
NEWS RELEASE

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April 8, 2014

LOUISIANA OUTPACES NATION IN ELECTION PERFORMANCE

BATON ROUGE, La.—Louisiana does a better job administering elections than most other states across the nation according to The Pew Charitable Trusts’ latest Election Performance Index. Between the 2008 Presidential Election and the 2012, Louisiana’s election performance improved by 6 percentage points compared to the nations’ overall improvement of just 4.4 percentage points.

“This kind of recognition is vitally important to Louisiana because it confirms what we know to be true, our state is leading the way when it comes to the integrity of our election process,” said Secretary of State Tom Schedler. “In this report, Pew specifically mentions the innovations Louisiana has fostered including our nationally recognized mobile phone app and website, GeauxVote, and the positive impacts both have made in getting information to voters on Election Day. I am very proud of our ranking and our success.”

The Pew Election Performance Index measures election administration using indicators including data completeness, availability of voting information tools online, voter turnout, rejection of military and overseas ballots, and accuracy of voting technology. It allows for comparisons to be made among all 50 states surrounding how elections are conducted.

Overall, 40 states and the District of Columbia improved their scores between 2008 and 2012, while 21 states, including Louisiana, saw growth at a pace greater than the national average. Ten states saw declines in their overall performance. Overall, Louisiana ranked 18th in the nation.

“We know common-sense solutions to improve elections exist. States are pioneering innovations that make a real difference in the efficiency and accuracy of their elections operations while also saving money,” said David Becker, director of Pew’s election initiatives project. “The Election Performance Index allows policy makers to pinpoint what’s working while also identifying areas where improvement is needed.

Louisiana was commended by Pew for several of its elections initiatives including online voter registration which was added in 2010 as well as the state’s use of technology to aid voters. Notably, Pew recognized Louisiana’s GeauxVote website and mobile phone app as excellent examples of tools voters can use to access registration and other election information. The state was also one of only six states to submit 100% of the data tracked in the index to the Election Assistance Commission in both presidential years.

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Areas noted for improvement in Louisiana included the rate of mail ballots unreturned. However Secretary Schedler noted a discrepancy in the data that may have led to an incorrect conclusion about the state's performance. In 2008 Louisiana's policies mandated that multiple ballots be sent to voters requesting to vote by mail. Each piece of paper was counted by the Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) in calculating Louisiana's return rate. In 2012, Louisiana only sent one assembled ballot to the same voters in an effort to streamline the process and in turn, significantly impacted the data submitted to the EAC.

"At the end of the day, we believe we did the right thing in Louisiana by consolidating our ballots and sending voters less paper," said Secretary of State Tom Schedler. "But on this survey, it seems like it may have counted against us. I agree with Pew's assessment that there are many legitimate reasons for changes in return rates, and we have appropriately investigated this instance and come to a reasonable conclusion that our actions in fact assisted voters."

A full copy of the Pew report on Election Performance as well as interactive tools can be found at www.pewstates.com.

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