

CHAPTER X

ELECTION COSTS

The cost is one of the most important aspects of the problem of election administration. It is, of course, secondary to honesty, accuracy, and the convenience of the electors, but nevertheless is of great importance. In other chapters the various phases of election administration have been treated, with incidental reference to costs and methods of reducing the costs. In this chapter will be presented a detailed statement and analysis of election costs, with specific recommendations for changes in the laws, personnel, and administration in order to reduce these costs. A certain amount of repetition here is unavoidable.

An Excessive Burden. Election costs in the United States are excessive. It is difficult to make general estimates for the country as a whole with the incomplete data available, but from the detailed cost records of many communities all over the country, it appears safe to estimate that the average cost of elections throughout the country is at least one dollar per vote cast. The only state for which data are available covering the cost of elections for the entire state, rural sections as well as cities, and for all elections, is Ohio. In 1930, which may be taken as an average year, though the vote was somewhat heavier than is usual for "off" years, the cost of elections was \$2,859,312.80, or \$1.27 per vote cast.¹ If the cost of the new permanent registration equipment is deducted from the total cost, the cost per vote cast still stands at the high figure of \$1.18. This does not include any fixed charges for interest, depreciation, and obsolescence, which should be made against the plant and equipment of the election offices, and for many counties does not include any rental charge for office quarters.

¹ See detailed table on Ohio election costs below.

The per capita cost of elections of Ohio for 1930, on the basis of the total population, was forty-two cents. This cost may be looked upon as somewhat typical. There are a number of large cities, and also many rural counties in Ohio. In 1930 two elections were held in the state—a primary and the general election following. While the cost per vote cast for Ohio is probably higher than that for the country as a whole, the number of elections per year in that state is undoubtedly fewer than for the country as a whole. Many communities have an average of three elections per year instead of two, and very few states have fewer than an average of two elections annually. If the per capita cost in Ohio is typical of the entire country, then our average annual cost of elections, based upon the total population, 122,775,046, at forty-two cents per capita, is approximately \$51,565,000. To be conservative, however, let us estimate the annual election costs for the entire country at \$40,000,000, assuming that the election costs in Ohio average somewhat higher than for the country as a whole.

This estimated annual cost of \$40,000,000 for the holding of elections may appear to be small in comparison with total governmental costs, the cost of the national government, or even the cost of some of our large cities. However, it is excessive, not by reason of the large annual expenditure involved, but because it is out of all proportion to the work involved. Obviously, one dollar per vote cast is a high price to pay for the routine work of holding an election, including the necessary office work and registration of voters. The very great difference between the costs of various large cities indicates not only that election costs in many communities are excessive, but also that the costs throughout the country as a whole are excessive. Milwaukee conducts its elections at a cost of fifty-six cents and Minneapolis at a cost of thirty-seven cents per vote cast. Both of these cities could substantially reduce their costs by improved methods, but in comparison with the country as a whole their costs appear extraordinarily low.

Both are large cities. The average for the country as a whole should be considerably lower, owing to the fact that the scale of wages paid in rural sections and smaller cities is much less than in the large city.

The annual cost of holding elections throughout the country could and should be reduced from an estimated amount of \$40,000,000 to \$10,000,000, or from an average cost per vote cast of one dollar to twenty-five cents. With satisfactory methods there is no good reason why the cost could not be further reduced, but twenty-five cents per vote is an attainable standard. If the costs exceed this amount, the laws regulating the conduct of elections, the personnel, and the administrative procedures should be altered to make it possible. For smaller cities and rural communities a standard of twenty-five cents per vote cast is too high; many such communities now operate at less cost. For the largest cities a higher cost than twenty-five cents per vote should be looked upon as excessive, and a cost exceeding fifty cents per vote should be regarded as grossly excessive. It is not supposed, for a moment, however, that election costs can be reduced to twenty-five cents per vote, or even fifty cents per vote, under the existing election laws of many states.

Accurate and complete data on election costs is very difficult to secure for many communities. In most states certain election costs are borne by the city, and others by the county. Often several offices in each unit of government perform certain duties in the conduct of elections. It is not uncommon for election costs to be mingled with other costs of the office in charge of elections, with the result that it is practically impossible to secure accurate data of the actual election costs. Where city and town officers perform certain election functions, as is usually the case, it is practically impossible to secure the local expenditures of the various cities and towns within the county, or to secure statistics upon the total vote cast in all elections throughout the county. Another factor is that in many states the counties bear the cost of county and state

elections, while the municipalities bear the cost of municipal elections. Sometimes school elections and elections of special districts of one kind or another are born by the district, and are not contained in the records of the city or county. When election cost data are available, data on the total number of votes cast may not be available. Even for New York City information is not available as to the total number of votes cast each year, the election office maintaining no record of the votes cast in primary elections.

In view of these difficulties, especial acknowledgment is made here to the election officers in various cities who have generously supplied the writer with detailed statements of election costs over a period of years. The following tables have been either taken from such statements supplied to the writer by the several election offices or have been compiled by the writer from the financial records of the city or county. They cover a number of the largest cities in the country, but they do not include rural sections, except for the State of Ohio. It is regretted that it has not been possible to submit data on the cost of elections in rural sections and smaller cities. A great deal of the work in such communities is performed by regular officers as a part of their other duties, and no separate account is kept of the cost. In Ohio there is a special election board for every county in the state, which conducts all elections and does not perform any other work. These boards are required to submit a financial report to the secretary of state. It is, therefore, possible to present data on election costs for all counties of the state.

