm election cycle cost - $18,992,732.48
2022 Total midterm election cycle cost - $18,888,358

Cost of Running Presidential Elections

2020 Primary
- $12,699,007.91
- 2 counties with no cost data

2024 Primary
- $13,342,517.65
- 1 county with no cost data

2020 General
- $14,811,849.66
- 1 county with no cost data

2024 General
- $16,293,562

2020 Total presidential election cycle cost - $27,510,857.57
2024 Total presidential election cycle cost - $29,636,079.65

Total Cost of Running Elections

Findings

A comparison of total election cycle costs reveals that municipal elections are approximately as expensive to administer as midterm elections. This is the case even as all 92 counties are not conducting elections during these municipal election cycles.

Total Cost of Elections (Primary and General)

Total Cost of Running Elections
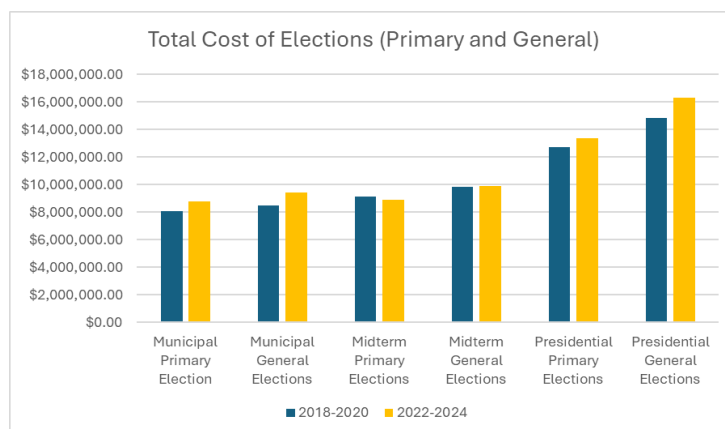
Total Election Cycle Costs
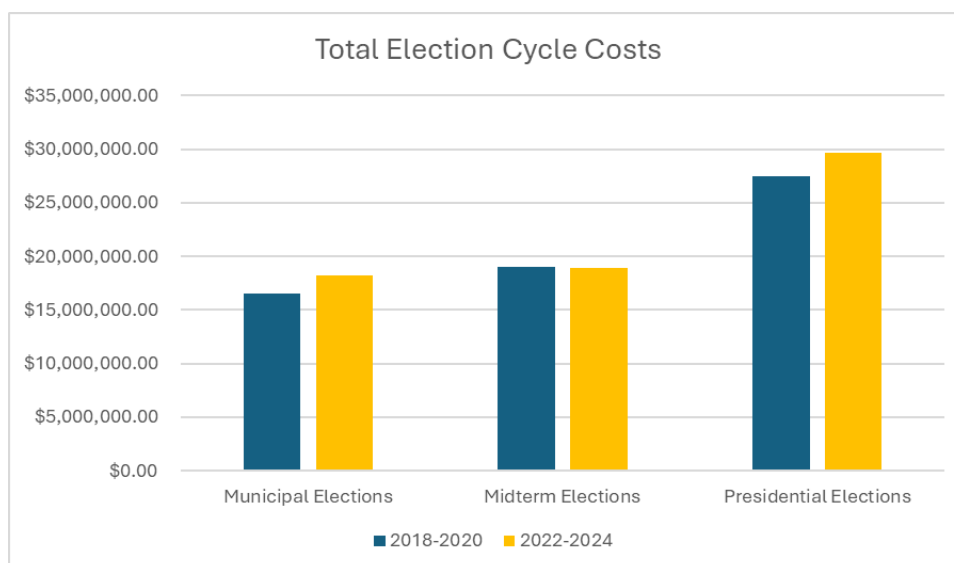
Voter Turnout

2018 Midterm General - 50.69% (2,299,619 voters)
2019 Municipal General - 22.63% (644,125)
2020 Presidential General - 64.58% (3,068,411)
2022 Midterm General - 39.63% (1,886,810)
2023 Municipal General - 20.6% (603,398)
2024 Presidential General – 61.53% (2,976,600)

Voter Turnout

Key Comparisons

- The 2018 midterm general election had a **123% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2019 municipal general election.

- The 2020 presidential general election had a **185.37% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2019 municipal general election.

- The 2022 midterm general election had a **92.38% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2023 municipal general elections.

- The 2024 presidential general election had a **198.69% greater** voter turnout rate than the 2023 municipal general elections.

Total Cost vs. Voter Turnout
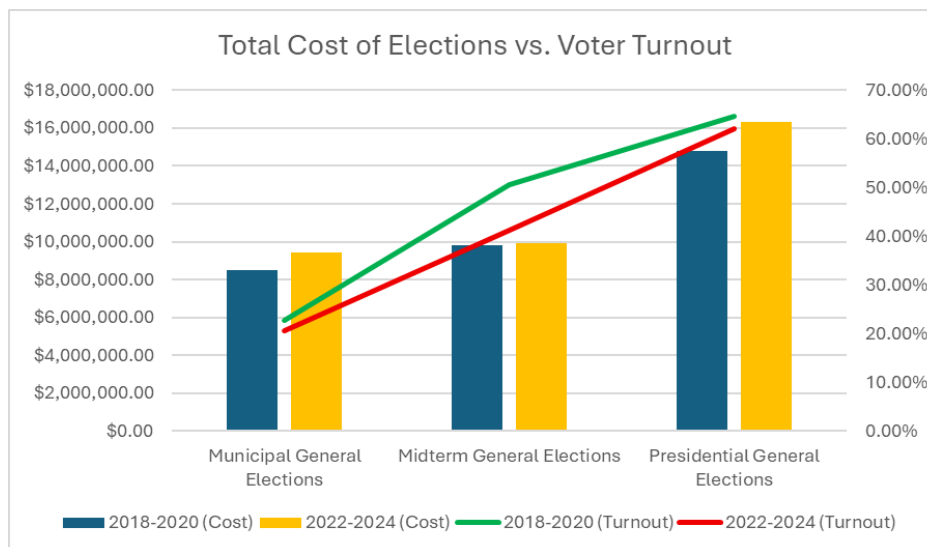
Cost Per Vote Comparison

2018 Midterm Primary - $10.57
2019 Municipal Primary - $23.30
2020 Presidential Primary - $11.71

2018 Midterm General - $4.27
2019 Municipal General - $13.21
2020 Presidential General - $4.83

2022 Midterm Primary - $13.43
2023 Municipal Primary - $27.81
2024 Presidential Primary - $16.25

2022 Midterm General - $5.26
2023 Municipal General - $15.62
2024 Presidential General - $5.47

Cost Per Vote Comparison

Key Comparisons

- The 2019 municipal primary election had a **120.45% greater** cost vote than the 2018 midterm primary election and a **98.97% greater** cost per vote than the 2020 presidential primary election.

- The 2023 municipal primary election had a **107.07% greater** cost per vote than the 2022 midterm primary election and a **71.14% greater** cost per vote than the 2024 presidential primary election.

- The 2019 municipal general election had a **209.37% greater** cost per vote than the 2018 midterm general election but saw a **173.5% greater** cost per voter than the 2020 presidential general election.

