

## *Guardians at the gates: Working the polls in a polarized electorate*

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### *Abstract:*

Drawing on theories of principal-agency and street-level bureaucracy, we fashion and test different explanations for the recruitment and retention of poll workers. Our explanations focus on the training poll workers receive, their experiences at the polls and interactions with other poll workers. Prior experience working the polls shaped by poll worker training and successful collaborations with other poll workers positively affects a person's willingness to work the polls. These effects match the effect of age and prior work at the polls in explaining workers' willingness to continue working the polls. Moreover, we find those persons who worked the polls in 2020 continue to have a strong positive attitude about working the polls. Our findings identify efficacious steps local election officials can take to recruit and retain persons to work the polls in future elections.

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## *1. Introduction*

Since 2000 local election officials (LEOs) have reported that they are having difficulty recruiting and retaining persons to work the polls (GAO 2002; EAC, 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016; 2018; 2020). How true is this condition across U.S. states and jurisdictions and over time? Why does this condition prevail and what remedies are available for correcting the paucity of persons to work the polls?

The primary source about the availability of persons to work the polls is a single question in the semi-annual *Election Administration and Voter Survey* (EAVS) of local election administrators (LEOs) in approximately 6,000 counties and municipalities. The limitation of a single survey question, the highly variable response rates and the absence of follow-up questions about the quality and experience of persons working the polls raise serious question with the veracity and usefulness of *EAVS* in assessing and explaining the availability of persons to work the polls (see Burden and Milyo 2015; Jones and Stein 2021; Hoffstetter 2019; Roberts and Greenberger 2023; Greenberger 2023). Researchers who have relied on EAVS to explain the availability of persons to work the polls have found jurisdiction size and demographics (Burden and Milyo 2015; Jones and Stein 2021; Hoffstetter 2019) and institutional arrangements for conducting elections (Jones and Stein 2021; Hoffstetter 2019) shape the difficulty local election officials report obtaining persons to work the polls.

Despite the obvious importance of poll workers to the successful administration of elections, almost no academic research has studied them directly. To build a base of knowledge about this crucial group, a national team of researchers collaborated with LEOs in 10 states and 19 jurisdictions to survey poll workers about their experiences and reasons for working the polls in the November 2020 and November 2022 elections. Two waves of interviews were conducted with over 5,000 poll workers across a variety of jurisdictions both before and after 2022 election. Our paper details the findings from the first wave of these surveys, identifying the experiences of poll workers and their willingness to continue to work the polls.

Drawing on theories of principal-agency and street-level bureaucracy, we identify and test different explanations for the recruitment and retention of poll workers. Our explanation focuses on the training poll workers receive, their experiences at the polls and interactions with other poll workers. These factors are malleable and well within the range of actions LEOs can take to recruit and retain poll workers. Unlike fixed demographics and state laws, the training and the deployment of poll workers can result in their retention for future elections.

We find support for our several explanations for why persons work the polls. Affect about working the polls, training and successful collaborations with other poll workers positively affects a person's willingness to work the polls in the future. Our findings, unlike those of other researchers, afford local election officials significant latitude and flexibility to recruit and retain persons to work the polls.

## 2. Previous research

Research on the recruitment of poll workers is a nascent field of study and limited to a handful of Studies in the U.S. (Burden and Milyo 2015; Hostetter 2020; Jones and Stein 2021; Roberts and Greenberger 2023; Greenberger 2023; Bustinza et al 2022; Kimball et al., 2010), the United Kingdom (Clark and James 2023), and Mexico (Cantu and Ley 2017). Studies of poll worker recruitment in the U.S. (Burden and Milyo 2015; Hostetter 2020; Jones and Stein 2021) have used biennial EAVS data from local elections officials to determine the degree to which poll worker recruitment is problematic. The semi-annual survey asks local election administrators “[H]ow difficult or easy was it for your jurisdiction to obtain a sufficient number of poll workers for the November [year] general election?” Responses include very difficult, somewhat difficult, neither difficult nor easy, somewhat easy, and very easy. The proportion of local elections officials who have reported having a “very difficult” time finding persons to work the polls has increased over time (Fig. 1).

