

Voter Experience Survey November 2016

The November 2016 Voter Experience Survey was administered online with Survey Monkey and distributed via email to Seventy's 11,000+ 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 Wednesday, November 2 to Saturday, November 12, at 12 noon, 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 nearly 1,700 citizens who participated. Out of Philadelphia's approximately one million registered voters, more than 704,000 cast ballots on November 8, 2016. To view previous survey results, visit www.seventy.org.

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

I voted in person	1,627	97%
I voted by mail	43	3%

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

No	25	60%
Yes	17	40%

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

Not at all	453	28%
Less than 10 minutes	477	30%
10-30 minutes	375	23%
31 minutes to an hour	194	12%
More than an hour	111	7%
I don't know	3	<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	1542	96%
Yes	69	4%

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

No	1530	95%
Yes	77	5%

If Yes: Were you allowed to vote?

(Continued from Question 5)

Yes, by voting machine	59	76%
Yes, by provisional ballot	16	21%
No, not allowed to vote	2	3%

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

No	1271	79%
Yes	331	21%

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

No	131	40%
Yes	200	60%

Were you then allowed to vote?

Yes, by the voting machine	324	98%
Yes, by the provisional ballot	6	2%
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	1461	91%
Yes	109	7%
Don't know	27	2%

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

No	1589	99%
Yes	6	<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.	4	67%
I used the audio keypad/headphone device	1	17%
The voting machine was lowered	1	17%
I had to submit an alternative ballot.	0	0%
I did not receive any assistance.	0	0%

Were you able to successfully vote?

No	0	0%
Yes	6	100%

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

No	80	5%
Yes	394	25%
N/A	1100	70%

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

Excellent	899	57%
Good	432	27%
Fair	169	11%
Poor	74	5%

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

4 (Very confident)	972	60%
3	457	28%
2	111	7%
1 (Not at all confident)	68	4%

Open-ended Responses

Were there any problems getting your absentee or alternative ballot?

- It arrived rather close to the deadline, which made me very nervous that it would take too long for the office to receive it, and that my vote would not be counted. I sent out the request letter about a month ahead of time and it took about 3 weeks to receive the absentee ballot.
- I never received a ballot after sending an absentee ballot request a week before it was due.
- Had to mail two absentee ballot application forms and call the board of elections multiple times before my absentee ballot was mailed to me. The process was long, over 6 weeks from the first ballot application mailed until I received my absentee ballot.
- Mailed in application but did not receive ballot prior to leaving for Florida. Called and we were advised to pick up ballots at City Hall as they were behind in processing absentee ballots. We did that and mailed them in before leaving Philadelphia.
- My husband never received his absentee ballot. Finally, it was sent to our house in Philadelphia rather than his actual location, and he received it on Friday 11/4, the same day it's due back. So he's not able to vote.

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

- I was not listed in the "books", I was denied a provisional ballot - despite having an email registration and my valid state ID. The poll worker refused to give me a provisional ballot. My girlfriend contacted local groups to get support for me to vote. Later I was able to return, with a lawyer, who insisted that I get a provisional ballot. Suddenly my name was in the supplemental pages of the book and I was able to vote.
- There were others ahead of me that seemed to be unsure of where they were to vote or even how to vote. They were dealt with appropriately by very patient staff. There were many older citizens that were voting and much effort was made for them to be comfortable while they waited with workers sometime forfeiting their chairs for the voters comfort.
- Even though I was sent two voter registration cards my name was not in the book. I had to submit a paper provisional ballot which I was told may not even be counted.
- I was a first time voter at this location. I came there with my updated card and I was not in the book or on the new sheets. I had to do a paper ballot. This is a big concern for me.
- Went to where I was supposed to vote, was told I could not vote at that address and had to walk to another polling place. When I arrived to that address I was told I could not vote there and to go back to the polling place I was originally at. When I finally arrived after walking 20 minutes, I was yelled at saying I could not vote there. Finally after talking with several different people I had to vote via paper.
- I moved three months ago and submitted a change of address form upon moving. After not receiving my voter registration card, I submitted a paper change of address form. Yesterday, when I still hadn't received a card, I verified my registration, and found that my old address was still listed, with my old polling place. I called the Office of Voter Registration at 11AM yesterday to confirm, and they confirmed. When I appeared at the polling place, after waiting for 45 minutes, I was told that my registration was not on file. Upon verifying my registration this morning, I found that my address had been updated, and I needed to go to a polling place about a mile away from my first polling place, with ID. The entire process took about 2 hours.
- My address and voting location are correct on my voter registration card but when I went to my location I was told they didn't have me in the book. I then had to go to the community college on spring garden far away from my Rittenhouse apartment where they had me in the book with an incorrect address. Took a total of 3 hours.
- They claimed they couldn't find record of my registration even after I showed them my registration card and asked me to fill out a provisional ballot. After I protested this and said I wouldn't leave, they checked again and found my name in their registration book.

