

FINAL  
REPORT

Application of the New Voter Identification  
Procedures under Bill C-31 for the  
September 17 Federal By-elections in  
Quebec

Evaluation Synthesis

*Prepared for:*

Elections Canada

Report date: January 15, 2008



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# CONTENTS

Executive summary.....	i
Introduction .....	1
Communications Campaign.....	3
Identification Methods Used by Voters .....	7
Effects of New ID Requirements on Voting Process.....	10
Training of Election Officers Regarding New ID Requirements .....	16
Conclusions and Recommendations .....	18

## Appendices:

- A. Sources used for the evaluation
- B. Logic Model used for the evaluation



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Research Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the evaluation is to answer a number of key questions regarding the implementation of the new identification requirements under Bill C-31. More specifically, the following questions guided the evaluation:

- How did voters satisfy the voter identification requirements?
- Did the new procedures disrupt the timing and flow of voting?
- Did the training provided enable election workers to efficiently apply the new procedures?  
and
- Did the communication campaign generate elector awareness and understanding of the new requirements?

### **Key Findings**

The following summarizes key findings from the research. Where appropriate, key differences by electoral district are highlighted.

### **Attitudes Towards Voter ID Requirements**

- More than nine in ten electors had a positive attitude regarding the requirement that electors prove their identity when voting, with two-thirds having a very positive attitude toward the requirement. Only two percent characterized their attitude as “very negative”.
- Only four percent of those who did not vote felt that this was in any way related to the new identification requirements.

### **Communications Campaign**

- In terms of the communications vehicles that were targeted to households, more than eight in ten eligible voters (nine in ten among voters) recalled receiving the Voter Information Card (VIC), while six in ten recalled the Householder. One in five who received the Householder at least partly understood the messaging regarding the new ID requirements.

- In terms of the mass media communications used to communicate the Bill C-31 requirements, about half of eligible voters recalled the newspaper ads, while a similar proportion recalled the radio ads. About one in ten among those who recalled the ads at least partly understood the messaging regarding the new ID requirements.
- Overall, reach for all communications vehicles was greater in Roberval and in St-Hyacinthe than in Outremont. The reach for Roberval and St-Hyacinthe was higher than the average seen for past elections<sup>1</sup>. However, the reach in Outremont was at or below the average seen in past elections.
- A large majority of voters (over nine in ten) felt that they were very well informed about the new ID requirements before going to the polls, although poll staff had a somewhat less positive view of the extent to which voters were well-informed about the new requirements.
- One-third remembered noticing, inside the polling station, a large poster explaining the three identification options allowing electors to vote.

## Identification Methods Used by Voters

- Virtually all those who went to the polls reported having proper ID upon arrival. About eight in ten voters used an Option 1 ID (photo ID showing name and residential address), most often a driver's license. Most of the remainder used Option 2 IDs (no photo), with only one percent being vouched for by another elector.
- There were no major differences by district; however, Outremont residents had access to some IDs that met the Option 1 requirements, other than a driver's license and some Outremont residents used these IDs instead of a driver's license.
- A number of voters who reported using two IDs said that one of them was a driver's license. Clearly these voters were not aware that the driver's license was sufficient by itself.
- About one-third of voters *considered* using the VIC as identification. A majority of deputy returning officers report having seen voters try to use the VIC as identification at least a few times, with one in five percent reporting that they saw this often. Officers in Outremont were

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<sup>1</sup> Past federal by-elections used as a reference baseline are Saskatoon, Mount Royal (1999) St. John's West, Okanagan—Coquihalla, Kings—Hants (2000), Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, Berthier—Montcalm (2003).

more likely to report having seen this. In fact, five percent of electors reported actually attempting to use their VIC to identify themselves.

## **Effects of New ID Requirements on Voting Process**

- Three-quarters of those who went to the polls recalled being asked to prepare ID in advance. Outremont voters were somewhat less likely to recall being asked to prepare ID in advance.
- More than eight in ten voters felt that the new ID requirements did not adversely affect the time required to vote; only three percent felt that the new requirements had a significant impact on voting time.
- More than nine in ten voters were satisfied with the election officers who verified their identification and a similar proportion felt that meeting the new requirements was easy. Outremont voters were somewhat less likely than others to say they were very satisfied, but were no less satisfied on an overall basis.
- Only six percent of those who went to the polling station reported any specific problem with identity verification.
- Elections officers were more likely than were voters to see a negative effect of the new requirements on the efficiency of the voting process; however, a majority felt that the new requirements did not slow down voting and only 7% saw a significant impact, usually only during peak periods.
- Almost all election officers felt that the overall process of voter identification went well and two-thirds felt it went very well.
- Two-thirds of election officers did not personally encounter any specific problems related to voter identification. Election officers in Outremont were more likely to report such problems. Lack of ID and lack of proof of residential address were the most common problems reported. Just over one in ten ever had to consult the Returning Officer to resolve a specific problem.
- About six in ten election officers had to deal with voters annoyed by the new ID requirements at least a few times, but only one in ten had to do so often.