[Figure 1 here]

The EAVS may not provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of poll worker staffing. Several researchers report that the response rates to EAVS and more specifically responses to the question about the difficulty of recruiting poll workers are exceedingly low, variable over time and not consistently reported by local election officials at the same level and unit of government (Hostetter 2020; Jones and Stein 2021; Roberts and Greenberger; Greenberger 2023).<sup>1</sup> These conditions make conclusions based on EAVS about the difficulty of recruiting persons to work the polls problematic. The balance of research on the poll worker recruitment comes from a host of single state and jurisdiction studies (Roberts and Greenberger 2023; Bustinza et al 2022; Glasser et al 2007;) and several national surveys of local election elections (Kimball et al 2010; Mason and Gronke 2022). In spite of the paucity and variable quality of data on poll worker recruitment, a consensus emerges from extant research that recruiting and retaining poll workers is a challenge for local elections officials, albeit variable across jurisdictions. Why?

Explanations for this condition and its remedy have focused on the demand for and supply of persons to work the polls, institutional arrangements for deploying poll workers and ways voters cast their ballots i.e., in-person and by mail. Burden and Milyo (2015) and others (Hostetter 2020; Jones and Stein 2021) report the difficulty of recruiting persons to work the polls is positively related to the size and age of a jurisdiction’s electorate. LEOs in larger jurisdictions report greater difficulty recruiting poll workers which diminishes with persons over 70 years of age. Hostetter (2020) found election officials in states that allow poll workers to work in any jurisdiction in the state reported less difficulty in recruiting persons to work the polls. Election officials in states with early voting and Election Day vote centers similarly reported less difficulty recruiting poll workers (Jones and Stein 2021). LEOS report recruiting poll workers is significantly less difficult in states where a higher proportion of voters vote by mail. All of

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<sup>1</sup> Hostetter (2020), Jones and Stein (2021) and Greenberger (2023) report that a number of states either refused to answer the EAVS survey or reported the data was unavailable for selected jurisdictions. Unreported states in 2018 include Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington and Wisconsin. See Stewart (2018; 2019) for a further discussion of the accuracy of EAVS data.

aforementioned research relies on the EAC survey of local elections for assessing the difficulty of recruiting poll workers and not surveys of poll workers.

Previous studies of poll workers largely focus on the performance of their duties and responsibilities at in-person polling locations. These studies provide important theoretical and empirical insight to why persons work the polls. Alvarez and Hall (2008) and Atkeson et al. (2014) cast the question of poll worker performance in terms of the principal-agency problem. Hiring the right persons to work the polls and knowing that they are performing their duties appropriately are significant challenges to local election officials. LEOs cannot know with high certainty the persons they hire to work the polls are the most qualified to perform their duties faithfully. Given the real time nature of elections and poll workers performance, monitoring the performance of poll workers in all but the smallest jurisdictions is costly and impractical. There are too many poll workers for LEOs to monitor on or even before Election Day during the early voting period.

Alvarez and Hall identify several ways LEOs can assure the faithful and effective performance of poll workers, including training, prior experience, resources to compensate poll workers, and institutional arrangements and alternative ways voters cast their ballot (in-person on or before Election Day or by mail). Atkeson et al. (2014) and Atkeson and Josh (2023, 1) report greater albeit variable compliance with election laws and procedures among experienced poll workers: “We find that experienced poll workers are more likely to follow some training while ignoring other parts. We conclude that poll workers ignore their training when it conflicts with the efficiency of the voting process.” These findings are explained in terms of a status quo bias among poll workers, especially experienced poll workers with long histories of working the polls. Experienced poll workers may resist changes in election laws and procedures either because they find the changes inefficient and unacceptable or that training is too difficult (Moynihan and Lavertu 2012; Moynihan and Silva 2009; Burden et al. 2012). Spencer and Markovits (2010) further suggest that experienced poll workers build relationships with their fellow poll workers that further reinforce their status quo bias.

Several researchers (Clark and James 2021; Bustinza et al 2022; McAuliffe 2009; Barsky 2020; Perry and Wise 1990 Knoke and Wright-Isak and Perry 1996) suggest poll workers see their services as a patriotic duty or form of civic participation, corresponding to normative motivations (Bustinza 2022:1). This normative motivation rival even pecuniary benefits from working the polls (Clark and James 2023).