The high cost of elections in the large cities, as well as the very great variation between the cost in various cities, is indicated in the following table showing the average cost per vote cast over a four-year period:

New York City	\$1.36
Chicago	1.35
Boston86
Detroit79

Baltimore	1.36
Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) (1930)	1.45
Cincinnati (Hamilton County) (1930)	1.36
Columbus (Franklin County) (1930)	2.13
Dayton (Montgomery County) (1930)	1.76
Milwaukee56
Minneapolis37
St. Louis75
Kansas City, Mo.	1.54
San Francisco	1.42
Omaha62
Denver67
Salt Lake City37

The cost per vote cast in the several counties of Ohio is given in the following table:²

Election Costs in Ohio Counties, 1930

County	Total number of votes cast	Total cost of elections	Average cost per vote cast
Adams	11,140	\$ 6,877.57	\$.61
Allen	24,547	34,597.43	1.41
Ashland	12,915	8,602.50	.67
Ashtabula	29,370	23,820.51	.81
Athens	22,459	13,723.30	.61
Auglaize	10,393	8,497.52	.82
Belmont	40,709	28,134.42	.69
Brown	14,079	6,469.51	.46
Butler	41,708	51,437.54	1.23
Carroll	8,589	5,899.48	.69
Champaign	14,406	10,435.20	.72
Clark	31,185	43,930.02	1.46
Clermont	13,262	12,033.80	.91
Clinton	12,362	7,967.37	.65
Columbiana	35,857	28,717.04	.81
Coschocton	13,644	9,721.61	.71
Crawford	20,163	12,501.87	.62
Cuyahoga	286,007	470,340.62	1.64
Darke	19,666	15,196.07	.78
Defiance	10,691	7,117.43	.67
Delaware	10,598	8,758.66	.84
Erie	13,479	19,303.65	1.44

² From mimeographed report of Secretary of State. It will be noted that the cost given for the several Ohio counties listed in the table above is slightly lower than in the following table for all of the counties of Ohio. In the table above the cost of the permanent registration equipment purchased in 1930 has been deducted before computing the average cost per vote, while in the following table for all counties of Ohio no correction has been made for this item.

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Election Costs in Ohio Counties, 1930 (Continued)

County	Total number of votes cast	Total cost of elections	Average cost per vote cast
Fairfield.....	17,927	\$ 15,630.26	\$.87
Fayette.....	10,296	7,857.17	.76
Franklin.....	100,099	223,998.16	2.24
Fulton.....	8,120	6,644.22	.82
Gallia.....	10,418	5,910.01	.57
Geauga.....	4,952	5,541.65	1.12
Greene.....	15,174	9,378.08	.62
Guernsey.....	18,437	13,639.49	.74
Hamilton.....	220,038	336,273.62	1.53
Hancock.....	12,897	18,089.21	1.40
Hardin.....	14,960	8,791.34	.59
Harrison.....	8,770	6,340.89	.72
Henry.....	8,208	9,140.80	1.11
Highland.....	13,827	8,826.06	.64
Hocking.....	10,771	6,824.62	.64
Holmes.....	7,384	4,988.88	.68
Huron.....	14,259	9,207.32	.64
Jackson.....	13,586	6,748.28	.50
Jefferson.....	32,156	53,543.51	1.67
Knox.....	11,444	11,976.22	1.04
Lake.....	17,178	10,239.07	.60
Lawrence.....	27,365	14,567.05	.53
Licking.....	24,618	24,519.51	1.00
Logan.....	12,597	9,489.47	.75
Lorain.....	35,365	44,700.99	1.26
Lucas.....	141,778	212,307.83	1.50
Madison.....	10,298	6,575.63	.64
Mahoning.....	72,765	131,081.83	1.80
Marion.....	16,406	21,302.57	1.30
Medina.....	11,070	9,111.88	.82
Meigs.....	15,352	9,559.85	.62
Mercer.....	13,166	8,158.98	.62
Miami.....	20,585	19,071.67	.93
Monroe.....	9,992	5,929.91	.59
Montgomery.....	65,291	122,210.64	1.87
Morgan.....	7,564	4,682.14	.62
Morrow.....	5,784	5,557.07	.96
Muskingum.....	34,660	33,226.92	.96
Noble.....	9,218	6,347.50	.69
Ottaway.....	10,059	7,332.83	.73
Paulding.....	6,899	5,907.02	.86
Perry.....	15,727	11,750.69	.74
Pickaway.....	13,166	8,184.67	.62
Pike.....	7,852	5,792.66	.74
Portage.....	15,868	12,402.12	.78
Preble.....	8,452	8,529.92	1.01
Putnam.....	14,277	8,148.57	.57
Richland.....	24,769	23,089.97	.93
Ross.....	17,631	17,942.69	1.02
Sandusky.....	16,482	12,225.10	.74
Sciota.....	35,811	26,535.65	.74
Seneca.....	17,252	18,907.62	1.10
Shelby.....	10,720	9,818.05	.92

Election Costs in Ohio Counties, 1930 (Continued)

County	Total number of votes cast	Total cost of elections	Average cost per vote cast
Stark.....	74,894	\$ 98,174.24	\$1.31
Summit.....	88,075	132,340.18	1.50
Trumbull.....	36,159	38,120.10	1.06
Tuscarawas.....	26,016	19,216.85	.74
Union.....	10,970	8,315.78	.76
Van Wert.....	13,109	8,879.74	.68
Vinton.....	6,624	5,886.48	.89
Warren.....	12,221	8,989.01	.73
Washington.....	17,720	13,309.76	.75
Wayne.....	17,936	15,115.83	.84
William.....	9,081	9,792.06	.93
Wood.....	17,939	15,453.57	.86
Wyandot.....	8,371	7,077.74	.85
Totals.....	2,252,302	\$2,859,312.80	\$1.27