- The 2023 municipal general election had a **196.96% greater** cost per vote than the 2022 midterm general election but saw a **185.56% greater** cost per voter than the 2024 presidential general election.

Cost Per Vote Comparison

Cost Per Vote (Primary and General)

Cost Per Vote Comparison

Cost Per Vote vs. Voter Turnout

County Cost Per Vote Ranges

2018 Midterm Primary: $74.95 to $2.12
2018 Midterm General: $17.91 to $1.15
2019 Municipal Primary: $500.00 to $4.05
2019 Municipal General: $106.84 to $2.43
2020 Presidential Primary: $34.66 to $1.83
2020 Presidential General: $43.12 to $0.91
2022 Midterm Primary: $56.78 to $2.93
2022 Midterm General: $48.96 to $1.39
2023 Municipal Primary: $473.29 to $3.14
2023 Municipal General: $557.60 to $1.58
2023 Presidential Primary: $56.93 to $2.77
2024 Presidential General: $24.33 to $0.67

County Cost Per Vote Ranges

Cost Per Vote (County Ranges)
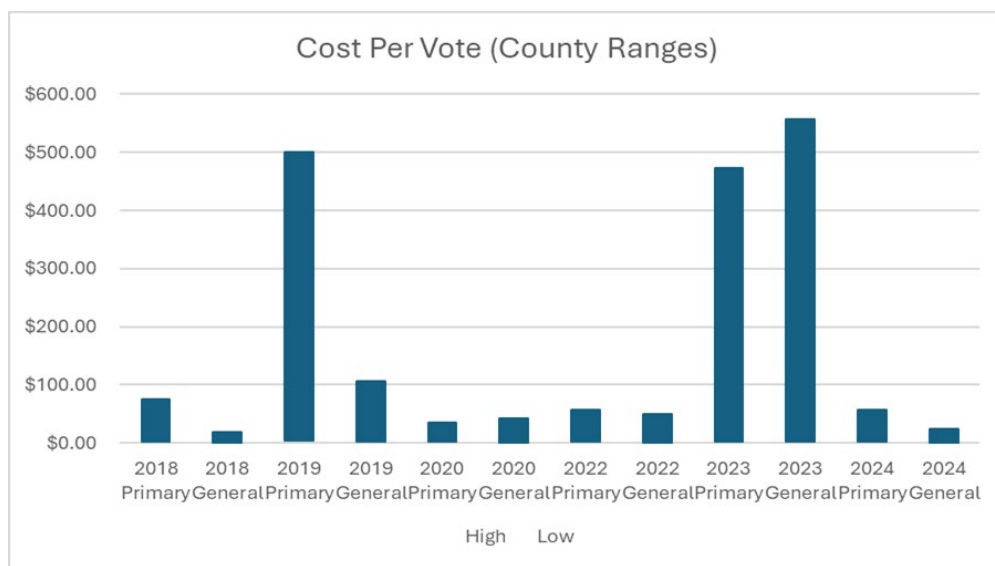
Potential Increase in Voter Turnout by Moving Municipal Elections

- Evaluated the number of voters who voted in the 2023 municipal general election, but not the 2022 general election. And the number of voters who voted in the 2023 municipal general election, but not the 2024 general election.

- **2022 General** – 78,693 voters that voted in the 2023 municipal general election did not vote. Would have equated to a 1.65% increase.
- **2024 General** – 23,395 voters that voted in the 2023 municipal general election did not vote. Would have equated to a 0.48% increase.

- Aligning municipal elections with larger cycles could modestly increase participation.

Ballot Drop Off Rates

Municipal Ballot Drop-Off Rates (2019):
- Portage Mayor to City Council: 6.25%
- Ft. Wayne Mayor to City Council: 7.55%
- Zionsville Mayor to Town Council: 12.11%
- Beech Grove Mayor to City Council: 1.74%
- Terre Haute Mayor to City Council: 15.99%

Midterm/Presidential Ballot Drop-Off Rates (2018 and 2020):
- Senate to Township Trustee (2018): 16.41%
- President to County Surveyor (2020): 30.92%

Municipal Drop-Off Rates (2023):
- Indianapolis Mayor to City Council: 8.84%
- Ft. Wayne Mayor to City Council: 8.73%
- Evansville Mayor to City Council: 12.29%
- Carmel Mayor to City Council: 4.09%
- Terre Haute Mayor to City Council: 21.20%

Midterm/Presidential Balot Drop-Off Rates (2022 and 2024):
- President to County Surveyor (2024): 22.74%
- Senate to Township Trustee (2022): 19.56%

Key Finding

Ballot drop-off rates are greater in midterm and presidential general elections than they are in municipal general elections, but the increase in voter turnout makes up for any increase in the ballot drop-off rate.

Ballot Drop Off Rates vs. Total Voters (2018-2020)
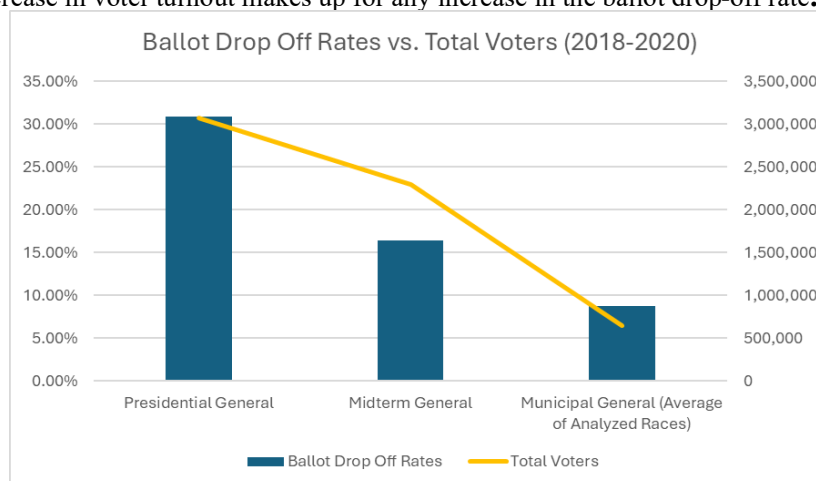
Ballot Drop Off Rates
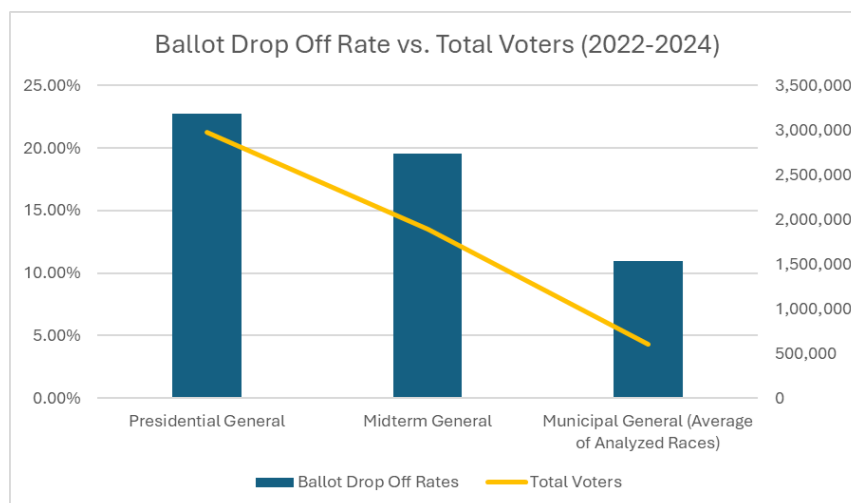
Ballot Drop Off Rates & Uncontested Elections

- A major contributing factor to the higher drop-off rates is the number of uncontested down-ballot races.