- Deputy returning officers rarely had to refuse a ballot due to an ID-related issue. Two-thirds never had to do so and only 15 percent had to do so more than once. Overall, deputy returning officers refused an average of less than one ballot each for reasons related to the new identification requirements.

### **Adequacy of Training of Election Officers Regarding New ID Requirements**

- More than six in ten election officers felt they very well trained, with most of the remainder reporting that they were somewhat well trained.
- The post-mortem meeting with election officers did not reveal any specific training-related problems that impacted the adequacy of preparations to implement the new ID requirements.
- Almost all (89%) Deputy Returning Officers claimed it was at least somewhat easy to fill out the “Summary Report” listing the identification pieces used by electors. Only one percent found it very difficult to complete. Few specific complaints were noted: four percent of all Deputy Returning Officers mentioned that the report was long to complete, while two percent indicated it was not very clear.



## INTRODUCTION

### Background

With the coming into force of Bill C-31, electors are now required to prove their identity and residential address before voting in federal elections. This can be done by providing either: (a) one piece of government-issued photo identification showing both the elector's name and residential address, or (b) two pieces of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, each of which establishes the elector's name and at least one of which establishes his or her residential address. If an elector is unable to provide the required documents, he or she may instead take an oath and be vouched for by another elector whose name is on the list of electors for the same polling division, and who has the necessary identification to establish his or her identity and residential address.

As these requirements were in effect for the September 17, 2007 by-elections in Quebec (held in the Outremont, Roberval–Lac-St-Jean and St-Hyacinthe–Bagot districts), Elections Canada has developed an evaluation framework to determine:

- How voters satisfied the voter identification requirements;
- If the new procedures disrupted the timing and flow of voting;
- If the training provided enabled election workers to efficiently apply the new procedures; and
- If the communication campaign generated elector awareness and understanding of the new requirements.

In order to answer these questions, Elections Canada commissioned specific surveys with electors and election officers and undertook other data collection activities, as outlined in the document *Evaluation Framework of the C-31 New Requirements*. A copy of this document is presented as Appendix B to this report.

### Objectives

The objective of this secondary analysis and synthesis is to bring together the key research results from across the various lines of evidence identified in the evaluation framework and to relate these back to the key outcomes in Elections Canada's *Bill C-31 Implementation Logic Model* (a copy of which is included as Appendix B to this report). In particular, the analysis will determine the extent to which the following results have been achieved:

- Eligible voters understand the voter ID and vouching requirements that must be met to cast a vote;
- Media outlets/representatives understand the voter ID and vouching requirements; and
- Poll site staff understand and know how to apply the procedures for verifying eligibility of voters.

This report begins with an executive summary outlining key findings and conclusions. The body of the report presents a detailed synthesis of the available data and a section devoted to major conclusions and recommendations stemming from the evaluative synthesis.

Unless otherwise noted, all results are expressed as a percentage.

## COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

The communications campaign revolving around the new identification requirements under Bill C-31 for the September 17, 2007 by-elections had four major components. Two of these components were targeted to the household and two to the mass-market. The two targeted communications vehicles were:

1. The Voter Information Card (VIC), which was sent to every registered voter in the electoral districts over the period August 22-24, 2007; and
2. The Householder, a brochure that was sent to every household in the districts over the period August 31 and September 3-4.

The two mass market components of the communications campaign were:

1. Radio advertising (in three flights: August 20-24, August 31-September 7, and September 13-17); and
2. Newspaper advertising (in two flights: August 30-September 1 and September 13-15).

### Targeted Communications Vehicles

**More than eight in ten eligible voters recalled receiving the Voter Information Card (VIC), while six in ten recalled the Householder. One in five recipients of the Householder understood the messaging regarding the new ID requirements.**

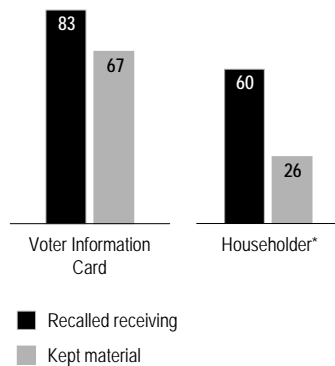
Overall recall of the VIC among eligible voters in the three ridings (including unaided and aided awareness) stood at 83 percent. (Among voters, 94 percent recalled receiving the VIC.) Awareness in Outremont was about as strong as that seen in past by-elections<sup>2</sup> for the VIC.

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<sup>2</sup> Past federal by-elections used as a reference baseline are Saskatoon, Mount Royal (1999) St. John's West, Okanagan—Coquihalla, Kings—Hants (2000), Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, Berthier—Montcalm (2003).

### Awareness of targeted communications

All districts combined 2007



In Roberval and St-Hyacinthe, awareness was above the average level seen in past by-elections. Two-thirds of all eligible voters reported keeping the VIC.

In the case of the Householder, six in ten (60%) of eligible voters recalled receiving it, with one-quarter reporting having kept it. Again, awareness of the Householder for the three districts is higher than the average of past by-elections, especially for Roberval and St-Hyacinthe. One in five (20%) among those who recalled the Householder clearly or partly understood the messaging related to the new voter identification procedures (based on unprompted recall). This is about double the comparable figures for the mass media advertising vehicles used (newspaper and radio).