Election Costs in Large Cities. Detailed data on election costs in a number of large cities is presented in the following tables. These election costs are compared and analyzed in the succeeding sections of this chapter. The unit used for the measurement of the cost of elections in the following tables is the average cost per vote cast over a period of four years, except in some cities where data are not available for a four-year period. It is recognized that in any community the cost per vote cast will vary from election to election, depending largely upon the size of the vote, the cost of each election being about the same regardless of the number of votes cast, but over a four-year period the large and the small elections counteract each other and offer an average which is reasonably comparable between cities. Some cities are afflicted with numerous minor elections, with the result that the cost per vote cast is rather high, while other cities have relatively few elections over a four-year period and a larger average vote. Detroit, for example, had fourteen elections within the four-year period, while Kansas City had only eight and Baltimore only six elections. Despite this discrepancy, however, it is believed that the use of the average cost per vote cast, not merely for the total cost, but for the individual items covered and discussed below, is fundamentally sound.

Election and Registration Costs of New York City, 1927-30

	1927	1928	1929	1930
SALARIES				
Regular employees.....	\$272,305.76	\$303,698.07	\$332,695.43	\$354,086.75
Temporary employees.....	64,257.50	119,797.75	69,922.50	75,360.00
Election officers.....	622,972.00	723,249.00	670,039.00	697,985.00
Total Salaries.....	\$ 959,535.26	\$1,146,744.82	\$1,072,656.93	\$1,109,431.75
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Supplies.....	254,670.10	564,492.17	321,428.35	327,517.74
Equipment.....	5,181.92	10,889.64	12,612.95	9,421.90
Repairs and replacements.....	24,066.80	20,138.89	20,621.93	18,219.47
Transportation.....	52,702.63	82,123.26	73,733.22	77,593.77
Telephone service.....	1,032.50	1,713.01	1,741.33	1,910.57
General plant service.....	23,765.65	54,142.32	62,494.06	67,017.06
Contingencies.....	3,823.90	6,754.36	4,973.45	58,489.53
Rent.....	215,080.66	239,187.66	230,601.83	234,000.00
Advertising.....	88,573.26	87,604.95	111,249.88	118,634.95
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$ 668,897.42	\$1,067,046.26	\$ 839,457.00	\$ 859,804.99
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$1,628,432.38	\$2,213,791.08	\$1,912,113.93	\$1,969,236.74
Number of elections held.....	2	2	2	2
Total number of votes cast ¹	1,252,239	2,073,758	1,564,689	1,543,997
Estimated interest and depreciation charge upon voting machines at 10 per cent.....	\$ 158,695.00	\$ 251,940.00	\$ 297,500.00	\$ 299,625.00
Total election costs including voting machine charge.....	1,787,127.38	2,465,731.08	2,209,613.93	2,268,861.74
Average cost per vote cast.....	1.42	1.19	1.41	1.47

¹ No statistics are available covering the total vote in primary elections, and an estimate of 100,000 per year has been made. The primary elections in New York are usually uncontested, with a very light vote cast.

Summary and Analysis of Election and Registration Costs of New York City, 1927-30

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Regular employees.....	\$1,262,786.01	19.6
Temporary employees.....	329,337.75	5.1
Election officers.....	2,696,245.00	42.0
Total Salaries.....	\$4,288,368.76	66.7
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Supplies.....	1,468,108.36	22.8
Equipment.....	38,106.41	.6
Repairs and replacements.....	83,047.09	1.3
Transportation.....	286,152.88	4.5
Telephone service.....	6,397.41	.1
General plant service.....	207,419.09	3.2
Contingencies.....	21,041.24	.3
Rent.....	918,780.15	14.3
Advertising.....	406,063.04	6.3
Total operating expenses..	\$3,435,205.67	53.4
Voting machine charge of 10 per cent of cost to cover interest and depreciation charges.....	1,007,760.00	15.6 ¹
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$8,731,334.43	\$1.36
Total number of votes cast....		6,434,683
Average cost per vote cast.....		\$1.36

¹ It should be noted that voting machines were not used throughout the city in 1927 and 1928. In 1929 the average overhead cost for voting machines per vote cast was 19 cents, and in 1930, 20 cents.

Election and Registration Costs of Chicago, 1928-31¹

	1928	1929	1930	1931
SALARIES				
Commissioners and chief clerk	\$ 32,749.94	\$ 29,000.08	\$ 28,875.08	\$ 29,500.08
Office force, regular	243,717.07	241,483.88	239,387.85	220,400.00
Extra employees and overtime	157,875.75	68,079.50	140,391.75	63,789.00
Judges and clerks	1,487,726.00	697,215.00	1,147,771.00	981,305.00
Total Salaries	\$1,922,068.75	\$1,035,778.46	\$1,556,424.68	\$1,294,994.08
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Office records and supplies	2,413.69	2,107.44	5,100.00	5,400.00
Printing	206,230.72	55,027.81	193,382.00	121,859.62
Election supplies	12,782.93	6,795.74	13,961.20	5,761.79
Election expenses (attorneys, investigations, typing, etc.)	55,121.90	26,494.37	50,240.62	56,714.95
Furniture and fixtures	2,516.50	739.81	1,478.88	1,066.29
Transportation	15,503.90	7,671.94	8,194.00	13,708.13
Advertising	16,120.10	9,097.50	20,471.00	15,263.21
Posting	17,757.50	33,126.50	20,050.00	27,000.00
Ballots	276,788.62	44,681.95	300,037.00	66,710.76
Ballot boxes	15,312.37	6,144.97	17,210.00	4,553.86
Postage	13,250.00	6,000.00	47,100.00	6,600.00
Maps and plates	3,937.75	1,085.04	515.00	226.03
Booths and rails	46,365.51	104.31	1,901.00	36,220.98
Cartage and storage	29,003.74	46,793.89	46,750.00	32,305.45
Rental of polling places	205,300.00	120,480.00	192,590.00	158,980.00
Binding	145.00			
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 918,550.13	\$ 366,351.27	\$ 918,980.70	\$ 552,271.07
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,840,618.89	\$1,402,129.73	\$2,475,405.38	\$1,847,265.15
Number of elections held	3	2	2	2
Total number of votes cast	2,530,447	1,114,792	1,786,995	906,805
Average cost per vote cast	\$1.12	\$1.26	\$1.38	\$2.03

¹ The table includes, besides the city of Chicago, the following municipalities under the jurisdiction of the board of election commissioners: Berwyn, Chicago Heights, Cicero, Summit, and Evergreen Park.