- In 2020, 78% of the county surveyor races were uncontested. Compared with 20% of the Portage City Council, 33% of the Ft. Wayne City Council, 40% of the Zionsville Town Council, 0% of the Beech Grove Council, and 67% of the Terre Haute City Council races in 2019. The number of township trustee races that were uncontested could not be identified based on the data available.

- In 2022, 85% of the township trustee races were uncontested. In 2024, 87% of the county surveyor races were uncontested. Compared with 40% of the Indianapolis City Council, 50% of the Ft. Wayne City Council, 50% of the Evansville City Council, 17% of the Carmel City Council, and 83% of the Terre Haute City Council races in 2023.

Ballot Drop Off Rates & Uncontested Elections

Ballot Drop Off Rate vs. Uncontested Races (2018-2020)

Ballot Drop Off Rates & Uncontested Elections
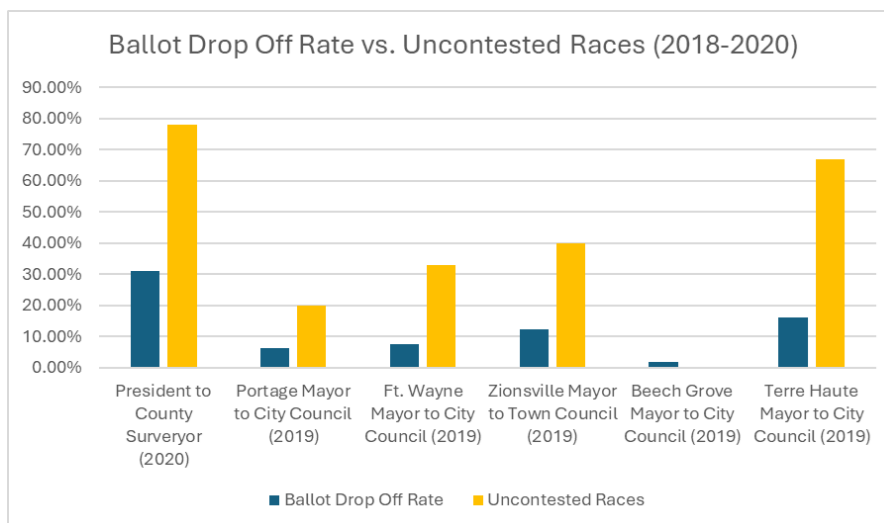
Ballot Drop Off Rate vs. Uncontested Races (2022-2024)
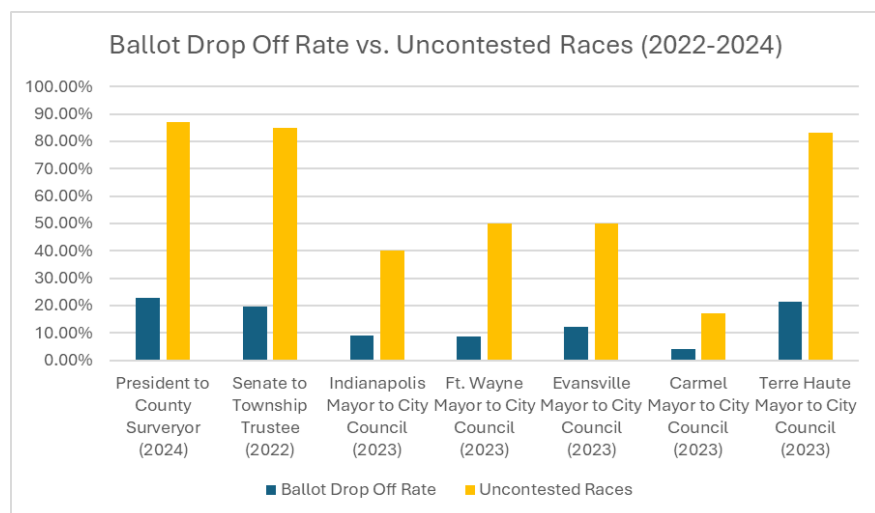
State Cost Impacts

- Cost for the BMV to be open the Monday prior to election day and election day for extended hours when there is an election per IC 9-14.1-2-5.

- Cost for Democracy Live to provide accessibility to slight disabled voters. ($50,000 each election).

- Cost for the Statewide Voter Registration System vendor to keep their Help Desk call center open for extra hours on election day.

- Cost for Homeland Security/law enforcement support on election day.

Literature on Low Turnout: A Problem Nationwide in Standalone Local Elections

- A study of 340 elections from 144 cities from 1996 to 2011 for U.S. mayoral elections that are not synced with midterm or presidential elections found an average turnout of 25.8%.[1]

- Separate studies examined 332 mayoral elections in 38 large U.S. cities over 25 years and found a similar average of 27%.[2]

(1) Holbrook, Thomas M., and Weinschenk, Aaron C., "Campaigns, Mobilization, and Turnout in Mayoral Elections," Political Research Quarterly, vol. 67, no. 1 (2014): 42–55
(2) Caren, Neal, "Big City, Big Turnout? Electoral Participation in American Cities," Journal of Urban Affairs 29 (1) (2007): 31–46

Literature on Ballot Drop Off Rates

- Previous studies have found that ballot fatigue might lead voters to skip lower-profile races on a long ballot, but the increased turnout in on-cycle elections appears to outweigh the effects of any potential drop-off. Having a "main" election draws voters in and increases the likelihood they will participate in "down-ballot" races as well, even if some might succumb to ballot fatigue.[3]

(3) Hajnal, Zoltan L., Kogan, Vladimir, and Markarian, Z. Agustin, "Who Votes: City Election Timing and Voter Composition," American Political Science Review, 116(1) (2022): 374 -383

Representative of the Electorate

- Local elections with few races on the ballot can lead to selective participation and may produce a voter pool that is disproportionately comprised of those who care most about one issue at stake, potentially allowing special interest groups to have more influence over the election.[4]

- School board races being off cycle are not an issue in Indiana with these races being synced with presidential or midterms elections but looking at data related to a specific profession in a specific election can be beneficial at looking at how other professions may vote.

