**Government Department Spring 2019**

**Dr. Michael W. Hail Faculty Sponsor**

# American Election Security

Sarah Fink - Undergraduate Research Fellow

**Abstract:**

The focus of this research is an examination of the American election infrastructure with a specific look at Kentucky's election security. This research was used to determine the most secure national system, while still protecting federalism. An in-depth comparison of both a centralized electronic system and a decentralized paper system was used to determine policy recommendations to increase American election security.

**Federal Regulation and Guidelines:**

· **U.S. Constitution, Tenth Amendment-** grants states the right to administer elections how they choose

· **2002 Help Americans Vote Act (HAVA)-** gave out grants and incentives to states to encourage upgrading election systems

· **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018** allotted $380 million to HAVA grants

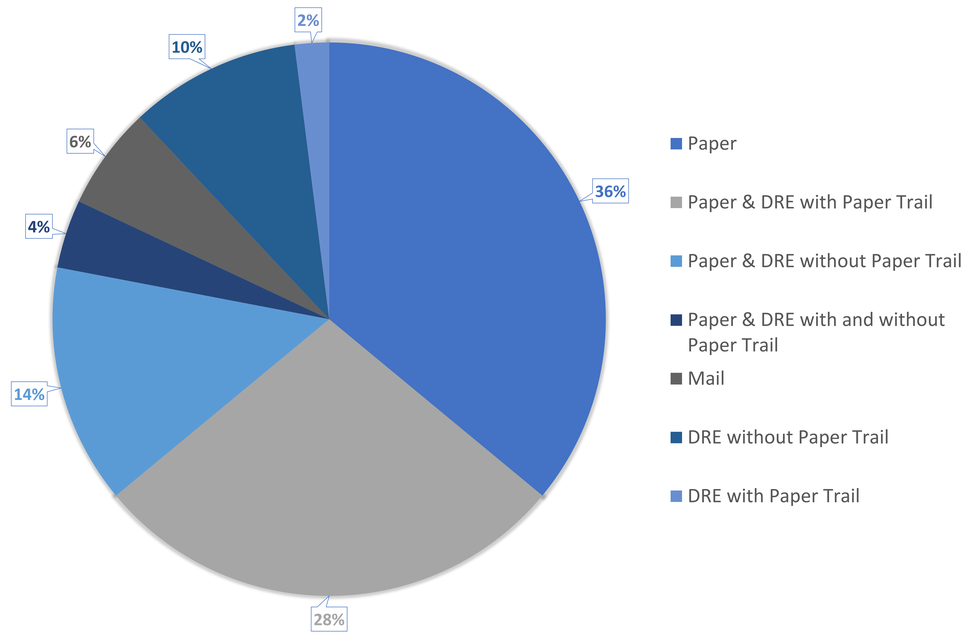
· **National Conference of State Legislature Guidelines** created criteria for judging security of election infrastructure

· **Guidelines created by the Election Assistance Commission** created nationwide labs to check election machines

**Two Main Voting Methods:**

1. Digital/Optical Scanners (use paper ballots)
2. Direct Recording Electronics Machines (use touch-screen or keypad input)

TABLE 2: VOTING METHOD USAGE BY PERCENTAGE OF STATES




**Center for American Progress' Election Security Report Kentucky was awarded a "D"**

· Unsatisfactory results:
  - -Out-of-date technology
  - -Lack of audit-able paper trails
  - -Faulty audit system based on a set percent of vote regardless of the margin of victory

· Satisfactory results:
  - -Mail-in and paper only absentee voting
  - -Verification of all machines in EAC labs

**Policy Recommendations:**

· Decentralized Paper voting

· Maintain election infrastructure diversity across nation:

· Increase penetration testing to heavily populated polling places

· Reallocate federal grants to incentivize updating optical/digital scanners instead of solely focusing on upgrading to DREs