

Voter Experience Survey May 2017

The May 2017 Voter Experience Survey was administered online with Survey Monkey and distributed via email to Seventy’s 13,000+ newsletter subscribers and through the organization’s Twitter and Facebook accounts; the live survey link was also available on www.seventy.org. Paid Facebook promotion was targeted to Philadelphia residents, ages 18 to 65+. The survey was open from 9 am on Friday, May 12 to Friday, May 19, at midnight, available before Election Day for voters submitting absentee or alternative ballots. Respondents were limited to one submission per IP address.

Seventy appreciates the support of the community, civic and media organizations who assisted in disseminating the survey – and to the more 1,700 citizens who participated. Out of Philadelphia’s approximately one million registered voters, more than 177,000 cast ballots on May 16, 2017. To view previous survey results, visit www.seventy.org/get-involved/voter-experience-survey.

Question 1: Did you vote in Person on Election Day or by mail?

I voted in person	1,765	99%
I voted by mail	12	<1%

Question 2: Were there any problems getting your absentee or alternative ballot?

No	11	93%
Yes	1	7%

Question 3: Approximately how long did you wait in line to vote?

Not at all	1,328	75%
Less than 10 minutes	361	21%
10-30 minutes	57	3%
31 minutes to an hour	6	<1%
More than an hour	4	<1%
I don’t know	4	<1%

Question 4: Did you encounter any individuals canvassing or distributing partisan flyers, buttons or posters inside the polling place (i.e. the space or room where the voting machines are located)?

No	1,634	93%
Yes	126	7%

Question 5: Was there a problem with your voter registration when you tried to vote?

No	1,696	97%
Yes	60	3%

If Yes: Were you allowed to vote?

(Continued from Question 5)

Yes, by voting machine	49	82%
Yes, by provisional ballot	6	10%
No, not allowed to vote	5	8%

Question 6: Were you asked to show picture identification, such as a driver’s license, at the polling place?

No	1,631	93%
Yes	122	7%

If Yes: Was this your first time voting at this particular polling place?

No	58	48%
Yes	64	52%

Were you then allowed to vote?

Yes, by the voting machine	120	98%
Yes, by the provisional ballot	1	<1%
No, not allowed to vote	1	<1%

Question 7: Did you encounter any problems with the voting equipment or the ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended?

No	1,607	92%
Yes	126	7%
Don’t know	16	<1%

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Question 8: Did you need help or assistance voting due to a disability?

No	1,736	99%
Yes	13	<1%

If Yes: How did you receive help or assistance voting at the polling place? (Check all that apply)

A person of my choosing assisted me.	5	33%
I used the audio keypad/headphone device	1	7%
The voting machine was lowered	4	27%
I had to submit an alternative ballot.	0	0%
I did not receive any assistance.	1	7%
I received another form of assistance.	4	27%

Were you able to successfully vote?

No	1	8%
Yes	12	92%

Question 9: Were the poll workers able to address any question or issues you encountered in the voting process?

No	380	22%
Yes	45	3%
N/A	1,318	76%

Question 10: Please rate the job performance of the poll worker at the polling place where you voted.

Excellent	1,159	66%
Good	435	25%
Fair	104	6%
Poor	45	3%

Question 11: How confident are you that the current election process in Philadelphia (or in your particular county) produces fair outcomes?

4 (Very confident)	866	49%
3	692	40%
2	132	8%
1 (Not at all confident)	59	3%

Open-ended Responses

Was there a problem with your voter registration when you tried to vote?

- I had to show proof of my address, even though I did so in November. I have not moved or re-registered to vote since then.
- My son registered online, but he wasn't on the books.
- I had my voter registration card with me, but didn't have my driver's license. They gave me a hard time about that.
- It was my first time voting in this location and the volunteers made me show my voter registration, photo ID, and pulled me back out of line to question my signature. I'm concerned that these tactics may prevent others who are voting legally from doing so.
- My signature was not on file. I've been voting at this location since 1994. According to the poll worker the same issue occurred with other voters. This did not prevent me from voting.
- I moved 8 months ago and changed my voter registration address online back in Sept 2016. Yet my address still hasn't changed, and I had to go back to my old voting location to vote - ridiculous! When



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they called voter services on my behalf, I was told to fill out a paper change of address form...7 months after I filled it out the first time.

- My signature wasn't in the book even though I've been voting at the same place for over 20 years.
- It said I had "no affiliation" even though I updated my registration to Democrat months ago in order to be able to vote in the primary on more than just the ballot questions. The Judge at the location had to call in and verify this was true. We were on the phone for about 30 minutes after being transferred four times. Eventually they found that I had in fact updated my registration even though it didn't show up in the booklet. They said they would correct it on their computer records and they let me vote with a provisional ballot.
- But the register said my signature wasn't on record. That's impossible because I've been voting in every primary, midterm, gubernatorial, local, and presidential election since I was 19. I'm 32 now.

Did you encounter any problems with the voting equipment or the ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended?