### *3. Testing alternative explanation for working the polls*

We derive several testable hypotheses for why persons work the polls from both the extant literature and research on the performance and compliance of poll workers. The first set of hypotheses identify the prevalent demographics of persons working the polls, including age, and education. A second set of correlates are experiential and identify the number of elections a person worked at the polls, their evaluation of working the polls, and collaboration with fellow poll workers. The third set of factors shaping poll work recruitment are affective, and focus on self-described reasons for working the polls such as civic obligation, party loyalty and financial needs.

A potential way to alleviate poll worker reticence to work future elections may be the collaboration of other poll workers and the training they receive. LEOs are unable to effectively monitor and assist poll workers in real time on or before Election Day (Alvarez and Hall 2004; Atkeson et al. 2014). When things go badly at a polling location, poll workers only have their co-workers to turn to for assistance. Similarly, the training poll workers receive from their LEOs may sustain workers when difficulties arise (Hall, Monson, and Patterson 2007). We hypothesize that the quality of poll worker collaborations with other poll workers and the quality of their training mitigate the negative effect bad experiences at the polls have on their intention to work future elections. We test these two conditional hypotheses with interaction terms between poll worker training and experiences at the polls and poll worker collaborations and experiences at the polls. We expect the negative effect of experiences at the polls has on the likelihood to work the polls in the future declines with better collaborations and poll worker training.

#### *4. Research design and measures.*

To date, no single national study of persons who work the polls has been undertaken. Most of our understanding about why persons work the polls comes from surveys with local election officials, not with poll workers. Surveys of poll workers have been limited to individual states or counties (e.g., Atkeson et al 2014; Atkeson and Josh 2023; Hall et al. 2007). Findings from these studies may not generalize to a national population of poll workers.

To remedy the dearth of contemporary surveys of poll workers we collaborated with LEOs in 10 states and 19 jurisdictions to survey poll workers about their experiences in the 2020 and 2022 elections and reasons for working the polls. Two waves of interviews were conducted with over 5,000 poll workers across a variety of jurisdictions both before and after 2022 election. Our paper details the findings from the first wave of these surveys, identifying the experiences of poll workers and their willingness to continue to work the polls. The appendix reports the sample of jurisdictions by state and number of completed interviews.

Interviews were conducted with 5,427 poll workers between September 15 and October 14, 2022. Surveys in all jurisdictions but one was conducted on line.<sup>2</sup> Survey respondents were solicited to take the survey by either their respective jurisdiction's LEO or where allowed, by the researchers.<sup>3</sup> All respondents were directed to a secure *Qualtrics* website where they could take the survey. Several follow-up requests were issued to increase response rates and representativeness of the samples.

The pre-election survey queried voters about their training, problems they observed voters having at the polls, their own experience working the polls, their interactions with other poll workers and their general affect about working the polls. The referent for all questions was the

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<sup>2</sup> Poll workers in Lubbock County, Texas (N=96) completed a self-administered paper survey. These surveys were not available for inclusion in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> In 12 of our of 19 study jurisdictions state law prohibits LEOs from sharing names, addresses (including emails) and other personal information of their poll workers. In these jurisdictions, LEOs directly solicited their cadre of poll workers to take the survey at a designated URL site. For the remaining jurisdictions, LEOs shared the contact for their poll workers with the researchers to make the solicitation.

2020 election. Among the poll workers who completed the pre-election survey, 85% (N=4,613) reported having worked the polls in the 2020 election.

For our dependent variable, respondents were asked in September 2022 how likely they were to work the polls in the upcoming November 2022 election. Retrospectively, we know from our post-election survey which respondents did in fact work the polls. However, this is not information LEOs had when making plans for the November 2022 election in September. LEOs need to reliably and accurately estimate a persons' intent to work the polls before each election. This is required in order to properly staff, equip and operate in-person polling locations. What we seek to identify is the best means for making this prediction. Our dependent measure of the likelihood to work the polls is a four-category ordinal measure i.e., very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely and very unlikely.