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Summary and Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of Chicago, 1928-31

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Commissioners and chief clerk	\$ 120,125.18	1.9
Office force, regular	944,988.80	14.9
Office force, temporary and overtime	430,136.00	6.8
Judges and clerks	4,314,016.00	68.2
Total Salaries	\$5,809,265.98	91.8
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Office records and supplies	15,021.13	.2
Printing	576,500.15	9.1
Election supplies	39,301.66	.6
Election expenses, investiga- tions, etc.	188,571.84	3.0
Furniture and fixtures	5,801.48	.1
Transportation	45,077.97	.7
Advertising	60,951.81	1.0
Posting	97,934.00	1.5
Ballots	688,218.33	10.9
Ballot boxes	43,331.10	.7
Postage	72,950.00	1.1
Maps and plates	5,763.82	.1
Booths and rails	84,951.80	1.3
Cartage and storage	154,753.08	2.4
Rental polling places	677,350.00	10.7
Binding	145.00	
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,756,153.17	43.5
GRAND TOTAL	\$8,565,419.15	135.5
Total number of votes cast		6,339,039
Average cost per vote cast		\$1.35

Election and Registration Costs of Boston, 1926-29

	1926	1927	1928	1929
SALARIES				
Commissioners	\$ 20,167.34	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 23,671.29
Permanent employees	91,896.85	93,395.55	93,376.87	95,177.44
Temporary employees and overtime	5,494.00	2,240.00	18,447.50	4,629.00
Precinct officers	52,464.00	23,697.00	80,324.00	27,768.00
Janitors in polling places	6,714.00	3,349.00	9,421.50	3,450.00
Total Salaries	\$176,736.19	\$143,681.55	\$222,569.87	\$154,696.23
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Printing and binding	39,215.15	35,486.28	46,596.76	43,510.05
Advertising and posting	622.10	593.90	593.85	847.86
Cartage and transportation	4,467.25	2,410.07	4,618.00	2,187.16
Rental of polling places	6,672.42	3,841.43	8,818.75	3,394.72
Office equipment and repairs	262.74	1,239.90	1,396.77	750.96
Office supplies	6,140.31	4,153.68	6,811.28	4,274.08
Miscellaneous	2,971.06	2,959.52	3,601.33	1,883.77
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 60,351.03	\$ 50,684.78	\$ 72,436.74	\$ 56,848.60
GRAND TOTAL	\$237,057.22	\$194,366.33	295,006.61	\$211,544.83
Number of elections held	2	1	3	1
Total number of votes cast	291,925	110,208	462,711	218,361
Average cost per vote cast (cents)	81.4	176.5	64.	96.7

Summary and Analysis of the Cost of Elections and Registration in Boston, 1926-29

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Commissioners	\$ 85,838.63	7.9
Permanent employees	373,846.71	34.4
Temporary and overtime	30,810.50	2.8
Precinct officers	184,253.00	17.0
Janitors in polling places	22,935.00	2.1
Total Salaries	\$697,683.84	64.2
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Printing and binding	164,808.24	15.2
Advertising and posting	2,657.71	.2
Cartage and transportation	13,682.48	1.3
Rental of polling places	22,727.32	2.1
Office equipment and reprints	3,650.37	.3
Office supplies	21,379.35	2.0
Miscellaneous	11,415.68	1.1
Total Operating Expenses	\$240,321.15	22.2
GRAND TOTAL	\$938,004.99	86.4
Total number of votes cast		1,083,205
Cost per vote cast (cents)		86.4

Election and Registration Costs of Detroit, 1927-30

	1927	1928	1929	1930
SALARIES				
General office payroll	\$ 33,901.96	\$ 37,315.96	\$ 40,225.84	\$ 41,570.88
Extra employees	51,260.38	90,983.98	76,686.78	88,642.15
Election board payroll	254,233.00	213,016.95	352,665.00	232,574.75
Registration board payroll		61,344.50		
Engineers and janitors' roll	9,587.00	13,542.00	9,735.00	7,321.00
Auto service	2,225.50	2,461.77	2,978.03	2,837.55
Total Salaries	\$351,207.84	\$417,665.16	\$482,290.65	\$372,946.15
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Election houses	24,440.00	15,880.00		5,511.45
Polling place equipment	9,011.00	9,173.94	5,719.00	1,864.91
Maintenance of booths and equipment	5,678.51	10,882.45	6,541.52	9,807.83
Transporting booths and equipment	7,439.15	12,087.56	10,622.99	9,807.83
Electrical service for polling places	6,590.84	3,841.10	6,236.17	5,124.95
Shop and warehouse equipment	63.93	250.00	144.00	17.30
Office equipment	85.35	4,263.78	560.12	196.75
Telephones	300.00	325.00	396.00	389.87
Postage	1,515.00	1,125.00	1,615.50	650.30
Stationery supplies	1,032.88	1,693.17	1,508.14	1,549.86
Printing books, forms, etc.	8,348.08	7,244.68	7,314.65	8,998.76
Printing ballots	6,788.75	1,996.40	12,580.39	65,842.24
Advertising and posting notices	11,426.53	12,884.75	12,763.12	7,871.94
Printing maps	1,217.99	999.77	124.00	1,020.00
Total Expenses	\$ 83,938.01	\$ 82,647.60	\$ 66,125.60	\$118,738.96
GRAND TOTAL	\$435,145.85	\$500,312.76	548,416.25	\$491,685.09
Number of elections held	4	3	4	3
Total vote cast	499,696	593,229	652,488	750,520
Average cost per vote cast (cents)	87	63	84	65