There were no significant problems with the clarity of the information and the format of the householder. More than nine in ten among those who recalled the Householder felt it was clearly presented (91%), used language that was easy to understand (94%) and was in an appropriate format (92%).

### One-third of eligible voters who went to the polls noticed the poster explaining the identification options.

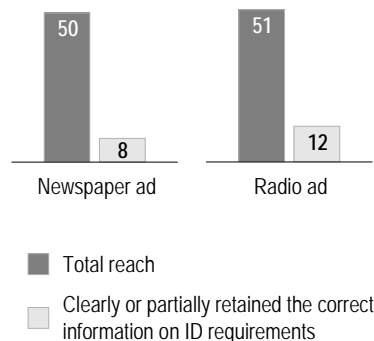
The final element of the targeted communications campaign was a poster displayed at the polls explaining the three identification options. One-third (33%) of those who went to the polling station said they noticed this poster. The poster was noticed more frequently by the youngest respondents (49% of those 18-24 years of age).

## Mass-media Communications Vehicles

**Both the newspaper and radio ads reached about half of eligible voters. About one in twenty of those recalling the ads understood the messaging related to the new ID requirements.**

Overall, total reach of the newspaper and radio ads was quite similar, with both reaching just over half of eligible voters. For both types of mass media communications used, reach was highest in Roberval, somewhat lower in St-Hyacinthe and much lower in Outremont. For the newspaper advertising, reach was higher than comparable past by-elections for Roberval and St-Hyacinthe, but was lower for Outremont.

**Awareness of mass media communications**  
All districts combined 2007



About one in twenty clearly or partly understood the messaging related to the new voter identification procedures (based on unprompted recall), a much lower level than that seen for the Householder.

## Communications Effectiveness

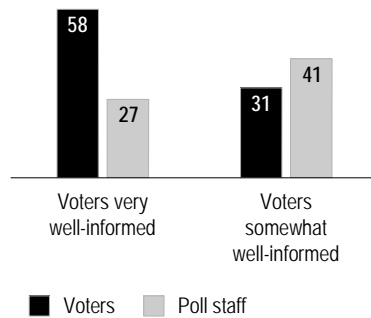
**More than nine in ten voters knew about the new ID requirements before going to the polling station and almost as many felt well-informed about the methods of identification they could use. Election officers were less likely to feel that voters were well-informed.**

What was the impact of these communications efforts in terms of voter awareness of the new identification requirement? Among those who went to the polling station, more than nine in ten (92%) reported that they knew, before going to the polling station, that they had to bring documents to prove their identity and residential address. In addition, almost nine voters in ten indicated that they felt that they were very (58%) or somewhat (31%) well-informed about how to identify

themselves at the polling station. Electors from Roberval were more likely than others to feel very well-informed.

### Perceived level of information about methods of identification

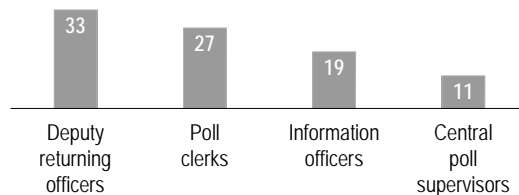
All districts combined 2007



Election officers had a somewhat less positive view of the extent to which voters were well-informed as to the new identification requirements and the acceptable pieces of identification. Although two-thirds felt that voters were at least somewhat well-informed, only one-quarter characterized them as very well-informed.

### Perception of voters as very well-informed

By poll staff type 2007



Information officers and central poll supervisors were least likely to feel that voters were very well-informed.

## IDENTIFICATION METHODS USED BY VOTERS

The second element of the evaluation of the new voter identification methods in place for the September 17, 2007 federal by-elections is an analysis of the forms of identification actually used by voters in these elections. The data for this portion of the evaluation come from two major sources. The first is the tally sheets used by elections officers at the polls and the second is voter self-reports from the survey of electors. Although the tally sheets are potentially the most accurate source of information on the identification methods actually used by voters at the polls, their application for the three by-elections in question was not entirely problem-free (as is described in more detail in the Evaluation Methodology section of this report). However accurate the tally sheets, there is still value in the voter self-report data, as it can highlight voter perceptions of the IDs used in ways that a simple tally cannot.

### Identification methods used based on tallies at the polls

**According to the tally sheets recorded at the polls, eight in ten voters used an Option 1 ID (usually a driver's license), while most of the remainder used an Option 2 ID. Only 1% of voters were vouched and about two in one *thousand* electors reported having left without voting.**

Overall, four out of five voters (80%) used an **Option 1 ID** (one issued by a government or government agency and containing a photo, name and residential address). In a large majority of cases, this ID was a driver's license (73%).

Voters could also use two so-called **Option 2 IDs**. Both Option 2 IDs must be authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada and both must contain the elector's name. One of the two IDs must also contain the elector's residential address. Virtually all of the voters who did not use an Option 1 ID (19% of all voters) used Option 2 IDs. The most commonly-used Option 2 IDs were hospital or health cards (10% of all voters) and utility bills (12% of all voters).