Summary scales were constructed from survey responses for five categories of poll worker experiences: training, collaborating with other poll workers, general affect about working the polls, observed experience of voters at the polls, and unpleasant experiences working the 2020 election.<sup>4</sup>

First, the training poll workers receive should influence their likelihood to continue to work the polls. This effect may be direct or mediated by their experiences at the polls. Poll workers well versed in their duties and responsibilities should report fewer problems working the polls than persons whose training was deficient. Respondents were asked if they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with five statements about their training.

- The training instructors were knowledgeable and answered questions thoroughly.
- As a result of my training, I was adequately prepared to serve as an election worker in any election.
- I was provided with clear instructions of what was expected of me as a poll worker.
- The training provided was in-depth enough to solve any problems I experienced as a poll worker.
- Training locations were close to where I live.<sup>5</sup>

Second, persons that worked the polls in 2020 were asked about their collaborations with other poll workers. Respondents were asked if they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with five statements about other poll workers with whom they worked.

- Election workers at my location were punctual.
- Election workers at my location were knowledgeable
- Election workers at my location worked as a team and fostered a collaborative environment.

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<sup>4</sup> A score is created for every observation for which there is a response to at least one item. The summative score is divided by the number of items over which the sum is calculated (Stata 2018).

<sup>5</sup> The results of a factor analysis of the five questions about poll worker training produced an eigenvalue for the first extracted factor of 3.1 and a Cronbach's Alpha of .88.

- Interactions between election workers at my location were professional, courteous, and respectful.<sup>6</sup>

Third, poll worker affect about working the polls is measured with ten agree/disagree questions. These questions did not reference any specific election but, rather asked the respondent their opinions about being a poll worker over their career working the polls. Our intent is to capture the totality of circumstances influencing a person's affect about working the polls.

- Working as a poll worker has become more difficult.
- Candidates and political parties unfairly blame poll workers for losing elections.
- Voters are courteous and friendly to me.
- Voters appreciate the work I do as a poll worker.
- Poll workers in my county are respected and well supported by our elected officials' duties as a poll worker.
- I feel safe and secure working as a poll worker.
- I am paid fairly for my work as a poll worker.
- Poll watchers for candidates and political parties perform a useful role at the polling place.
- My state has enacted laws that make it more difficult for me to perform my duties as a poll worker.
- I feel safe and secure working as a poll worker.<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, to assess whether poll workers observed voters having difficulty at the polls, respondents were asked the share of voters — most, less than half, a few, or none — that appeared to experience the following problems.

- Problems recording their vote choices on the voting equipment
- Problems completing a provisional ballot
- Problems checking in to vote with the proper ID
- Poll watchers interfering with a voting trying to vote
- Conflicts with other voters waiting to vote.
- Misunderstandings or confusion about election rules.
- Waiting more than a hour to vote<sup>8</sup>

Finally, to assess specific exposure to difficulties by poll workers in the 2020 elections, respondents were asked whether they had one or more unpleasant experiences working the polls in that election:

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<sup>6</sup> The results of a factor analysis of the five questions about other poll workers produced an eigenvalue for the first extracted factor of 2.9 and a Cronbach's Alpha of .79.

<sup>7</sup> The results of a factor analysis of the ten questions about affect produced an eigenvalue for the first extracted factor of 2.1 and a Cronbach's Alpha of .61.

<sup>8</sup> The results of a factor analysis of the seven questions about affect produced an eigenvalue for the first extracted factor of 3.0 and a Cronbach's Alpha of .84.

- Conflict with poll watchers representing candidates or political parties
- Difficulty with voting machines and other equipment
- Long lines of voters waiting to vote
- Conflict with voters
- Conflict with other poll workers<sup>9</sup>

Our measure of poll worker problems at the polling place is surprisingly deficient. The five questions do not cohere, evidenced by the small Alpha score and weak factor analysis results. Two questions, conflicts with voters and poll watchers, were frequently mentioned in news accounts (ABC News 2020; WABE 2022) are included in our analysis as a measure of poll worker experiences. The excluded questions about difficulty with voting machines, long lines and conflicts with other poll workers are captured in our measures of voter problems at the polls and poll worker collaborations.