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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?

- There was some kind of problem with the voting machine that I used. It seemed to be shutting off in the middle of someone trying to use it. A poll worker there said that it shouldn't matter and that our votes should still be counted, because they were stored on a cartridge. Plus by the time I got to the front of the line to use the machine, there was a maintenance person there who seemed to be able to fix it. I hope that my vote was counted and I'm not sure what happened with that particular machine after I left.
- One of the ballot questions, the buttons and lights did not line up well with the text. I had to work to make sure I was indeed voting the way I intended by pressing around the text and seeing what both answers did to the light placement.
- I wrote in a few candidates, and with the second one, the machine wouldn't let me and malfunctioned, and I was given a paper ballot to fill out. I am not confident that it will be counted.
- The machine had to be reset before I could begin listening to the ballot and making my selections. The poll worker who handles setting up the machines for accessible voting worked as quickly as possible to get the machine working so I could use it. Also, there was so much loud chatter at points that even with the machine at the highest volume; I had difficulty hearing my choices. Polling place officials were quick to deal with the problem when it was brought to their attention, and I was able to complete the voting process.
- When I arrived at 8 am, they told all voters there that only one machine was working and it was up to individuals to come back or wait an hour.
- Two out of three machines were not working. Poll workers called in problem before 7:00am but when I arrived at 8:00 machines were still broken so we waited about 40 min.
- I was able to figure it out and cast my vote as intended, but I find the ballot machines very counterintuitive. It is not clearly indicated where to press to select a candidate, the other ballot measures are located off in the lower right corner which is not obvious, and it is not clear that one has to push the VOTE button as it is not easily seen and there are no instructions.
- The write-in option on the machine was broken and the poll worker refused to fix it, saying he didn't know anything about that. The window to access the paper to write on opened but was stuck on a write-in vote that was presumably from 2012 (it was for Ron Paul). I did submit my ballot anyway, but this means I did not vote as planned in one specific race.
- I was standing behind the machine while my husband voted. I noticed the red number on the back of machine did not go up when he finished voting (it was at 23 when he entered, and remained at 23 - did not go up to 24). I believe the worker did not "set" the machine before he voted, therefore his vote did not register. We told the poll watchers what happened and they allowed him to vote again.
- I wasn't sure how to operate the equipment and asked for help, but the poll worker wouldn't offer it unless he knew who I was voting for and even told me to vote for a specific candidate. This was unethical.
- Multiple voting booths were malfunctioning. I have voted at this polling place four times in the past, and each time voting has bottlenecked due to equipment malfunctions.

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Were there any questions or issues you encountered in the voting process that poll workers were unable to address?