- Teachers are seven times more likely to vote in school district elections.[5]

- Studies show that voters in local elections are demographically unrepresentative of the electorate overall.[6]

(4) Berry, Christopher, Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Governments (Cambridge University Press, 2009)
(5) Moe, Terry, "Political Control and the Power of the Agent," The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization 22(1) (2006): 1-19
(6) Hajnal, Zoltan L. and Trounstine, Jessica, "Race and Class Inequality in Local Politics," Report of the APSA Task Force o n Racial and Class Inequalities in the Americas (2016). https://www.apsanet.org/inequalities

Appendix B
Analysis of Vote Centers Public Presentation

Vote Centers

Study Researchers

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VSTOP
Executive Director

Matt Housley, MPA
Election Systems
Audit Specialist

PL 108-2025 – Vote Center Study Scope

- Goal of Study: "Analyze and estimate cost savings and effects on voter turnout by requiring all counties to use vote centers."
- Initial Analysis Objectives:
  - Election Staffing
  - Equipment Usage
  - Voting Locations
  - Estimated Election Costs
  - Voter Turnout
  - Voter Experience

PL 108-2025 – Vote Center Study Scope

- Methods: Statistical and Comparative Analysis

Statistical	Raw Data Comparison
Vote Center Effects on Voter Turnout	Election Staffing
Voter Experience	Equipment Usage
	Voting Locations
	Election Costs

PL 108-2025 – Vote Center Study Scope

- Data Collection: Data was collected using pre-existing data sets and original data collected by the Secretary of State.
  - U.S. EAC EAVS: Election Administration and Voting Survey from 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024
  - Indiana State Election Data from 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024
  - MIT Survey on the Performance of American Elections from 2012, 2014, 2016, 2022, and 2024
  - 2025 SOS Survey to County Election Officials
  - County CEB-9 Forms from 2010, 2012,2014,2016,2018,2022, and 2024
  - All Data is General Election Data –Nearly all aspects of Primary Elections will either align or be less than when compared to General Elections.
- Important Considerations:
  - The year 2020 was excluded from this analysis due to the extraordinary circumstances of the election cycle, which did not reflect typical operations.
  - Data verification and reliability are critical for studies to generate legitimate findings. **ALL** data that was incomplete or verified as incorrect was removed from analysis. Data sets for each analysis may look different based on the reliability and completeness of the data needed for that specific analysis. Lack of data may narrow the applicability of the findings and may result in a very limited analysis. Any counties that have incorrectly reported data on county and state forms could also impact findings.
  - Data has been rounded to the nearest whole number in all cases in which non-whole numbers cannot exist (location count, poll worker count, etc).

Literature on Turnout

- Initial studies of vote centers in Colorado and Texas found modest increases in turnout, especially among infrequent voters (Stein & Vonnahme, 2008, 2012).
- Research in California associates vote centers with a modest increase in voter turnout (Bryant, 2019; McGhee et al., 2019).
- The type of election can also affect the impact of vote centers, with vote centers showing a bigger impact for off-year constitutional elections than midterm and presidential elections (Cortina & Rottinghaus, 2019)
- Other studies, examining Indiana counties and a southern municipal election, find that vote centers have no effect on voter turnout (Folz,2014; Scheele et al., 2009).

Literature on Voter Experience

- Some find high levels of voter satisfaction with vote centers (e.g., Folz, 2014; Scheele et al., 2009).

- Larimer County experienced more efficient elections and better trained personnel (Stein & Vonnahme, 2012), yet Denver County experienced a problematic rollout that included longer lines (Montjoy, 2008).

- Chen, Sadeghpour, and Lamb (2021) found that voters in Harris County, TX, reported a more negative experience because of longer lines and less helpful poll workers.

Literature on Election Costs

- For some jurisdictions, the sheer number of precincts alone presents tremendous administrative challenges in conducting successful elections. The system of precinct -based voting on election day is increasingly expensive and labor intensive (Alvarez & Hall, 2008).
- Stein and Vonnahme (2009) compared election administration costs in Colorado counties that utilized precinct-based voting and Election Day vote centers during the November 2008 election. They found counties with vote centers averaged $2.83 less per registered voter than counties that utilized precinct - based voting on election day (US$7.92 vs. US$10.75 per registered voter).
- The Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute (2010) concluded that vote centers would produce significant savings for all counties, but particularly for those jurisdictions with smaller numbers of registered voters per precinct.
- In a case study on Farragut, TN, Folz (2014) found that vote centers were a viable strategy to control election costs.

Vote Centers Over the Last 12 Years

Vote Center Adoption 2012 -2024
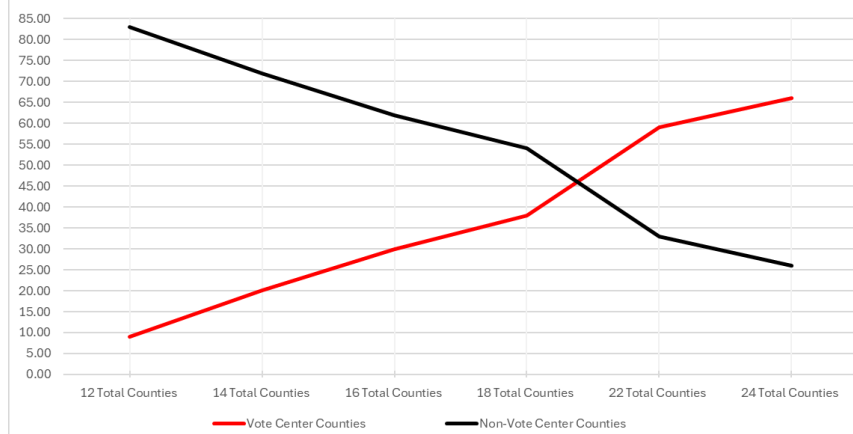
Presidential Switch Poll Worker Analysis

Data for Presidential Switch Analysis

- Analyzing counties that have switched from precinct-based voting to voter center models. Counties used should have administered the 2016 General Election with precinct-based voting and administered the 2024 General Election with vote centers. A control group of precinct-based counties were used to generate a more accurate representation of data findings.
- The 36 switching counties meeting this criteria with complete data are:
    - Fountain, Posey, Fulton, Madison, Steuben, Benton, Franklin, Ripley, Greene, Hendricks, Lawrence, Morgan, Putnam, Randolph, D eKalb, Pike, Shelby, Stark, Decatur, Dubois, Jasper, Knox, Spencer, Tipton, Warrick, Kosciusko, Daviess, Scott, Laporte, Sullivan, Marion, Dearborn, St. Joseph, Jackson, and Porter.
- The 22 control counties that remained precinct-based with complete data are:
    - Brown, Gibson, LaGrange, Martin, Parke, Warren, Allen, Delaware, Hamilton, Jay, Jefferson, Lake, Orange, Perry, Whitley, Clar k, Monroe, Harrison, Jennings, Newton, Ohio, and Union.
- The total number of poll workers used in the 2016 and 2024 General Elections were used from each county taken from the 2016 and 2024 EAVS.
- Turnout data was sourced from State records.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Presidential Elections?

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Precinct to Vote Center Counties	63 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	32% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based Counties	44 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	13% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

Counties that used precinct-based voting in 2016 and then used vote center voting in 2024 used, on average, 19% fewer poll workers than counties that remained using precinct-based voting.