The remaining 1% of voters used the **Option 3 ID** – to swear an oath and be vouched for by a registered elector in the same polling division who has acceptable ID.

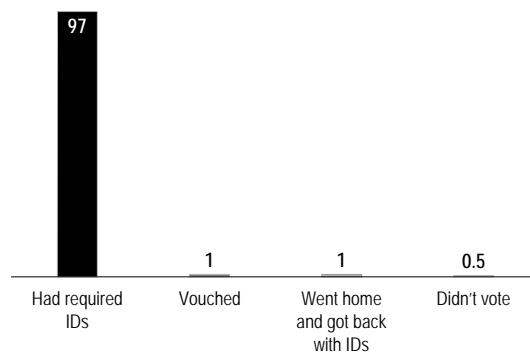
Over the three electoral districts, only 159 electors out of the nearly 73,000 counted by the tally sheets (or about 0.2%) left without voting.

## Identification methods used based on voter self-reports

Virtually all those who went to the polls had the correct ID and voter self-reports of ID methods used are in broad agreement with the tally sheet data, although voters often reported using a driver's license along with a second ID.

Virtually all those who went to the polls (97%) reported having the required identification at the poll. About one percent reported they did not have the correct identification, but went back home, got it and returned to the poll. An equal proportion were vouched at the poll (consistent with the tally sheet data) and only half of one percent did not vote (again, consistent with the tally sheet data).

**Incidence of correct identification at the poll**  
All districts combined 2007



Generally, voter self-reports as to IDs used in the voting process are broadly consistent with the tallies taken at the polls. The driver's license was by far the most commonly-used ID, with 80 percent reporting having used this type of identification.



**Types of identification used at the polls**  
based on voter self-reports 2007

	%
Driver's license	80
Health card	38
Hospital card	6
Voter Information Card *	5
Utility bill	3
Passport	2
SIN card	2
Public transportation card	1
Citizenship Card	1

*\* Despite the fact that the VIC is not an authorized piece of identification, 34% of voters (40% in Outremont) reported that they considered using it as such and 5% reported having done so.*

Use of health/hospital cards is somewhat over-reported in comparison to the tally sheet data

An important finding emerging from the voter self-reports is the proportion of voters who used two IDs, one of which was the driver's license. Of the voters who indicated using two IDs, more than seven in ten used a driver's license as one of the two. Of course, the driver's license is sufficient identification by itself, so the fact that such a high proportion presented a second ID shows that there were a number of voters who did not know that a driver's license alone would have been sufficient.

## EFFECTS OF NEW ID REQUIREMENTS ON VOTING PROCESS

The third major element of the evaluation of the new identification requirements in place for the September 17, 2007 by-elections is the effects of the new requirements on the voting process. Did the new requirements slow down voting or otherwise adversely affect voter satisfaction with the voting process? This is a key element, as any change that significantly impacts satisfaction with the act of voting runs the risk of negatively impacting elector participation for future elections.

To ensure all viewpoints were considered in the evaluation of the impact of the new requirements on the voting process, the perspectives of both voters and elections officers were assessed.

### Attitude Towards Voter ID Requirements

**The vast majority of electors had a positive attitude towards the idea of voters having to prove their identity and only four percent of those who did not vote indicated that this was in any way connected to the new ID requirements.**

Respondents to the survey of electors were asked how they felt about the idea of electors having to prove their identity in order to vote. More than nine in ten respondents said that their attitude towards the idea of electors having to prove their identity when voting at a federal election is positive, with two-thirds (68%) having a very positive attitude. Almost no one (2%) reported that their attitude towards the new identification procedures is “very negative”.

Respondents from Outremont, those with higher levels of education, and voters were most likely to report a “very positive” attitude. On the other hand, electors from Roberval, and those with lower education levels were the least likely to feel very positive about the new requirements.

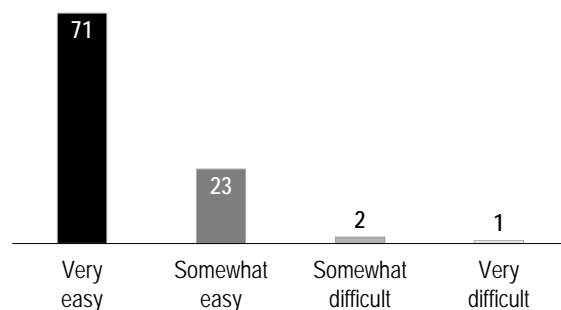
Among those few respondents who had a negative attitude towards the new requirements, the most frequently mentioned reasons related to the “veiled women” cases for which ID documents cannot prove their identity (most often mentioned in Outremont and Saint-Hyacinthe), followed by the “uselessness of the requirements when everybody knows each other” (especially mentioned in Roberval).

Among those who reported they did not vote, only four percent indicated that their not voting was *in any way* related to the new identification requirements. It is important to note that this does not mean that the new requirements prevented these individuals from voting; they may not have voted even in the absence of new regulations.