Summary and Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of Detroit, 1927-30

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
General office payroll	\$ 153,014.64	6.1
Extra employees	307,573.29	12.3
Precinct officers, elections	1,052,489.70	42.3
Precinct officers, registration	60,344.50	2.4
Engineers and janitors	40,185.00	1.6
Total Salaries	\$1,624,109.80	65.1
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Election houses	45,831.45	1.8
Polling place equipment	25,768.85	1.0
Maintenance, booth and equip- ment	32,895.28	1.3
Transportation	39,957.53	1.6
Electrical service, polling places	21,813.06	.9
Shops and warehouse equipment	477.23	
Office equipment	5,106.00	.2
Telephones	1,410.87	
Postage	5,005.80	.2
Stationery supplies	5,784.05	.2
Printing books, forms, etc.	31,906.15	1.3
Printing maps	3,361.76	.1
Printing ballots	87,207.78	3.5
Advertising and posting notices	44,946.34	1.8
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 351,448.17	14.1
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,975,559.95	79.2
Total vote cast		2,495,941
Average cost per vote cast (cents)		79.2

Election and Registration Costs of Baltimore, 1926-29

	1926	1927	1928	1929
SALARIES				
Office force and supervisors.....	\$ 38,200.00	\$ 38,200.00	\$ 38,200.00	\$38,200.00
Extra help and overtime.....	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
Judges and clerks (elections).....	89,424.00	89,424.00	89,424.00	
Judges and clerks (registration).....	99,360.00	39,744.00	59,616.00	
Total Salaries.....	\$231,484.00	\$171,868.00	\$191,740.00	\$42,700.00
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Rent of polling places.....	37,260.00	26,082.00	29,808.00	
Storage.....	3,480.00	3,480.00	3,480.00	
Precinct boundary books.....	2,200.00	1,890.40	1,040.20	
Supplies for election officials.....	3,410.31	2,787.71	2,080.10	
Overhauling and cleaning ballot boxes.....	1,300.00	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Printing miscellaneous forms.....	8,640.00	7,980.40	6,001.20	
Maps.....	3,515.50	3,418.00	2,940.80	
Equipment for polls (new).....	8,340.00	670.40	2,433.07	
Repair of equipment.....	2,840.00	1,422.80	1,489.10	
Transportation and erecting polling booths.....	7,490.00	5,463.80	6,989.16	
Ballots.....	23,960.00	14,335.00	23,725.00	
Printing election returns.....	1,490.00	980.40	1,890.85	
Registration books.....	10,625.00			
Advertising.....	9,605.00	6,611.32	6,448.02	
Miscellaneous.....	10,610.50	9,144.40	4,145.14	
Total Expenses.....	\$134,766.31	\$ 85,566.63	\$ 93,770.64	
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$366,200.31	\$258,434.63	\$285,510.64	\$42,700.00
Number of elections held.....	2	2	2	0
Total vote cast.....	217,385	186,793	293,133	0
Average cost per vote cast.....	\$1.55	\$1.37	\$0.98	

COSTS

Summary and Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs in Baltimore, 1926-29

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Office force and supervisors.....	\$152,800.00	21.9
Extra help and overtime.....	18,000.00	2.6
Judges and clerks (election).....	268,272.00	38.4
Judges and clerks (registration)....	198,820.00	28.4
Total Salaries.....	\$637,792.00	91.3
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Rent of polling places.....	93,150.00	13.4
Storage.....	10,440.00	1.5
Precinct boundary books.....	5,130.60	.7
Supplies for election officials.....	8,278.12	1.2
Overhauling and cleaning ballot boxes.....	3,900.00	.6
Printing forms.....	22,621.60	3.2
Maps.....	9,874.30	1.4
Equipment for polls (new).....	11,443.47	1.6
Repair of equipment.....	5,751.90	.8
Transportation and erecting polling booths.....	19,942.96	2.9
Ballots.....	62,020.00	8.9
Printing election returns.....	4,361.25	.6
Registration books.....	10,625.00	1.5
Advertising.....	22,664.34	3.2
Miscellaneous.....	23,900.04	3.4
Total Expenses.....	\$314,103.58	45.1
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$951,895.58	136.4
Total vote cast.....		697,211
Average cost per vote cast.....		\$1.36

Election and Registration Costs of St. Louis, 1926-29

	1926	1927	1928	1929
General office payroll.....	\$ 62,149.45	\$ 43,660.88	\$112,830.74	\$ 20,980.76
Judges and clerks' payroll.....	130,544.00	68,102.00	200,078.00	90,250.00
Polling place rental.....	55,000.00	17,005.00	38,413.00	20,988.12
General expenditures.....	84,000.00	29,799.31	72,716.60	33,249.06
Total.....	\$331,693.45	\$158,567.19	\$423,768.34	\$165,466.94
Number of elections held..	4	2	2	2
Total number of votes cast	426,982	124,548	475,174	398,980
Average cost per vote cast (cents).....	77.6	127.2	89.1	41.6

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Summary and Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of St. Louis, 1926-29