Presidential Switch
Poll Worker Analysis
by County Size

Data for Presidential Switch by Size Analysis

- Using the average voter turnout for each county over 8 years (2016-2024), counties were separated into jurisdictions sizing ranging from "small" through "extra-large".
- **The 35 small counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.**
  - 20 Small switching counties with complete data are:
    - Fountain, Greene, Putnam, Randolph, Pike, Posey, Starke, Decatur, Fulton, Jasper, Knox, Spencer, Steuben, Tipton, Daviess, Sc ott, Benton, Franklin, Ripley, and Sullivan
  - 15 small control counties with complete data are:
    - Brown, Gibson, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Union, Warren, and Whitley
- **The 15 medium counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.**
  - 12 medium switching counties with complete data are:
    - Lawrence, Morgan, Dearborn, DeKalb, Grant, Shelby, Dubois, Jackson, Madison, Warrick, Kosciusko, and LaPorte
  - 3 medium control counties with complete data are:
    - Clark, Delaware, and Harrison
- **The 4 large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.**
  - 3 large switching counties with complete data are:
    - Hendricks, St. Joseph, and Porter
  - 1 large control county with complete data is:
    - Monroe
- **The 4 extra-large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 100,000+ voters.**
  - 1 extra-large switching county with complete data is:
    - Marion
  - 3 extra-large control counties with complete data are:
    - Allen, Hamilton, and Lake

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Presidential Elections?

Small Counties - 2,000-14,999 Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Precinct to Vote Center Counties	41 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	37% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based Counties	13 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	12% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

Small counties that used precinct-based voting in 2016 and then used vote center voting in 2024 used, on average, 25% fewer poll workers than counties that remained using precinct-based voting.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Presidential Elections?

Medium Counties- 15,000-49,999 Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Precinct to Vote Center Counties	91 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	28% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based Counties	97 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	26% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

Medium counties that used precinct-based voting in 2016 and then used vote center Voting in 2024 used, on average, 2% fewer poll workers than counties that remained using precinct-based voting.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Presidential Elections?

Large Counties- 50,000-99,999 Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Switch Counties: Hendricks, Porter, and St. Joseph	234 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	34% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based County: Monroe County	160 More Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	27% More Poll Workers Needed

Large counties that used precinct-based voting in 2016 and then used vote center voting in 2024 used, on average, 34% fewer poll workers. A comparison analysis could not be completed due to too few data points.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Presidential Elections?

Extra Large Counties- 100,000+ Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Switch County: Marion	348 More Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	14% More Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based Counties: Allen, Hamilton, and Lake	219 Fewer Poll Workers from 2016 to 2024	15% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

Marion County used precinct-based voting in 2016 and then used vote center voting in 2024 and used 14% more poll workers. A comparison analysis could not be completed due to too few data points.

Midterm Switch Poll Worker Analysis

Data for Midterm Switch Analysis

- Analyzing counties that have switched from precinct-based voting to voter center models. Counties used should have administered the 2018 Midterm Election with precinct-based voting and administered the 2022 Midterm Election with vote centers. A control group of precinct-based counties were used to generate a more accurate representation of data findings.
- The 19 switching counties meeting this criteria with complete data are:
  - Posey, Fulton, Steuben, DeKalb, Grant, Pike, Shelby, Starke, Decatur, Dubois, Jasper, Knox, Spencer, Tipton, Warrick, Kosciusko, Dearborn, St. Joseph, and Jackson.
- The 23 control counties that remained precinct-based with complete data are:
  - Brown, LaGrange, Martin, Parke, Warren, Allen, Delaware, Hamilton, Jay, Jefferson, Lake, Orange, Perry, Whitley, Clark, Monroe, Harrison, Jennings, Newton, Ohio, Union, and Washington.
- The total number of poll workers used in the 2018 and 2022 Midterm Elections were used from each county taken from the 2016 and 2024 EAVS.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Midterm Elections?

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Precinct to Vote Center Counties	78 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	39% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based Counties	63 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	17% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

Counties that used precinct-based voting in 2016 and then used vote center voting in 2024 used, on average, 22% fewer poll workers than counties that remained using precinct-based voting.

Midterm Switch Poll Worker Analysis by Size

Data for Midterm Switch by Size Analysis

- Using the average voter turnout for each county over 8 years (2016-2024), counties were separated into jurisdictions sizing ranging from "small" through "extra-large".
- **The 26 small counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.**
  - 10 Small switching counties with complete data are:
    - Pike, Posey, Starke, Decatur, Fulton, Jasper, Knox, Spencer, Steuben, and Tipton
  - 16 small control counties with complete data are:
    - Brown, Crawford, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Union, Warren, Washington, and Whitley
- **The 11 medium counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.**
  - 8 medium switching counties with complete data are:
    - Dearborn, DeKalb, Grant, Shelby, Dubois, Jackson, Warrick, and Kosciusko
  - 3 medium control counties with complete data are:
    - Clark, Delaware, and Harrison
- **The 2 large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.**
  - 1 large switching county with complete data is:
    - St. Joseph
  - 1 large control county with complete data is:
    - Monroe
- **The 3 extra-large counties are defined as the 8-year average turnout of 100,000+ voters.**
  - No extra-large county met the switching criteria
  - 3 extra-large control counties with complete data are:
    - Allen, Hamilton, and Lake

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Midterm Elections?

Small Counties - 2,000-14,999 Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Precinct to Vote Center Counties	40 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	37% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based Counties	11 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	14% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

Small counties that used precinct-based voting in 2018 and then used vote center voting in 2022 used, on average, 23% fewer poll workers than counties that remained using precinct-based voting.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Midterm Elections?

Medium Counties – 15,000-49,999 Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Precinct to Vote Center Counties	80 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	41% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Precinct-Based Counties	107 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	29% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

Medium counties that used precinct-based voting in 2018 and then used vote center voting in 2022 used, on average, 12% fewer poll workers than counties that remained using precinct-based voting.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Midterm Elections?

Large Counties – 50,000-99,999 Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

Voting Style	Average Poll Worker Decrease (per county)	Average Percent Change (per county)
Switch County: St. Joseph	438 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	47% Fewer Poll Workers Needed
Non-Vote Center County: Monroe	48 Fewer Poll Workers from 2018 to 2022	13% Fewer Poll Workers Needed

St. Joseph County used precinct-based voting in 2018 and then used vote center voting in 2022 used, 34% fewer poll workers than Monroe County that remained using precinct-based voting.

Do Counties that Switch Use Less Poll Workers in Midterm Elections?

Extra Large Counties – 100,000+ Voters in 8 Year Average Turnout

Findings:

A comparison analysis could not be completed due to no available data points within the specified parameters.

2024
Poll Worker
Comparison

Data for 2024 Election Staffing Comparison

- This analysis is comparing poll worker staffing needs by voting model and county size. All 92 counties were included in this analysis. A total of 66 counties use a vote center model, and 26 counties use a precinct-based model. Counties were broken down by using each county's 2024 voter turnout totals. Counties were separated into jurisdictions sizing ranging from "small" through "extra-large".

- The total number of poll workers used in the 2024 General Election were used from each county taken from the 2024 EAVS.

- Turnout data was sourced by State records.

Data for 2024 Election Staffing Comparison

- **The 47 small counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Brown, Crawford, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Rush, Union, Vermillion, Warren, and Washington
  - The vote center counties are: Adams, Benton, Blackford, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Daviess, Decatur, Fayette, Fountain, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Miami, Owen, Pike, Posey, Pulaski, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Starke, Sullivan, Switzerland, Tipton, Wabash, Wells, and White
- **The 31 medium counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Delaware, Gibson, Harrison, and Whitley
  - The vote center counties are: Bartholomew, Boone, Dearborn, DeKalb, Dubois, Floyd, Grant, Hancock, Henry, Howard, Huntington, Jackson, Jasper, Knox, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Lawrence, Marshall, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Putnam, Shelby, Steuben, Vigo, Warrick, Wayne
- **The 9 large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Clark and Monroe
  - The vote center counties are: Elkhart, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Porter, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh
- **The 5 extra-large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 100,000+ voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Allen, Hamilton, and Lake
  - The vote center counties are: Marion and St. Joseph

In 2024, Did Vote Center Counties Use Fewer Poll Workers?