In addition to the above measures, our estimate of intent to work the polls in 2022 includes the respondent's age<sup>10</sup> and the number of elections the respondents worked the polls since 2020.<sup>11</sup> (i.e., none, one, two and two or more).

We estimate the difficulty of obtaining poll workers using several different forms of our dependent measure. We first estimate an ordered logit model for our ordinal measure of likelihood to work the polls. When estimating an ordinal regression model, it is necessary to satisfy the proportional odds assumption that presumes that the effects of the independent variables are proportional across the different categories of the dependent variable. This means that the explanatory and control variables have the same effects regardless of the category. After running an ordinal regression, we can test the proportional odds assumption by using the Brant test (Brant 1990) and a Likelihood-ratio test between a model that requires the proportional odds assumption and one that does not. In both cases, we are testing against a null hypothesis that the proportion odds assumption is true. A significant value shows that the assumption is violated. As a result, the dependent variable should be adjusted so that the assumption can be met because “use of an ordered logit model when its assumptions are violated creates a misleading impression of how the outcome and explanatory variables are related” (Williams 2016, 11).

Our second estimation of the likelihood of working the polls is dichotomous; 1=very likely to work the polls and 0=Somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, and very unlikely to work the polls. As discussed above, LEOs cannot be certain who will show up at the polls on or before Election Day. Given the episodic and irregular nature of working polls, identify those persons who express a high likelihood for working the polls would seem be the optimal strategy when planning for early and Election Day voting.

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<sup>9</sup> The results of a factor analysis of the five questions about poll worker problems at the polls produced an eigenvalue for the first extracted factor of .1 and a Cronbach's Alpha of .1.

<sup>10</sup> Age categories include: 18-25, 26-40, 41-60, 61-70, 70+

<sup>11</sup> No elections, one election, two elections, more than two elections.



#### 4. Findings

Eighty percent of respondents reported that they were very likely to work the polls in the 2022 election. In spite of high proportion of poll workers who continue express a strong interest in working the polls, there is some notable variation in this predisposition among our sample of jurisdiction. The range in the percent of respondents who reported they were ‘very likely’ to work the polls in 2022 was 33% i.e., 66.7%-98%.

[insert table 1 here]

Notwithstanding the modest variation by jurisdiction, it is clear that persons who have worked the polls in 2020 continue to have a strong interest in returning to their electoral duties in the future. This finding might seem surprising given the circumstances of the 2020 election and its aftermath. The continuing albeit diminished threat of COVID and criticism that LEOs and poll workers received from the President Trump and other election deniers should have soured many from returning to the polls. The adoption of new laws regulating in-person polling place operations and other aspects of elections similarly should have given some who had worked the polls significant pause about returning. Moreover, these findings raise doubt about the alleged paucity of persons to work the polls, with inertia in service being the predominant pattern even in an era of historic disruptions. Of course, our sample of poll workers is a convenience sample, and may not reflect the need for workers nationwide.

The skewed distribution of responses to our ordinal measure of likelihood to work the polls lends some justification for estimating a dichotomous measure of respondents’ intention to work the polls in 2022. This choice is further justified by results of the Brant test. The likelihood-ratio tests are significant ( $p < .05$ ) confirming that our ordinal measure of intent to work the polls does not meet the proportional odds assumption, further justifying use of a dichotomous dependent measure (Appendix Table A1).<sup>12</sup>

Table 2 reports the logit estimates and probabilities for our dichotomous measure indicating whether a person was “very likely” to work the polls again in 2022. Our model is weighted for the size of each jurisdiction’s electorate with fixed effects for county/jurisdiction. The latter captures differences that might arise among jurisdictions not measured in our model..