**A large majority of voters reported that the new ID requirements were easy to meet.**

Virtually all of those who went to the polling station generally felt that meeting the new identification requirements was easy. More than nine in ten (95%) said it was at least somewhat easy to meet the new requirements, with seven in ten (71%) considering it very easy. There were no differences between districts in terms of the perceived ease of meeting the new identification requirements.

**Ease of meeting new identification requirements**  
All districts combined 2007

**Voters' perspectives on impacts of new requirements on voting**

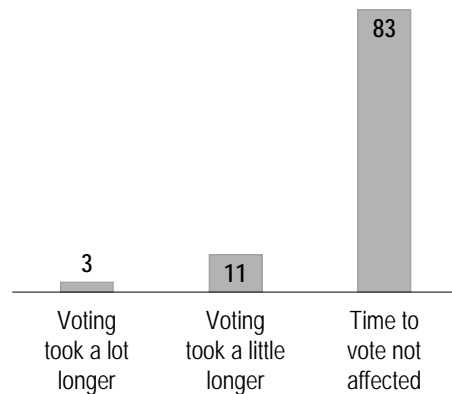
**More than eight in ten felt the new ID requirements did not adversely affect the time required to vote. Only three percent felt voting took a lot longer.**

One important aspect of the voting process that has a direct impact on satisfaction with the process is the amount of time required to vote. As part of the evaluation of the new ID requirements, those who reported going to the polls were asked whether they felt that the new requirements affected the time taken to vote.

Overall, more than eight in ten (83%) did not feel that the time taken to vote was adversely affected by the new identification requirements. Only three percent felt that voting took a lot longer; the remainder felt that the impact on voting time was minor. Furthermore, the time of day when voting occurred did not have any relationship to perceptions of the impact of the new identification requirements on the time required to cast a ballot.

### Impact of new requirements on time required to vote

All districts combined 2007



**Only about one voter in twenty reported specific problems related to the new identification procedures.**

Very few of those who went to the polling station reported encountering any difficulties that were related to the new identification requirements. Only six percent reported any such problems, with no one specific type of problem standing out. Reports of problems did not vary by district.

### Election officers' perspectives on impacts of new requirements on voting

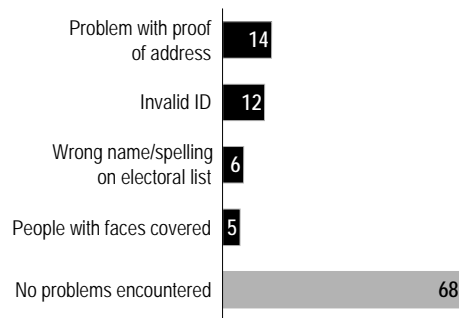
**Almost all election officers felt the identification of voters generally went well and two-thirds did not encounter any specific problems. Lack of ID or proof of address were the most frequent problems encountered.**

In terms of overall satisfaction, more than nine election officers in ten (94%) felt that the identification of voters during the vote went well, with almost two-thirds (64%) saying it went very well. In addition, three-quarters of election officers (74%) characterized voter reaction to the new requirements as “favourable”, with one in three (29%) saying it was “very favourable”.

Not surprisingly, election officers were more likely than were voters to report specific problems at the polls. As they were at the polls for extended periods, they had more opportunity to observe problems arise. Even so, more than two-thirds (68%) did not personally experience any specific problems. The most common problems reported were problems with proof of address (14%) and lack of valid ID (12%). Election officers working in Outremont were more likely to report problems.

### Specific problems personally encountered

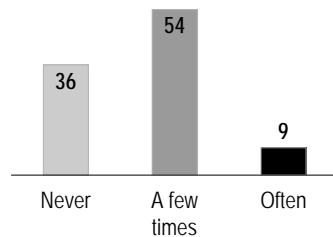
All election officers 2007



Most election officers reported having to deal with a voter annoyed by the new identification requirements at least once: more than half dealt with such voters “a few times”; however, only 9% had to deal with such voters often.

### Frequency of dealing with voters annoyed by new requirements

All election officers 2007



Just over one in ten (14%) ever had to consult the Returning Officer to resolve a specific problem related to the new identification requirements and only one percent had to do so “often.”

**About four in ten election officers felt that voting took longer because of the new ID requirements, although few felt the impact was severe.**

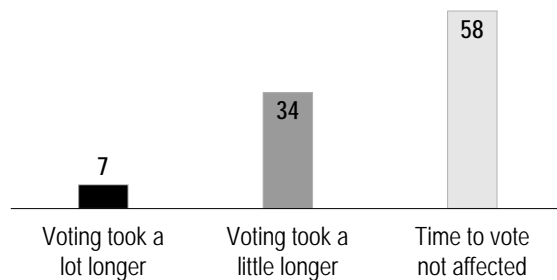
The experiences of election officers are a key component of the evaluation of the impact of the new identification requirements on the voting process. Overall, 41% had previous experience working at a poll, providing a reference point against which the new ID requirements could be assessed.

As with the voters, the opinions of election officers were sought regarding the impact of the new requirements on the time required for the voter to cast their ballot.