• Findings:

Jurisdiction Size	Average Voter Turnout	Average Poll Workers	Average Voters Per Poll Worker
Small Vote Center Counties	10553	59	193
Small Non Vote Center Counties	7900	61	135
Medium Vote Center Counties	27324	125	239
Medium Non Vote Center Counties	25288	166	159
Large Vote Center Counties	74303	308	251
Large Non Vote Center Counties	59467	506	157
Extra Large Vote Center Counties	235183	1731	157
Extra Large Non Vote Center Counties	192459	1167	198

In 2024, Did Vote Center Counties Use Fewer Poll Workers?

• Findings:
- **Small Vote Center Counties**
  - On Average - 2 fewer poll workers
  - On Average – 58 additional voters per poll worker
- **Medium Vote Center Counties**
  - On Average - 41 fewer poll workers
  - On Average – 80 additional voters per poll worker
- **Large Vote Center Counties**
  - On Average - 198 fewer poll workers
  - On Average – 94 additional voters per poll worker
- **Extra Large Vote Center Counties**
  - On Average – 564 more poll workers
  - On Average – 41 fewer voters per poll worker

On average, in small, medium, and large counties, vote center counties serviced more voters per poll workers with fewer poll workers needed. In extra-large counties, non-vote centers needed fewer poll workers and serviced more voters per poll worker.

Summarizing of Election Staffing Findings

- Generally, voter center counties require quite fewer poll workers than precinct voting counties.

- The transition has the largest and most immediate impact on small and large counties.

- In 2024, small, medium and large vote center counties serviced more voters with fewer poll workers than their precinct counterparts.

- In 2024, extra-large non-vote center counties served a higher number of voters per poll worker than their vote center counterparts. Super Precincts in Non-Vote Center Counties is likely to have impacted this statistic.

2024 Equipment Usage Comparison

Summarizing Equipment Usage Findings

- Equipment costs differ substantially across counties.

- Transitioning from precinct-based to vote center voting would likely yield minimal cost savings, as counties have already acquired sufficient equipment to accommodate their voter populations.

- Counties using DRE systems will still need to deploy comparable amounts of equipment to maintain standard election operations.

- Counties utilizing optical scan systems may require fewer scanners and ballot-marking devices; however, variations in county preferences are too prominent to draw definitive conclusions.

2024
Voting Locations
Comparison

Data for 2024 Voting Location Comparison

- This analysis is comparing voting location by voting model and county size. All 92 counties were included in this analysis. A total of 66 counties use a vote center model and 26 counties use a precinct-based model. Counties were broken down by using each county's 2024 voter turnout totals. Counties were separated into jurisdictions sizing ranging from "small" through "extra-large".

- The total number of precincts and voting locations used in the 2024 General Election were used for each county taken from the 2024 EAVS.

- Turnout data was sourced by State records.

Data for 2024 Election Staffing Comparison

- **The 47 small counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Brown, Crawford, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Rush, Union, Vermillion, Warren, and Washington
  - The vote center counties are: Adams, Benton, Blackford, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Daviess, Decatur, Fayette, Fountain, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Miami, Owen, Pike, Posey, Pulaski, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Starke, Sullivan, Switzerland, Tipton, Wabash, Wells, and White
- **The 31 medium counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Delaware, Gibson, Harrison, and Whitley
  - The vote center counties are: Bartholomew, Boone, Dearborn, DeKalb, Dubois, Floyd, Grant, Hancock, Henry, Howard, Huntington, Jackson, Jasper, Knox, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Lawrence, Marshall, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Putnam, Shelby, Steuben, Vigo, Warrick, Wayne
- **The 9 large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Clark and Monroe
  - The vote center counties are: Elkhart, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Porter, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh
- **The 5 extra-large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 100,000+ voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Allen, Hamilton, and Lake
  - The vote center counties are: Marion and St. Joseph
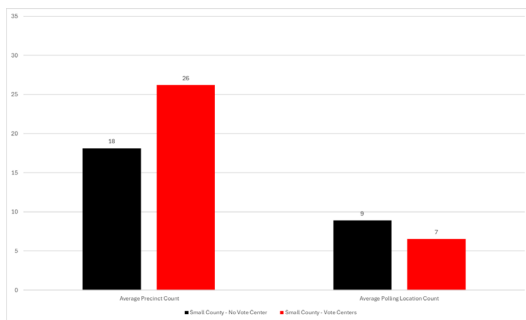
Do Vote Center Counties Use Fewer Voting Locations?

Findings:

Juridiction Size - VC/NVC	Average Precinct Count	Average Polling Location Count	Average Precincts Per Location	Average Polling Location Count Difference
Small County - No Vote Center	18	9	2.43	
Small County - Vote Centers	26	7	4.54	-2
Medium County - No Vote Center	48	21	2.55	
Medium County - Vote Centers	45	12	4.21	-9
Large County - No Vote Center	79	30	2.66	
Large County - Vote Centers	106	26	4.25	-4
Extra Large County - No Vote Center	286	137	2.15	
Extra Large County - Vote Centers	369	113	3.14	-24

On average, vote center counties have more precincts and fewer locations than precinct-based models. Vote centers capture an additional 1-1.5 precincts per location.

Do Vote Center Counties Use Fewer Voting Locations?

Average Precinct vs Voting Location Count – Small and Medium Counties

On average, small vote center counties have double the number of precincts but, still have fewer locations than the precinct-based counties.

On average, medium sized counties have about the same number of precincts yet, vote center counties have significantly fewer polling locations.
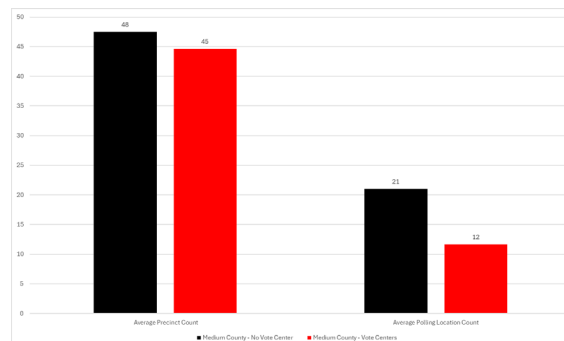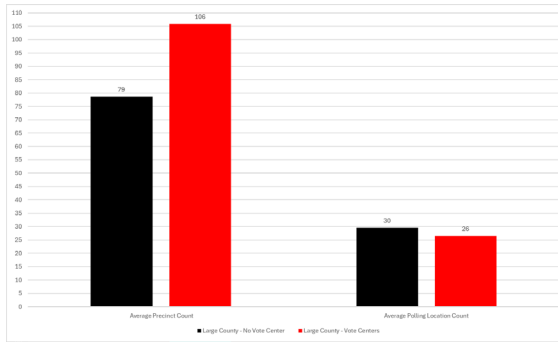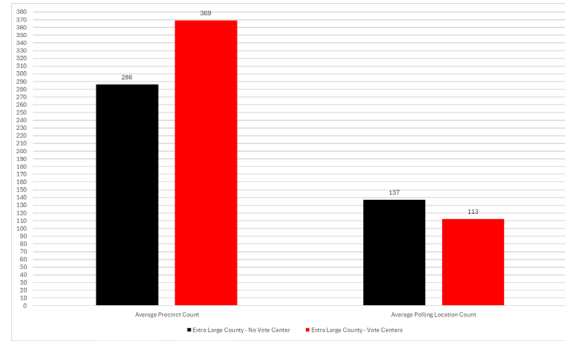
Do Vote Center Counties Use Fewer Voting Locations?

