Designing for the Voter Experience
Learning from Voters

Whitney Quesenbery
Center for Civic Design
@civicdesign | @whitneyq | civicdesign.org

Future of California Elections 2016
February 25, Los Angeles
Make voters feel like experts...not students

"Human-Centered Design for the Voting Experience" Stanford Social Innovation Review
How long will I have to be there?
- New citizen, Pasadena

I don't know too much about voting. That's why I stopped doing it.
- 21 year old, Modesto

I do have one question. What do you actually do when you vote?
- 18 year old, Baltimore
Election terminology is a barrier to bridging the civic literacy gap

Information gaps
There are options for how and when you vote
You can get a new ballot if you make a mistake
The whole idea of provisional ballots
You can vote if you are in line when the polls close
You can vote after a conviction for a felony
What is a primary election?
Trying to explain primaries
## How to vote in a primary election

All voters can vote in the primary election. A primary election in June chooses the candidates who will run in the General Election in November. You may see three different types of primaries on your ballot.

### The way each primary works depends on the office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>Nominated by party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Top-Two Primary</td>
<td>Nominated by voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County or Local Offices</td>
<td>Non-partisan Primary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Who can vote in each type of primary election?

- **Only voters who registered in the same political party** as the candidate can vote for these offices. Some parties allow voters who registered with no party preference to vote in their primary.
- All voters can vote for any candidate running for these offices.
- All voters can vote for any candidate running for these offices.

### Which offices are in each type of primary?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Candidates’ party preference</th>
<th>Candidates’ party preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. President</td>
<td><strong>always</strong> appears on the ballot</td>
<td><strong>always</strong> never appears on the ballot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the parties also nominate candidates for County Central Committees and County Councils</td>
<td>U.S. Representative U.S. Senator Governor and Lt. Governor State Senator State Assembly Member Other state offices including Treasurer, Secretary of State, Attorney General</td>
<td>County Supervisor Other county offices including Sheriff, County Clerk, Recorder - Assessor Municipal Offices School Districts Superior Court Judges State Superintendent of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What is the result of each type of primary election?

- **The winner of each party’s Presidential primary** will help select who will represent that political party in the General Election.
- **The top two candidates with the most votes** move on to the General Election. They may have the same party preference.
- Candidates who receive **50% plus 1 vote** are elected. Or, if no candidate wins, **the two candidates with the most votes** move on to the General Election.

---

The secret is usability testing

With many different types of voters

Senior centers, public libraries, county offices, schools, cultural centers
How voters get information:
Best practices manual and webinars
https://cavotes.org/download-best-practices-manual

Resources for creating voter guides
Templates, guides and samples
http://civicdesign.org/resources-for-creating-voter-guides/

Field Guides to Ensuring Voter Intent
10 volumes of design guidelines for election design
http://civicdesign.org/fieldguides/
Thank you.