The extant literature suggests that age of the poll worker, size of the electorate, threats and harassment, a general affect about working the polls shape the decisions of poll workers to continue working. Our findings suggest a different emphasis for these correlates of working the polls. Like others (Roberts and Greenberger 2023; Bustinza et al 2022; Kimball et al., 2010) we find that age and years working the polls since the 2020 have significant and positive effects on respondent answering they are very likely to work the polls in 2022. These effects, however, are accompanied by the importance of general affect about working polls (e.g., civic obligation, support from local officials, voters and political parties), the quality of poll working training and collaborations with other workers at the polls. Unexpectedly, voter problems at the polls,

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<sup>12</sup> The Brant test was computed using the post-estimation command for testing the parallel regression assumption for ordinal dependent measures. The *oparallel* command in *Stata’s ologit* command was used to estimate the Brant test.

reported conflicts with poll watchers and voters had either an insignificant or trivial effect on poll workers' likelihood to work the polls in 2022.

Two factors, well within the control of LEOs can positively and substantially enhance the likelihood a poll worker will continue to work the polls. The likelihood of working the polls increases from chance to over 60% across the range of reported training and collaborations with other poll workers. These effects are near equal to the effects age and the number of elections worked since 2020 have on working the polls. Negative experiences working the polls have surprising muted effects on returning to the polls in 2022. Conflicts with voters only slightly diminished the respondent's enthusiasm for working the polls i.e., -.04.

Poll workers' affect about working the polls in the aftermath of the 2020 election is positive and consequential. Most persons who worked the polls in 2020 report a positive attitude about their work. Across the range of affect about working the polls we observe a .17 increase in likelihood that respondents reported they would be very likely to work the polls in the 2022 election i.e., .47 to .64. This change in probability is both substantial and consequential, moving respondents from just chance to work the polls to a near certainty of working the polls.

[insert table 2 here]

We find no support for our conditional hypotheses. Neither training nor successful poll worker collaborations lessens the negative effects that conflicts with voters have working the polls in 2022. The interaction between reported conflicts with voters at the polls and training and poll worker collaborations have statistically insignificant effects on the likelihood to work the polls. These findings further suggest that the alleged negative experiences poll workers had in the 2020 election were not consequential to their commitment to working the polls in the future

## *5. Discussion*

Our findings offer several qualifications to the extant literature on the recruitment and retention of poll workers. First, our sample of poll workers expressed little reticence to work the polls in future elections in the aftermath of the contentious 2020 election. More than 8 in 10 persons who worked the polls in 2020 said they would be very likely to work the polls in 2022 and beyond. The scarcity and difficulty to recruit and retain poll workers that emerges from surveys of LEOs (e.g., EAC) does not match what poll workers told us. Perhaps the problems of the 2020 election – the COVID pandemic and aspersions on the election system – were seen by many respondents as having dissipated sufficiently to no longer be significant deterrents. But it also seems that persistence of election workers is an important fact about their service.

Second, our correlates of working the polls and their relative importance deviate from what we have learned from previous research. Age and years working the polls have modest and positive effects on the willingness to continue working the polls. The dominate correlate of continued presence at the polls is the quality of the worker's prior experiences at the polls. Conflicts with other poll workers, voter and poll watchers, difficulty with long lines and voting equipment were all significant deterrent to working the polls in future elections. This finding is hardly surprising but would have gone undetected had we not surveyed poll workers. Even the most attentive and

empathetic LEO might not fully appreciate the problems poll workers experienced at the polls in 2020 and since. Poll workers are often recruited and trained individually without full consideration of how they will operate as team.

Our findings point to a viable strategy for recruiting and retaining reticent poll workers for future elections. Enhanced training and more deliberate and strategic staffing of in-person polling locations have been shown to enhance the likelihood of poll workers returning to the polls. Moreover, these are actions wholly within the purview of local election officials, do not require state oversight.

There remains a note of caution about our findings and the conclusions and recommendations we draw from them. The doubt we have raised about the veracity about the difficulty LEOs have in recruiting poll workers may be misplaced. Burden and Milyo (2015) offer a note of caution with using the EAC's ordinal survey measure, suggesting,

[S]ome election administrators may have a higher tolerance for lines and confusion at the polls and so report no difficulties obtaining sufficient poll workers. Other officials might mean to convey that it was difficult to find a sufficient number of competent poll workers rather than the raw number needed. Finally, just because it was a difficult process to find poll workers does not necessarily mean that there is a shortage in the end. (2015:7)