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
General office salaries	\$ 239,621.83	16.7
Judges and clerk	488,974.00	34.3
Polling place rental	131,136.12	9.2
Other expenses	219,763.97	15.4
Total	\$1,079,495.92	75.6
Total vote cast		1,425,684
Average cost per vote cast (cents) . .		75.6

Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 1930¹

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Board	\$ 16,800.00	5.9
Office force (regular)	67,594.73	23.6
Office force (temporary)	28,852.50	10.0
Judges and clerks (elections)	137,735.60	48.2
Registrars	59,788.00	20.9
Total Salaries	\$310,770.83	108.6
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Ballots	8,977.00	3.1
Poll books and supplies	7,003.75	2.4
Permanent registration equipment	54,972.99	19.2
Printing registration lists	23,090.68	8.1
Transportation of precinct equipment	10,655.77	3.7
Storage of precinct equipment	1,225.00	.4
Repair of precinct equipment and voting houses	13,746.97	4.8
Office furniture	405.43	.1
Rent: office of board	13,975.12	4.8
Rent: polling places	14,856.25	5.2
Advertising	160.22	
Miscellaneous	10,500.81	3.7
Total Operating Expenses	\$159,569.99	55.6
GRAND TOTAL	\$470,330.82	164.2
Number of elections held		2
Total number of votes cast		286,007
Average cost per vote cast		\$1.64
Average cost not including permanent registration equipment		\$1.45

¹ Including Cleveland.

Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of Hamilton County, Ohio, 1930¹

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Board.....	\$ 16,572.00	7.5
Office force (regular).....	54,170.82	24.6
Office force (temporary).....	16,587.46	7.5
Judges and clerks (election).....	87,291.10	39.7
Registrars.....	31,740.00	14.4
Total Salaries.....	\$206,361.38	93.7
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Ballots.....	3,977.65	1.8
Poll books and precinct supplies....	3,636.53	1.7
Permanent registration equipment....	38,252.17	17.4
Precinct registration lists.....	13,613.89	6.2
Transportation of precinct equip- ment.....	2,855.75	1.3
Storage of precinct equipment.....	3,843.71	1.7
New precinct equipment.....	1,810.74	.8
Repair of precinct equipment.....	399.78	.2
Office furniture.....	4,801.29	2.2
Rent: office of board.....	12,266.48	5.6
Rent: polling places.....	26,901.00	12.2
Advertising.....	928.72	.4
Miscellaneous.....	16,634.43	7.5
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$129,912.14	59.0
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$336,273.62	152.7
Number of elections held.....		2
Total vote cast.....		220,038
Average cost per vote cast.....		\$1.53
Average cost, not including permanent registration equipment.....		\$1.36

¹ Including Cincinnati.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of Franklin County, Ohio, 1930¹

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Board.....	\$ 11,887.68	11.9
Office force (regular).....	36,687.00	36.7
Office force (temporary).....	2,765.26	2.8
Judges and clerks (elections).....	72,080.20	72.1
Registrars.....	22,750.00	22.7
Total Salaries.....	\$146,161.14	146.2
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Ballots.....	5,576.79	5.6
Poll books and precinct supplies....	5,816.00	5.8
Permanent registration equipment.	11,471.25	11.5
Printing registration lists.....	14,171.55	14.2
Transportation, precinct equipment		
Storage, precinct equipment.....	895.00	0.9
New precinct equipment.....	1,790.83	1.8
Repair precinct equipment.....	9,148.57	9.1
Office furniture.....	10,090.78	10.0
Rent: office of board.....	3,900.00	3.9
Polling places.....	11,675.43	11.7
Advertising.....	388.72	.4
Miscellaneous.....	2,912.10	2.9
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$ 77,837.02	77.8
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$223,998.16	224.0
Number of elections held.....		2
Total number of votes cast.....		100,099
Average cost per vote cast.....		\$2.24
Average cost, not including permanent registration equipment.....		\$2.13

¹ Including Columbus.

Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of Montgomery County, Ohio, 1930¹

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Board	\$ 9,432.00	14.4
Office force (regular)	27,902.10	42.7
Judges and clerks	34,366.40	52.7
Office force (temporary)	4,442.56	6.8
Registrars	8,722.00	13.4
Total Salaries	\$84,865.06	130.0
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Ballots	2,595.45	3.9
Poll books and precinct supplies	2,782.31	4.3
Permanent registration equipment	7,391.22	11.3
Registration lists	5,745.73	8.8
Transportation precinct equipment	2,609.20	4.0
Storage precinct equipment		
New precinct equipment		
Repair precinct equipment	519.37	.8
Office furniture		
Rent: office of board	3,925.00	6.3
Rent: polling places	5,430.00	8.3
Advertising	283.60	.4
Miscellaneous	6,063.70	9.3
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 37,345.58	57.2
GRAND TOTAL	\$122,210.64	187.2
Number of elections		2
Total number of votes cast		65,291
Average cost per vote cast		\$1.87
Average cost, not including permanent registration equipment		\$1.76

¹ Including Dayton.