Election officers were somewhat more likely than were voters to feel that the new identification requirements slowed down the voting process. This is not surprising, as the election officers are at

the polling station for a longer period and, therefore, have more of an opportunity to see problems that might delay the voting process for an individual voter. Overall, about four in ten (41%) of election officers felt that the voting process took at least a little longer than normal, although less than one in ten (7%) felt the process took a lot longer. Most of those who felt the voting process took longer believed that slowdowns took place only during peak periods; only 12 percent of election officers perceived that voting took longer throughout the day.

**Impact of new identification requirements on time required to vote**  
All election officers 2007

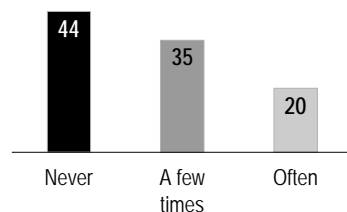


**Most deputy returning officers reported that they saw voters attempting to use the VIC as ID on occasion, with one in five saying they saw it happen often.**

It was noted earlier that about one-third voters reported that they at least considered using their VIC as a piece of identification and a small proportion of voters (about one in twenty) reported using (or attempting to use) the VIC in this way. Deputy returning officers were asked their perception of how frequently this happened as part of the assessment of problems during the voting process.

A majority of deputy returning officers reported that they observed voters trying to use the VIC as identification often (20%) or a few times (35%). Officers working in Outremont were more likely than others election officers to see voters attempt to use the VIC as identification.

**Frequency of voter attempts to use VIC as identification**  
Deputy returning officers 2007

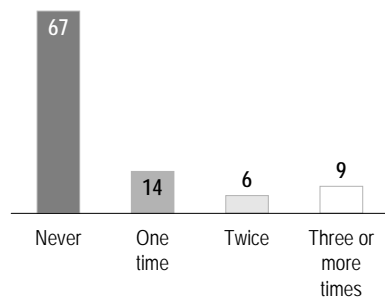


**Two-thirds of deputy returning officers never had to refuse a ballot based on the new ID requirements. Overall, deputy returning officers refused an average of less than one ballot each for reasons related to the new identification requirements.**

Deputy returning officers were also asked how often they had to refuse a ballot because the elector in question could not meet the identification requirements.

Two-thirds of the deputy returning officers reported that they never had to refuse a ballot for reasons related to the new identification requirements and only 15 percent had to do so more than once.

**Frequency of refusing ballot due to identification problem**  
Deputy returning officers 2007



## TRAINING OF ELECTION OFFICERS REGARDING NEW ID REQUIREMENTS

The fourth major aspect of the evaluation of the implementation of the Bill C-31 identification requirements during the September 17 by-elections in Quebec looked at the adequacy of the training of election officers to implement the Bill C-31 provisions.

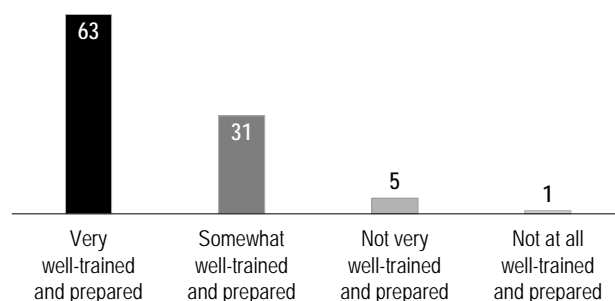
This aspect of the evaluation is the one for which the least data exist. Only one question on the Createc+ Survey of Election Officers bore directly on this issue. Another question looked at the reporting requirements for deputy returning officers. The only other piece of relevant data is the minutes of a post-mortem meeting held with Field Liaison Officers, Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers and Training Officers in relation to the application of Bill C-31 in the by-elections, and this document is mostly silent on issues related to perceived adequacy of training.

### Perceived adequacy of preparation for new identification requirements

**More than six in ten election officers said they were very well trained in the new ID procedures and the post-mortem meeting did not reveal any specific problems impacting adequacy of preparation for the new requirements.**

More than six in ten (63%) election officers felt they were very well trained for implementing the new identification requirements for electors, with an additional three in ten (31%) indicating that they were somewhat well trained. These findings did not vary by type of election officer.

**Perceived adequacy of training**  
All election officers 2007



The post-mortem meeting of election officers did not highlight any perceived inadequacies in the training provided. It noted that the training for deputy returning officers and poll clerks was about 30 minutes longer than normal and that there were “no major difficulties to report.” However, the



post-mortem did note that these officers were not satisfied with the amount of pay they received for training.

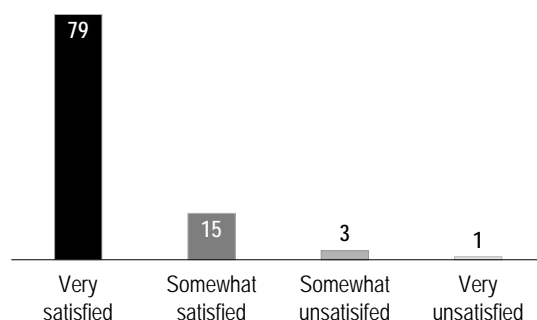
The deputy returning officers had to complete a summary report (tally sheet) listing the pieces of identification used by electors. Nine in ten of these officers reported that this report was very easy (50%) or somewhat easy (39%) to prepare. No specific problems in completing this report were mentioned by even five percent of deputy returning officers.