Average Precinct vs Voting Location Count – Large and Extra Large Counties

On average, large vote center counties have significantly more precincts, but still have fewer locations than the precinct - based counties.

On average, extra-large vote center counties have significantly more precincts, but still have fewer locations than the precinct-based counties.

Summarizing Voting Location Findings

- On average, counties utilizing vote center models operate fewer locations than those using a precinct-based system.

- Medium and large vote center counties deploy significantly fewer locations compared to precinct - based counties.

- In most cases, vote center counties hold a greater number of precincts, yet operate fewer locations than precinct-based counties.

- While direct cost savings from reducing locations are marginal, the reduction can substantially affect staffing requirements and related expenses.

2024 Poll Worker Cost Comparison

Data for 2024 Poll Worker Cost Comparison

- This analysis is comparing poll worker costs by voting model. 50 counties were included in this analysis. A total of 32 counties use a vote center model, and 18 counties use a precinct-based model.
  - The 32 vote center counties are: Adams, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Cass, Daviess, Dearborn, Dubois, Elkhart, Fayette, Floyd, Howard, Jasper, Kosciusko, Lawrence, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Pike, Porter, Posey, Putnam, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Shelby, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Wabash, Wells, White
  - The 18 precinct-based counties are: Allen, Crawford, Delaware, Gibson, Hamilton, Harrison, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Monroe, Newton, Parke, Rush, Union, Washington, Whitley

- The 50 counties included completed the 2025 SOS Survey by 8/11/25 to be included.

- Poll worker pay was calculated by using the lowest amount paid to election workers in each county. This allows for a low-end approach to cost and savings.

- Voters per poll worker were calculated taken the 2024 turnout divided by the number of reported poll workers used in the 2024 General Election.

- Approx. poll worker base pay was calculated by multiplying the base pay by the number of poll workers used in the 2024 General Election.

- CEB-9 election budget estimates were attributed to each county based on their response.

- Percent of poll worker expense was calculated by base pay divided by estimated election budget.

Do Vote Centers Save on Poll Worker Costs?

VC/NVC	Average Voters Served	Average Voter Per PW	Average PW Pay	Average CEB-9 Election Budget	Average PW Count	Average Approx. Low-End Pay PW Cost	Average % of Projected Budget
Non-Vote Center Counties	34374	173	136	137617	199	28325	19
Vote Center Counties	23516	208	139	120374	113	15912	19

- Precinct-based counties served more voters with a larger number of poll workers, which is logical on the surface; however, when examining average voters per poll worker, vote center counties served approximately 35 more voters per poll worker.

- Compensation levels among responding counties were similar across both voting models.

- On average, responding vote center counties used approximately 86 fewer poll workers than their precinct-based counterparts.

- Although both precinct-based and vote center counties allocated roughly 19 percent of their projected budgets to poll worker expenses, precinct-based counties spent just over $12,000 more than vote center counties. This difference was nearly offset when accounting for the reduction of 86 poll workers at an average cost of $139 each ($11,954).

- These findings reflect averages, and the effects may vary depending on the specific circumstances of each county.

2012-2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

Data for 2012-2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

- This analysis compares the cost per voter across voting models. All 92 counties were included, although a few were missing data for one or two election years. Those counties without data were excluded from averages for those years.

- For each county, cost per voter was calculated for the election years 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024. The calculation used each county's CEB-9 estimated election cost divided by total voter turnout, as reported in the State's official election records.

- Each county was coded annually based on whether it operated as a vote center or under a precinct-based model. Average costs per voter were then calculated for both models across all years.

Do Vote Center Counties Spend Less Per Voter?

VC/NVC	12 Average CPV	14 Average CPV	16 Average CPV	18 Average CPV	22 Average CPV	24 Average CPV	12-24 Average CPV
Vote Center Counties	5.71	6.60	3.67	4.05	6.14	4.80	5.02
Non-Vote Center Counties	4.13	7.05	4.55	5.07	7.48	6.84	6.50

Findings:

VC Cost Difference
2012: $+1.58
2014: $-.45
2016: $-.88
2018: $-1.02
2022: $-1.34
2024: $-2.04
2012-2024: $-1.48

Cost Per Voter 2012 -2024
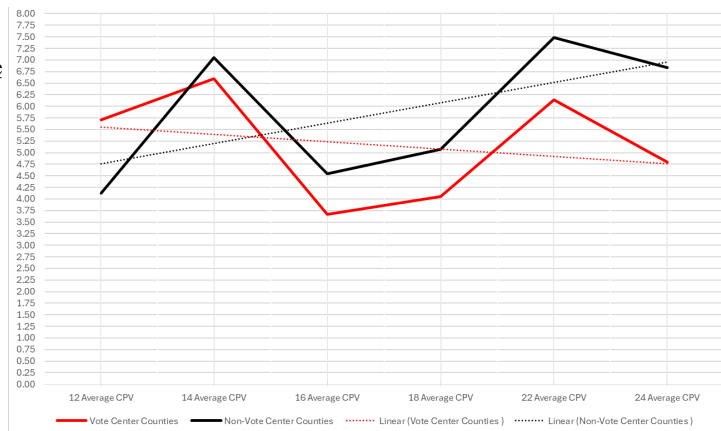
2024
Cost Per Voter
Comparison

Data for 2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

- This analysis compares the cost per voter across voting models by jurisdiction size and election equipment type. All 92 counties were included.

- For each county, cost per voter was calculated for the 2024 General Election. The calculation used each county's CEB-9 estimated election cost divided by total voter turnout, as reported in the State's official election records.

- Each county was coded whether it operated as a vote center or under a precinct-based model.

- Each county was coded as either a DRE or Optical Scan County based on VSTOP records.

Data for 2024 Cost Per Voter Comparison

- **The 47 small counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 2,000-14,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Brown, Crawford, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, LaGrange, Martin, Newton, Ohio, Orange, Parke, Perry, Rush, Union, Vermillion, Warren, and Washington
  - The vote center counties are: Adams, Benton, Blackford, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Daviess, Decatur, Fayette, Fountain, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Miami, Owen, Pike, Posey, Pulaski, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Starke, Sullivan, Switzerland, Tipton, Wabash, Wells, and White
- **The 31 medium counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 15,000-49,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Delaware, Gibson, Harrison, and Whitley
  - The vote center counties are: Bartholomew, Boone, Dearborn, DeKalb, Dubois, Floyd, Grant, Hancock, Henry, Howard, Huntington, Jackson, Jasper, Knox, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Lawrence, Marshall, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Putnam, Shelby, Steuben, Vigo, Warrick, Wayne
- **The 9 large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 50,000-99,999 voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Clark and Monroe
  - The vote center counties are: Elkhart, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Porter, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh
- **The 5 extra large counties are defined as a 2024 turnout of 100,000+ voters.**
  - The precinct-based counties are: Allen, Hamilton, and Lake
  - The vote center counties are: Marion and St. Joseph

Do Vote Center Counties Spend Less Per Voter?