- I found it difficult to read the ballot due to small print even though I wear prescribed contact lenses. The booth was not well lit.
- Only one working machine; should have been two. The Judge of Elections and Inspector names were in the wrong places on each of the three ballots at my poll [Ward 2, divisions 18, 22 and 23]. People were directed to do write-ins, and then one of the write-in apparatuses in [Ward 2, division 23] broke.
- I tried to vote early in the morning to vote, but every single one of the machines was broken. I was concerned that I would not be able to return until too late, as my work commute is about an hour. Thankfully, I made it in time. I don't know how long the machines remained broken.
- Despite not being a Democrat or Republican, I had full access to all candidates on the voting machine.
- One of two voting machines was not working, and this was after the poll place opened 50 minutes late. So there was a long line accumulated from the late opening and then the broken booth.
- I was able to vote correctly, but the plastic overlay on the ballot wasn't secure, creating a ¼-inch vacuum between the film and the ballot, which created the effect of making the words blurry and hard to read. When I pressed the film against the ballot I was able to read the wording clearly. It's a minor thing but could impact people's ability to clearly read and make the correct selections.

If no, please specify the question or issue poll workers were unable to address:

- Someone had written a write-in candidate's name on the face of the ballot in the voting booth. When election officials were informed they were very rude and said if I wanted it removed I could clean it off myself.
- The polling place and voting machines were not set up or operational at 7am. This is the 4th elections we have voted at this location and they are never ready at 7am.
- I arrived at 7:45am to vote and was told that they were not ready yet and we're having trouble with the equipment. When I returned at 6pm there was no wait at all and everything went smoothly.



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- At first they wanted to have someone watch me vote as I am an Independent and I had to remind them it's against the law for someone to be in the booth with me as I did not need help nor asked for it unclear why I needed a driver's license if I had my voter registration card
- They didn't know anything about accommodating Independents, so just let me vote with no restrictions.
- The judge of election did not show up at 7am. I left at 7:45 And had to come back after work. The poll workers were provided no information regarding when the polls might be open.
- Polling place was not open at 7:45am. They expected it to be open a half hour later. I saw at least 3 people on their way to work that could not vote due to our polls not being open yet.
- Division 6 had no book whatsoever. No one was working in division 6. At 9 a.m. I placed a report and phone calls. I had to return.
- There were five districts represented at my polling place, and the poll workers literally sent me to all five stations. No one could give accurate information about where I should be. Finally figured it out myself, but it was kind of crazy that no one could accurately point me in the right direction. (I also witnessed a voter who was registered as an independent try to figure out why he wasn't allowed to vote on the whole ticket. The poll workers did not explain it to him.)
- Voting location was not open until 1 hour after it was supposed to be. I was not able to vote because I had to go to work then school.
- I'm a libertarian and should only have voted for the ballot questions. The poll workers did not know anything about adjusting the machine for that, so let me vote with no restriction on candidates.

Other issues or comments

- There was a lady stretched across the table, sleeping, where I had to sign the registration book. I asked another Volunteer what was wrong with the person lying across the table. The Volunteer laughed and said, 'oh she's sleeping'.
- Every time I have been to this station there is illegal canvassing inside the station. I report it but nothing changes. I have even less faith in the polling station now that I know people with political agendas are welcome to come mess with the machines.
- I vote at the Ellwood School in East Oak Lane. I have for years. I got in with only minimal problem but watched two elderly folks using canes, have great difficulty because of broken and closed steps and no wheelchair access. My son who uses a wheelchair did not vote this election because he said it was not worth the difficulty.
- Poll workers were great, positive, communicative despite the challenges with the locked building and broken booth.
- I was concerned because of my inability to stand unaided, but the poll worker said it was no problem, lowered the voting machine, and placed a chair inside the booth so I could vote from a sitting position.

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Methodology Note

The Voter Experience Survey was piloted in November 2015 to identify issues that the electorate may be encountering in the voting process. Most questions have been collected from academic studies conducted in other states and have been kept consistent each election season. Responses are anonymous. The open-ended responses listed above are verbatim as received from respondents.

These results are not drawn from a random and representative sample of Philadelphia-area voters. Despite the large number of respondents, only rough generalizations can be inferred about the experiences of the nearly 1,700 survey participants – not the broader population of voters.

Please contact **Policy Program Manager Patrick Christmas** at pchristmas@seventy.org with questions or feedback on the survey. Find past results online at: www.seventy.org/get-involved/voter-experience-survey.

Demographics of May 2017 Respondents

Zip Code

Philadelphia Responses*	1,576	
Center	288	16%
North	169	10%
Northeast	150	8%
Northwest	309	17%
South	443	25%
West/Southwest	217	12%

Suburban County Responses	192	11%
Other/No data	9	<1%
TOTAL	1,777	

***Center** (19102, 19103, 19106, 19107, 19123, 19130),
North (19120, 19121, 19122, 19124, 19125, 19132, 19133, 19134, 19140), **Northeast** (19111, 19114, 19115, 19116, 19135, 19136, 19137, 19149, 19152, 19154),
Northwest (19118, 19119, 19126, 19127, 19128, 19129, 19138, 19141, 19144, 19150), **South** (19112, 19145, 19146, 19147, 19148), **West/Southwest** (19104, 19131, 19139, 19142, 19143, 19151, 19153)

Race/Ethnicity

Asian	32	2%
Black / African American	156	9%
Hispanic / Latino	37	2%
Native American	2	<1%
Pacific Islander	1	<1%
White / Caucasian	1,444	86%
Other race or ethnicity	0	0%

Age

18-35	606	36%
36-55	593	35%
56-74	483	29%
75+	0	0%

Gender

Female	607	35%
Male	1108	64%
Transgender	6	<1%
Do not identify as female, male, or transgender	17	<1%

*Respondents were not required to include demographic information.