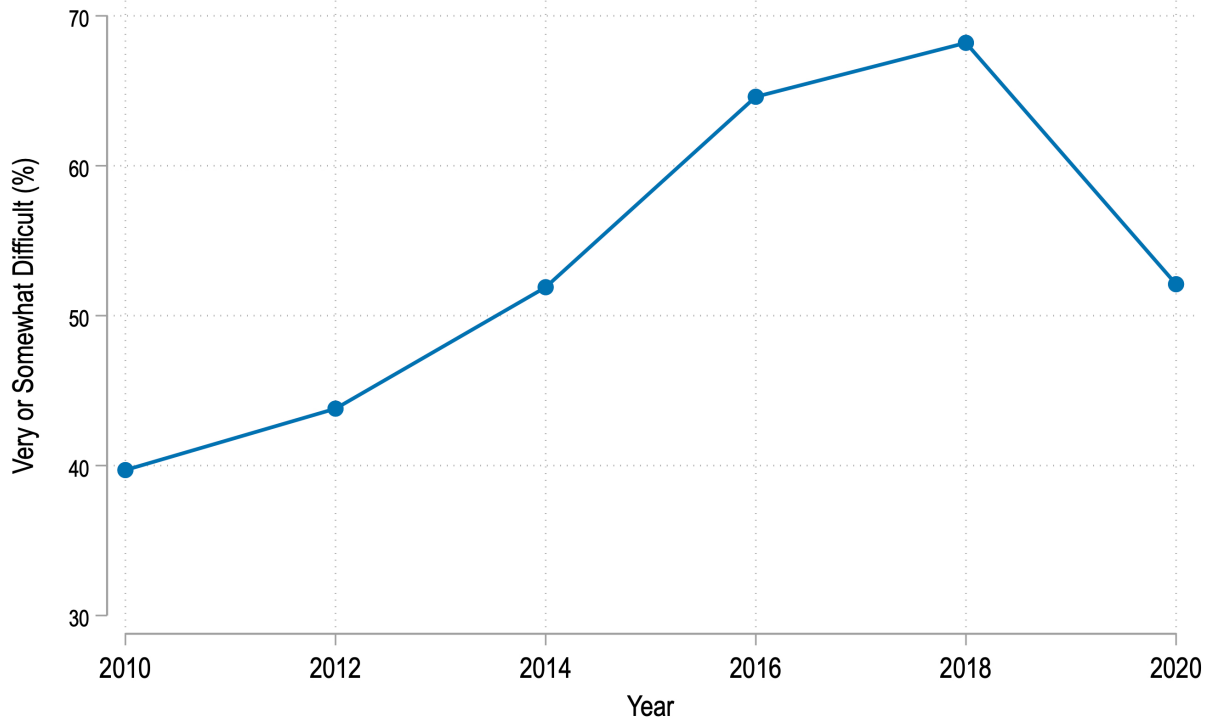
Future research needs to clarify when the difficulty LEOs report recruiting poll workers is really about recruiting experienced and qualified persons to work the polls. To this end the EAC's 2022 EAVS includes a new question on the number of persons working the polls for the first time. This question provides us with some indication of the proportion of persons working the polls who are experienced as opposed to first time poll worker. If we assume that experience matters in the performance of poll workers we might expect that reported difficulty recruiting persons to the polls will vary rise with the proportion of those working the polls for the first time.

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Figure 1: Percent of Local Election Officials who Reported “Very Difficult” Recruiting Persons to work the Polls



Source: EAC Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS). Note that different jurisdictions respond to each survey.

Table 1: Likelihood of Working the Polls in 2022

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Boston	87.0	8.0	1.1	4.0
Cambridge	73.9	9.0	10.8	6.3
Charleston	71.8	13.7	4.0	10.6
Charlottesville	75.8	8.8	6.6	8.8
Cibola	87.5	0.0	0.0	12.5
Dona Ana	98.3	0.0	0.0	1.8
Fairfax	85.1	8.5	2.1	4.3
Fairfield	66.7	23.1	10.3	0.0
Fresno	95.3	2.4	1.2	1.2
Grand Rapids	77.9	9.1	3.9	9.1
Harris	89.5	10.6	0.0	0.0
Lansing	76.3	8.8	3.5	11.4
Los Alamos	83.9	6.5	0.0	9.7
Milwaukee	79.8	6.9	4.4	8.9
Otero	92.3	0.0	0.0	7.7
St Louis City	67.0	14.6	5.8	12.6
St Louis County	75.5	3.8	4.9	15.8
Wellesley	90.9	4.6	0.0	4.6
Total	80.6	8.5	3.2	7.8