Election and Registration Costs of Kansas City, Missouri, 1925-29

	1925	1926	1927	1928
SALARIES				
General office payroll.....	\$20,400.00	\$ 20,400.00	\$20,400.00	\$ 20,400.00
General office extra help.....	60,112.59	120,725.17	78.12	144,198.27
Judges and clerks (elections).....	45,510.00	28,440.00		45,144.00
Judges and clerks (registrations).....	20,448.00	37,908.00		95,412.00
Total Salaries.....	\$146,470.59	\$207,473.17	\$20,478.12	\$305,154.27
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Booth rental (elections).....	12,120.00	7,540.00		12,020.00
Booth rental (registrations).....	4,080.00	7,550.00		24,130.00
General office rent.....	3,120.00	3,360.00	3,480.00	3,480.00
Light and power.....	479.65	839.30	290.85	1,019.50
Stationery and supplies.....	6,929.50	8,039.16	142.15	17,676.31
Postage.....	2,350.00	3,000.00		2,000.00
Telephone and telegraph.....	754.28	785.56	579.45	955.39
Office furniture and equipment.....	1,021.66	1,145.65		739.80
Booth equipment.....	429.99	2,149.29	5.95	9,752.46
Booth equipment, transfer and storage.....	9,391.90	7,678.85	1,200.00	13,685.30
Auto hire.....	703.50	156.00		4,547.00
Legal advertising.....	5,855.30	10,257.80		18,468.30
Printing: forms.....	13,902.06	20,012.55		45,666.08
Printing: voters' lists.....	9,326.42	17,279.46		36,696.34
Printing: ballots.....	24,747.77	31,060.76		52,335.97
Printing: maps.....	1,151.80	4,486.43	787.94	6,037.43
Miscellaneous.....	2,738.94	2,665.92	177.08	4,415.43
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$ 98,902.77	\$128,479.90	\$ 6,663.42	\$253,625.31
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$245,373.36	\$335,479.90	\$27,141.54	\$558,779.58
Number of elections held.....	3	2		3
Total vote cast.....	244,326	172,151		341,884
Average cost per vote cast.....	\$1.00	\$1.95		\$1.63

Summary and Analysis of Election Costs of Kansas City, Missouri, 1925-28

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
General office payroll	\$ 81,600.00	10.8
General office, extra help	325,114.15	43.0
Judges and clerks, elections	119,094.00	15.7
Judges and clerks, registrations	153,768.00	20.2
Total Salaries	\$ 679,576.15	89.7
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Booth rental, elections	31,680.00	4.2
Booth rental, registrations	35,760.00	4.7
General office rent	13,440.00	1.8
Light and power	2,629.30	.3
Stationery and supplies	32,787.12	4.3
Postage	7,350.00	1.0
Telephone and telegraph	3,074.68	.4
Office furniture and equipment	2,907.11	.4
Booth equipment	12,337.69	1.6
Booth equipment, transfer and storage	31,956.05	4.2
Auto hire	5,406.50	.7
Legal advertising	34,581.40	4.6
Printing: forms	79,580.69	10.5
Printing: voters' lists	63,202.22	8.4
Printing: ballots	108,144.50	14.3
Printing: maps	12,463.60	1.6
Miscellaneous	9,997.37	1.3
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 487,198.23	64.3
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,166,774.38	154.0
Total number of votes cast		758,234
Average cost per vote cast		\$1.54

Election and Registration Costs of Milwaukee, 1928-31
City of Milwaukee

	1928	1929	1930	1931
SALARIES				
Commissioners.....	\$ 3,780.00	\$3,780.00	\$ 3,780.00	\$ 3,780.00
Secretary and asst. secretary.....	5,580.00	5,580.00	5,700.00	5,700.00
Extra employees.....	26,893.44	5,363.67	17,287.20	26,973.19 ¹
Inspectors and ballot clerks.....	73,458.50	34,986.00	59,438.00	40,680.00
Total Salaries.....	\$109,711.94	\$49,709.67	\$86,205.20	\$77,133.19
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Office records and supplies.....	194.99	1,701.46	301.09	2,468.59
Printing registration lists.....	16,256.76		8,236.81	
Election supplies.....	4,212.35	2,689.82	2,872.80	3,389.30
Furniture and fixtures.....	432.90	246.10		994.06
Transportation.....	453.70	167.30	227.93	160.76
Advertising.....	3,526.77	3,639.82	1,503.06	3,503.78
Postage.....	50.00	8.00	50.00	50.00
Maps and plates.....	41.19	252.39	135.00	70.30
Cartage.....	511.01	217.00	368.20	252.00
Erecting, maintaining and dismantling polling places.....	10,436.43	4,973.59	9,885.17	5,253.20
Equipment repairs.....	3,286.71	487.25	5,044.34 ²	1,280.50
Fuel and oil.....	339.70	146.39	305.17	115.46
Additional equipment.....	1,948.01	105.00	2,273.78	363.96
Total Operating Expenses.....	41,690.52	14,634.12	31,203.35	17,801.91
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$151,402.46	\$64,343.79	\$117,408.55	\$94,935.10

¹ Including \$13,659.94 to change street names and house numbers on all registration records.

² Including \$4,000 for painting and repairing election booths.

Election and Registration Costs of Milwaukee, 1929-31 (Continued)
 Milwaukee County
 (Eighty per cent charged to City)

	1928	1929	1930	1931
SALARIES				
Commissioners and secretary	\$4,800.00	\$4,920.00	\$5,040.00	\$5,040.00
Temporary employees	1,983.68	89.60	1,482.80	272.40
Total Salaries	\$6,783.68	\$5,009.60	\$6,522.80	\$5,312.40
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Office supplies	983.04	275.48	860.20	832.76
Printing (ballots, etc.)	7,472.74	594.40	5,480.86	923.68
Advertising and publication	16,154.96	5,483.20	10,650.73	3,218.57
Miscellaneous	580.56	83.20	218.92	114.20
Total Operating Expenses	\$25,191.30	\$ 6,436.28	\$17,210.81	\$ 5,089.21
GRAND TOTAL	\$31,974.98	\$11,445.88	\$23,733.61	\$10,401.61
CITY AND COUNTY TOTAL				
Number of elections held	4	2	2	2
Total number of votes cast	441,580	112,184	231,048	118,352
Average cost per vote cast (cents)	41.5	67.7	61.1	89.3