- The first worker sent me to the wrong table - so wrong ward/division. There I was asked for ID, and then told that I'd need to do a provisional. I insisted that this location was the correct polling station for me, because I voted in the primary with no issue. I was redirected back in line, to be told to go to the wrong table again...then when I went to the correct table, I was not asked for ID, and my signature wasn't even cross checked. The polling location could have been set up in a more logical way to cut down on wait time, and the workers needed to be more knowledgeable about figuring out which addresses belonged to which divisions.
- While my issue was addressed, it was done poorly. This was my first time voting in my polling place, and I knew I needed to provide ID. However, per the instructions on my voter registration card, "this card can be used as that first-time proof of identification." However, the registration clerk insisted I needed a photo ID, even when I pointed out the information on the card. After I politely repeated that the card should be sufficient ID, she then called across the room to the poll judge -- who was also her dad -- to ask if I needed to show photo ID. He shrugged and said he didn't want any problems and to let me vote. It didn't exactly instill confidence that the poll judge and poll workers know what they are doing. And this was in the evening... surely I was not the first person to present their registration card in lieu of photo ID.
- The poll workers are a very professional group who always support voters.
- Poll workers had a hard time helping people figure out their Ward and Division. One person mentioned a website but didn't tell us the address. And I know there's a map inside, but it's too far into the polling place to help the people waiting in line outside. My polling place has three divisions, so it's very confusing, especially if you don't know your W&D (which, luckily, I do).
- I recently moved to PA. I do not yet have a PA photo ID, but I did register to vote and received a Certificate of Voter Registration. I was told that the Certificate was not sufficient ID despite the fact that the certificate itself says that it is sufficient. I was able to show a Minnesota ID which was accepted. I don't think the poll worker was trying to keep me from voting, but I think she was misinformed.
- This was my first time in Philadelphia voting in person (non-absentee) and I was pretty disappointed by it. It made me realize that voting is not as simple as we are led to believe. I don't think the situation was caused by too few volunteers, I think it was caused by poor preparation and foresight. There were a fair number of volunteers, they just didn't seem very productive or helpful.
- Prior to getting to the ballot, I asked the poll worker what I needed to be able to vote as I saw four people in front of me have to leave to go get more information (it sounded like their photo IDs were not enough). She said I would need an ID with my current address on it, and if I didn't have that I would need a photo ID plus proof of address such as mail with my name and address on it.
- When I initially had issues figuring out my registration problems, one of the poll workers told me that I needed to complete a provisional ballot. A second poll worker helped me figure out that my address had been changed, and offered to help me locate my new polling place. I already knew how to do that, but the poll worker was completely prepared to answer my fairly complicated question.
- Many people in line, myself included, were confused about where to line up. There are two polling places within the same building, but there were no signs directing us to our respective polling places. There was

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no signage directing us where to enter the building, where to line up, etc. Aside from signage, there was a general lack of instruction on what to do, how to vote, who's turn it was, etc.

- Poll workers were not good at sorting voters across the divisions. Some divisions had incredibly long lines while others were quick. The sign in process was very slow since some of the workers were slow and unable to look up names quickly. They need: 1) Clear lines by division 2) maps of each division in many places so voters who don't know can sort themselves before entering the building 3) poll workers who can get to voters names quickly 4) the ability to process more than one voter at a time at the division tables.

Methodology Note

This tool was first deployed in November 2015, collecting 650 responses from city residents and another 50 from the surrounding counties. The April 2016 primary survey gathered 1,070 responses, 170 of which were from counties outside the city. Most questions have been collected from similar studies conducted by academics in other states and have been kept consistent each election season. Responses were anonymous.

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. The survey is designed to identify issues that the electorate at large may be encountering in the voting process. The open-ended responses listed above are verbatim as received from respondents.

Please contact futureofthecity@seventy.org with questions or feedback on the Voter Experience Survey.

November 2016 Responses by Geography

Philadelphia Responses*	1,467	
Center	235	14%
North	186	11%
Northeast	191	11%
Northwest	284	17%
South	366	22%
West/Southwest	205	12%
Suburban County Responses	193	12%
Other/No data	10	<1%
TOTAL	1670	

***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)