2024 Average Vote Center Cost Difference
- Small DRE County: $**-.80**
- Small OpScan County: $**-2.33**
- Medium DRE County: $**-2.27**
- Medium OpScan County: $**-2.85**
- Large DRE County: Not Applicable
- Large OpScan County: $**+2.02**
- Extra Large DRE County: Not Applicable
- Extra Large OpScan County: Not Applicable

2024 CPV by Equipment Type
- 2024 DRE CPV: **$4.05**
- 2024 OpScan CPV: **$7.65**

2024 CPV Average By Voting & Equipment Type
- VC DRE CPV: **$3.62**
- Precinct DRE CPV: **$4.57**
- VC OpScan CPV: **$7.47**
- Precinct Opscan CPV: **$7.90**

Summarizing Election Cost Findings

- The average cost per voter has followed a similar overall trend over time, regardless of voting method. Length of a county being a vote center has no bearing on cost per voter.

- Over a 12-year period, the average cost per voter was $5.02 in vote center counties and $6.50 in precinct-based counties, representing an average savings of approximately $1.48 per voter per year in vote center counties. During this period, costs per voter in precinct-based counties trended upward, while costs in vote center counties trended downward. However, due to significant variation in county budget expenditure estimates, these results should be interpreted with caution.

- In 2024, vote center counties saved approximately $2.04 per voter compared to precinct-based counties.

- Based on 2024 data, vote center counties using DRE systems experienced the lowest cost per voter, though OpScan vote center counties also saw savings when compared to their precinct-based counterparts.

Voter Turnout

Do Vote Center Counties Have Higher Turnout?

Method: Difference-in-Differences Analysis of Turnout 2010 - 2024

Data: Indiana Official Turnout Numbers

Findings: Precinct-based counties consistently have higher turnout than vote center counties, the difference does not reach statistical significance.

Summarizing Turnout Findings

	Non Vote Center Registered Voter Turnout	Vote Center Registered Voter Turnout	Diff	Non Vote Center Voting Age Voter Turnout	Vote Center Voting Age Voter Turnout	Diff
2010	44.68	41.27	3.41	39.54	32.02	7.53
2012	59.21	56.78	2.42	53.9	50.01	3.89
2014	36.24	30.29	5.95	33.18	26.74	6.44
2016	60.44	60.03	0.41	57.28	54.54	2.73
2018	53.29	52.26	1.03	47.26	44.44	2.82
2022	43.52	40.86	2.66	39.46	36.68	2.78
2024	65.47	64.1	1.37	59.91	58.79	1.12

Voter Experience

Method and Data for Voter Experience Analysis

Method: T-Test of four different questions asked across all surveys to determine if there was a difference in voter experience in vote center and precinct-based counties

Data: 2012, 2014, 2016, 2022, and 2024 Survey of the Performance of American Elections done by MIT

Do Vote Center Counties Have a Better Experience?

Election Year	How difficult was it to find your polling place to vote?	How well were things run at the polling place where you voted?	Approximately, how long did you have to wait in line to vote?	Please rate the job performance of the poll workers at the polling place where you voted.
2012	-1.405	1.802	-2.180*	1.486
2014	.974	-.910	-3.605***	.214
2016	.135	.617	-.396	.652
2022	-2.507*	1.527	.109	-1.197
2024	-.706	-.748	-1.319	.721

Summarizing Voter Experience Findings

Findings:
- Based on the analysis of the MIT data from Indiana, there seems to be little difference in the experience between those in vote center and precinct-based counties in key indicators of voter experience

- The analysis suggests that in the early years of vote centers, voters experienced shorter lines and, in 2022, voters had an easier time finding Vote Centers than they did precinct-based voting locations

Appendix C
Public Comment

There were five public meetings held across the state to present the study and take public comments related to the two issues included in the legislation. The meetings were held in Muncie, Indianapolis, Jeffersonville, Evansville, and Munster. In addition to the public meetings held across the state the office created an email inbox to take public comments for those not able to attend the meetings in person. All the meetings were livestreamed and posted on the office's YouTube page. So, even if an individual could not make the meeting they could go back and watch the entire presentation.

Public Comment on Municipal Election Timing

Across the public meetings and in the email inbox, there were 74 comments related to the timing of municipal elections. There were 60 individuals that were opposed to moving the timing of municipal elections and there were 14 individuals that were supporting moving municipal elections to either line up with midterm elections or presidential elections.

Of those individuals who were in opposition to moving the timing of municipal elections the vast majority were in opposition because they believed national issues and candidates would take precedence over local issues and candidates. There was concern that it would effectively lead to local elections being nationalized. Though, there were some in opposition that thought it should be a local option for all cities across the state to decide which cycle to hold their elections.

For those in support, the main reason was cost savings that would be realized by moving municipal elections and the increased participation you would see in these municipal elections if held in either a midterm or presidential general election.

Public Comment on Vote Centers

Across the public meetings and in the email inbox, there were 88 comments related to requiring vote centers statewide.

There were 61 individuals who spoke in opposition to requiring vote centers statewide and there were 27 individuals who spoke in support of requiring vote centers statewide.

Among the individuals who were in opposition to requiring vote centers statewide, a majority wanted it to leave it as a decision for the county to make. There were not many individuals who were inherently in opposition to vote centers, but the public sentiment was against the requirement. There were various reasons provided, such as it leads to fewer locations and could hinder individuals without reliable transportation from casting their ballot in person. There were some individuals who gave public comments and who opposed the use of vote centers statewide. The reasons presented related to the idea that precinct voting provides protection from voter fraud in addition to providing a sense of community. Additionally, vote centers require the

use of electronic pollbooks and they were opposed to this technology being used in Indiana elections.

The one Indiana county that was unanimous in their opposition to vote centers was Lake County. They provided many reasons for opposition such as an aging population that lacks transportation and the lack of public transportation throughout Lake County.

Among those in support of requiring vote centers statewide, a majority thought it would make voting easier as individuals would be able to vote at any polling location throughout the county.

Comments from Election Administrators

Election Administrations hold a unique role in elections and this process benefits from having their comments separated out from the general public as they will be the ones to run these local elections.

Related to the timing of municipal elections, there was more support on syncing these elections with midterm or presidential years among election administrators than the general public. But there was still the opinion that there should be local control, and municipalities should have the option on whether to move their elections. This was especially true among the election administrators with large municipalities. The idea of requiring small town elections to be synced with either midterm or presidential elections was also more widely supported by election administrators.

Related to the use of vote centers, election administrators echoed the public comments. The main sentiment was that although a wide majority of counties utilize vote centers it should still be up to the county to adopt these plans and should not be a requirement from the state.