**More than nine in ten voters were satisfied with the election officers tasked with informing them of the new requirements and verifying their identification documents.**

Overall, three-quarters (74%) of those who went to the polling station recalled being asked to prepare their identification documents prior to voting. Outremont voters were somewhat less likely (67%) to recall being asked to prepare their ID.

Well over nine in ten (95%) of those who went to the polling station expressed satisfaction with the election officers who asked for and verified voter identity prior to voting. A very high eight in ten (79%) were very satisfied. Outremont voters were somewhat less likely to say they were very satisfied (73%), but were no less likely to express overall satisfaction.

**Satisfaction with elections officers who verified identity**  
All districts combined 2007



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Implementation of the New Identification Procedures

The findings of this evaluation indicate that, in broad terms, the implementation of Bill C-31 identification requirements in the September 17, 2007 Quebec by-elections went smoothly. The communications campaign appeared to be effective, as reach was (except in Outremont) higher than normally seen for election advertising. More importantly, the vast majority of voters felt adequately informed about the new requirements before going to the polls, although only about one in five could specifically recall the content of Elections Canada's advertising (householder and mass media alike).

At the polls, identification generally proceeded smoothly. Although election officers saw (mostly minor) slowdowns due to the new identification procedures and some officers had to deal with electors annoyed with new procedures, voters generally were satisfied with the efficiency of the voting process and with the operation on the new identification procedures.

Most voters used an Option 1 ID (in the large majority of cases, a driver's license) and few reported any specific problems related to identification. There was some confusion about the Voter Information Card, as election officers reported that voters sometimes tried to use the VIC as identification, and many voters said they considered using it for identification purposes. In addition, there is evidence that voters were not always aware that a driver's license was sufficient identification by itself.

Most elections officers reported that they were very well trained in the new procedures and only a handful felt they were not well trained. No specific issues related to the adequacy of training were reported.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the following recommendations are provided for consideration:

1. Apart from the Voter Information Card, communications referencing the VIC should put more emphasis on the fact that it is not an acceptable piece of ID. It is possible that references in the communications campaign that the voter should bring the VIC to the polling station were misinterpreted by some as meaning that it could help with the identity verification process.

2. The communications campaign should emphasize that a driver's license, by itself, is adequate identification. Although presentation of a second piece of identification along with the driver's license has no negative impact on the verification of a voter's identity, the possibility exists that some voters may have stayed away from the polls because they did not think they had a valid second piece of ID to present along with the driver's license.
3. Training of election officers should emphasize proper completion of the tally sheet. Although it is not unusual for errors to occur the first time a new reporting requirement is used, the tally sheet data is designed to be the primary source of data on the types of identification used. Therefore, correct completion of this sheet is critical. Training in future implementations should use the deficiencies seen in the September 17, 2007 by-elections as examples of the types of errors that can occur.

## **Evaluation of Identification Procedures**

Methodologically, the data sources used for the evaluation were adequate to complete the task. The core data sources were the three telephone surveys (two by Createc+ and one by Impact Research) and all three were sufficiently sound methodologically to be considered reliable sources of data.

It should be noted that a weakness of telephone surveys of voter behaviour is that respondents tend to over-report voting. Therefore, some respondents provide an evaluation of a voting experience that they did not, in fact, have. One way to adequately address this deficiency is through some kind of exit poll. Although this methodology does ensure that only people who actually voted participate, these types of polls are subject to significant methodological deficiencies of their own (mostly related to coverage issues). In addition, exit polls would exclude non-voters from the study. On balance, we feel that the strengths of the telephone survey approach outweigh its weaknesses in this context.

The Impact Research Study took the form of a pre- and post-assessment of the advertising related to the new voter ID requirements. This is a standard technique to assess the effectiveness of an advertising campaign. However, usually the pre-assessment takes place prior to the start of the campaign to give a baseline measure of awareness, to which the post-assessment level (after the campaign has ended) is compared. Because by-elections are by nature unpredictable in their timing, this standard method of assessing the effectiveness of an advertising campaign is usually impractical; the announcement of a by-election immediately sensitizes the public to the event and makes a "true" pre-assessment impossible.

Given this fact, the optimal assessment of the effectiveness of an advertising campaign such as that assessed here (designed to increase awareness of the new voter ID requirements) is one conducted just prior to polling day. An assessment at this point in time would show the level of awareness of the new requirements attributable to the communications campaign only (and not the act of voting itself).

The survey of election officers conducted by Createc+ was designed as a census. However, only 71% of the officers contacted actually participated in the survey. Given the small size of the population (1,576 officers), the resultant sample of 1,112 officers provides a very small margin of sampling error ( $\pm 1.3\%$ , according to Createc+). If this study had been conceptualized as a sample survey with a target sample of  $n=500$ , the margin of error would still be acceptable ( $\pm 3.6\%$ ) and the cost of the study greatly reduced. Disproportionate sampling could be used to ensure that a minimum number of each type of election officer is obtained.