Table 2: Logit estimates for likelihood to work the polls in 2022

VARIABLES	Coefficient	Probability: Low High	$\Delta$ Probability
Elections worked since 2020	0.974*** (0.0519)	.25 .68	.43
Age	0.249*** (0.0502)	.51 .62	.11
Affect about working the polls	0.473*** (0.122)	.47 .64	.17
Training	0.231** (0.106)	.53 .61	.08
Collaboration with other workers	0.294*** (0.102)	.54 .61	.07
Voter problems	0.112 (0.130)	-	-
Conflicts with poll watchers	0.0135 (0.185)	-	-
Conflict with voters	-0.352** (0.161)	.55 .51	.04
Constant	-5.519*** (0.694)		
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.499		
Observations	4,233		

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Fixed effects for jurisdiction



Appendix:

Order Logit Model: Test of Parallel Regression Assumption

Number of Obs=4,125

LR Chi<sup>2</sup> (8)=360.63

Prob . Chi2=.000

Pseudo R<sup>2</sup>=.063

	Coef	Std. Err.	Z	P> z
Elections worked since 2020	-0.644	0.055	-11.810	0.000
Age	-0.193	0.040	-4.860	0.000
Affect about working the polls	-0.739	0.096	-7.670	0.000
Training	0.103	0.067	1.530	0.126
Collaboration with other workers	0.119	0.060	2.000	0.046
Voter problems	0.050	0.075	0.660	0.508
Conflict with poll watchers	0.042	0.158	0.260	0.792
Conflict with voters	-0.325	0.119	-2.730	0.006
/cut1	-2.004	0.384		
/cut2	-1.308	0.383		
/cut3	-0.883	0.384		

Tests of the parallel regression  
assumption

	Chi <sup>2</sup>	df	P >Chi <sup>2</sup>
Wolfe Gould	127.2	16	0
Brant	88.88	16	0
score	97.35	16	0
likelihood ratio	101.5	16	0
Wald	105.1	16	0

### Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Very likely to work the polls	5,761	0.53	0.50	0	1
Elections worked since 2020:					
None	5,458	0.13	0.33	0	1
1 election	5,458	0.22	0.42	0	1
2 elections	5,458	0.16	0.37	0	1
More than..	5,458	0.49	0.50	0	1
Age:					
18-25	4,888	0.02	0.15	0	1
26-40	4,888	0.13	0.33	0	1
41-60	4,888	0.27	0.44	0	1
61-70	4,888	0.31	0.46	0	1
71+	4,888	0.27	0.44	0	1
Affect about working the polls	5,201	3.00	0.46	1	4
Training	5,122	3.19	0.77	1	4
Collaboration with other workers	4,598	3.26	0.93	1	4
Voter Problems	4,584	3.39	0.65	1	4
Conflict with poll watchers:	4,754	0.07	0.25	0	1
Conflict with voters:	4,754	0.18	0.38	0	1

Poll Worker Sample and Completed Interviews by  
Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Sample	Completes
Lansing City, MI	650	132
Grand Rapids, MI	689	236
City of Boston, MA	2,200	601
Town of Wessley, MA	82	29
Cambridge, City, MA	326	136
Fairfield, CT	159	47
Charlottesville, VA	415	101
Charleston, SC	3,350	657
Fresno, CA	319	103
St. Louis City, MO	2,108	244
St. Louis County, MO	2,364	1,009
Lubbock, TX	200	95
Milwaukee, WI	4,580	1,033
Fairfax City, VA	107	69
Dana Ano, NM	221	73
Harris, TX	3,500	1,152
Otero, NM	104	13
Los Alamos, NM	126	32
Cibola, NM	79	9
	21,579	5,771