Another important data source for the evaluation was the tally sheets completed by elections officers at the polls. However, the design of the tally sheets led to limitations in the interpretation of the data gathered, most notably in terms of the recording of cases where the elector produced two IDs, one of which was a driver's license.

Other sources of data were of secondary importance in the evaluation. The post-mortem meeting of election officers offered little insight specific to this evaluation, and the clipping analysis, while valuable in providing background, could not offer data on the effectiveness of the communications campaign that outweighed the results of the public opinion surveys.

Finally, data related to web traffic was not sufficiently detailed or targeted to materially influence the evaluation.

Based on these conclusions, the following methodological recommendations are provided for consideration:

1. As noted above, there is some duplication between the two surveys of electors (related to the evaluation of the communications campaign) that could be removed to streamline the evaluation process. In addition, there is little value in a pre- and post-assessment design such as that used in the Impact Research study. In fact, one pre-election survey of electors would be sufficient to assess the communications campaign and one post-election survey of electors would be sufficient to address all information needs related to the voting process

itself. Not only would this reduce evaluation costs, but it would also avoid any potential discrepancies between the two data sources.

2. The importance of accurate completion of the tally sheet should be emphasized during training of elections officers. In addition, the form of the tally sheet could be modified. As it currently stands, the tally sheet does not allow for the identification of cases where an elector offered two IDs, one of which was a driver's license, nor does it record cases where an elector attempted to use the VIC as an ID. Adding these two components to the tally sheet would facilitate the evaluation of communications campaigns in future elections in terms of how well they communicated the fact that (1) the VIC cannot be used as ID, and (2) the driver's license, by itself, is an acceptable ID.
3. More data related to training of election officers is essential to evaluate the adequacy of training and preparedness of the officers. The post-mortem meeting of election officers should be the primary source of insight here but, in this case, the post-mortem contained almost no useful information to evaluate training. To provide backup for this data source, the survey of election officer should contain an expanded section related to training and preparedness, with an opportunity for officers to be more specific as to additional training or information needs they might have.

## DATA SOURCES USED IN THE EVALUATION



## DATA SOURCES USED IN THE EVALUATION

The findings of this evaluation are based on a number of different sources. These include public opinion surveys with electors and election officers, advertising post-tests, tally sheets of types of identification used by voters that were completed by polling staff at the polls, minutes of a post-mortem meeting with elections officers, analyses of media coverage and analyses of web site hits.

The analysis of web site hits did not contribute in a material way to the evaluation. The other sources of information are described in more detail below:

### Post-Election Survey of Electors and Election Officers

This study was conducted by Createc+ and consisted of two separate telephone surveys. One was conducted among 2,746 electors in the three electoral districts where by-elections were held: Outremont (n=916), St-Hyacinthe – Bagot (n=915) and Roberval – Lac-St-Jean (n=915). Data collection took place over the period September 18 – 26, 2007.

The second study is a census conducted among 1,112 elections officers who worked during the September 17 by-elections. Four types of election officers were interviewed: Information officers (n=134), Central Poll Supervisors (n=107), Poll Clerks (n=451) and Deputy Returning Officers (n=420).

The data used in the evaluation are drawn from the report entitled *Evaluation of New Voter Identification Requirements at the September 17, 2007 Federal By-Elections (Electors and Election Officers)*, as well as the accompanying data tables.

### Advertising Post-Test

This study was conducted by Impact Research and consisted of two telephone surveys, one conducted prior to the by-elections (data collection September 6 – 13, 2007) and one conducted after the by-elections (data collection September 18 – October 2). For each survey, 900 eligible voters were interviewed, split evenly between the three districts.

The data used in the evaluation are drawn from the report entitled *Outremont / Roberval Lac-St-Jean / St-Hyacinthe – Bagot / September 17<sup>th</sup> by-elections – Final Report*, as well as the accompanying data tables.



## **Tally sheets completed by election officers at the polls**

As part of the evaluation of the first implementation of voter ID at the polls, poll staff were required to complete tally sheets to provide counts of the different types of identification used by voters to meet the Bill C-31 requirements. These tallies were used in the evaluation.

However, it is important to note that there are indications that the tally sheets were not always filled out properly (or, in some cases, at all) in some polls. This is not surprising – more than half of the poll staff worked in past elections and it is to be expected that implementation of a new (and substantial) reporting requirement would not be entirely problem-free the first time out.

For this reason, the tally sheet counts are not reported in this evaluation in exact form. Rather, approximate percentage results are reported, as it was felt that to report the results in exact form would be to ascribe to the tally sheets a level of precision that is not supported in fact.

## **Clipping analysis**

An analysis of media coverage of the September 17 by-elections was completed by Harley House Consultants Inc. This analysis covered the period July 28 – September 21, 2007 and examined 345 media clips, drawn from both electronic and print media. The data used in the evaluation are drawn from the report entitled *Clipping Analysis of By-Election Coverage*.

## LOGIC MODEL USED FOR THE EVALUATION

# LOGIC MODEL