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Summary and Analysis of the Election and Registration Costs of Milwaukee, 1928-31

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
City of Milwaukee		
SALARIES		
Commissioners	\$ 15,120.00	1.7
Regular employees	22,560.00	2.5
Extra employees	76,517.50	8.5
Precinct election officers	208,562.50	23.0
Total Salaries	\$322,760.00	35.7
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Office records and supplies	4,566.13	.5
Printing registration lists	24,493.57	2.7
Election supplies	13,164.27	1.5
Furniture and fixtures	1,673.06	.2
Transportation	1,009.69	.1
Advertising	12,173.43	1.3
Postage	158.00	
Maps and plates	498.88	
Cartage	1,348.20	.1
Erecting, maintaining, and dismantling polling houses	30,548.39	3.3
Equipment repairs	10,098.80	1.1
Fuel and oil	906.72	.1
New equipment	4,690.75	.5
Total Operating Expenses	\$105,329.90	11.6
TOTAL CITY EXPENSES	\$428,089.90	47.5
Milwaukee County, 1928-31 (Eighty per cent charged to City)		
SALARIES		
Commissioners and secretary	\$19,800.00	2.2
Temporary employees	3,828.88	.4
Total Salaries	\$23,628.88	2.6
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Office supplies	2,951.48	.3
Printing (ballots, etc.)	14,471.78	1.6
Advertising and publication	35,507.46	3.9
Miscellaneous	996.88	.1
Total Operating Expenses	\$53,927.60	5.9
TOTAL COUNTY EXPENSES	\$77,556.48	8.6
CITY AND COUNTY TOTAL	\$505,646.38	56.1
Total vote cast		903,164
Average cost per vote cast (cents)		56.1

Election and Registration Costs of Minneapolis, 1926-29

	1926	1927	1928	1929
SALARIES				
Office force	\$ 6,828.33	\$ 7,880.00	\$10,083.25	\$ 8,100.55
Extra help, office	4,806.75	4,258.00	13,057.89	1,554.31
Judges and clerks	51,680.87	46,894.43	54,199.02	61,776.06
School janitors	915.10	397.00	1,110.83	361.40
Labor	4,014.55	5,274.50	1,471.34	889.14
Total Salaries	\$68,245.60	\$64,703.93	\$79,922.33	\$72,681.46
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Postage	753.04	1,587.92	2,283.08	943.98
Trucking	81.75	473.70	541.75	1,790.59
Advertising		85.49	116.52	839.73
Printing and binding	390.50	951.21	519.05	871.84
Ballots	1,250.93	6,630.55	1,385.20	6,331.13
Rental for polling places	2,240.00	2,417.00	2,624.00	3,525.00
Supplies and miscellaneous	3,984.43	4,926.03	4,881.35	3,369.21
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 8,700.65	\$16,855.90	\$12,349.68	\$17,670.48
GRAND TOTAL	\$76,946.25	\$81,559.83	\$91,272.01	\$90,351.84
Number of elections held	2	2	3	3
Total number of votes cast	193,749	198,690	275,224	277,723
Average cost per vote cast (cents)	39.7	41	33	32.5

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Summary and Analysis of Election and Registration Costs of Minneapolis, 1926-29

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Office force	\$ 32,897.13	3.4
Extra help—office	23,676.95	2.5
Judges and clerks	214,550.38	22.7
School janitors	2,784.23	.2
Labor	11,649.55	1.2
Total Salaries	\$295,558.24	31.2
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Postage	5,568.02	.6
Trucking	2,887.79	.3
Advertising	1,041.47	.1
Printing and binding	2,732.60	.3
Ballots	15,327.81	1.6
Rental polling places	10,860.00	1.1
Supplies and miscellaneous	17,161.02	1.8
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 55,578.71	5.9
GRAND TOTAL	\$351,136.95	37.1
Total vote cast		945,386
Average cost per vote cast (cents)		37.1

Election and Registration Costs for City and County of San Francisco 1926-29

	1926	1927	1928	1929
SALARIES				
Office force and commissioners.....	\$ 63,328.63	\$ 63,867.66	\$ 62,832.83	\$ 65,161.65
Extra help and overtime.....	72,035.80	49,075.78	141,600.60	39,491.01
Judges and clerks (registrations).....				
Judges and clerks (elections).....	81,340.00	50,230.00	86,560.00	35,830.00
Total Salaries.....	\$216,704.43	\$163,203.44	\$290,993.43	\$140,482.66
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Office rent, light-power.....				
Stationery and supplies.....	1,136.35	834.55	1,177.25	456.65
Office furniture and equipment.....	1,789.52	3,046.72	3,347.00	2,829.99
Postage.....	15,311.42	11,684.75	33,345.21	8,000.00
Printing				
Forms, books, etc.....	14,908.45	13,373.83	20,939.28	14,291.30
Lists of voters.....	23,316.33	5,552.64	12,086.57	4,201.30
Ballots.....	9,040.10	1,494.00	12,219.10	2,960.00
Maps.....		2,167.90	75.00	2,170.00
Rental of polling places.....	13,690.00	15,030.00	25,360.00	10,580.00
Polling place equipment (new) and repair and maintenance.				
Cartage and storage.....	732.90	235.00	1,013.00	450.00
Voting machines—storage and cartage.....	4,789.75	7,988.05	9,672.27	10,852.85
Auto hire.....	1,853.60	1,477.80	4,426.04	1,082.00
Legal advertising and posting.....	1,422.90	912.51	2,222.45	932.15
Miscellaneous.....	1,819.68	1,240.85	1,727.68	1,075.17
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$ 89,811.00	\$ 65,038.60	\$127,610.85	\$ 59,881.31
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$306,515.43	\$228,322.04	\$418,604.28	\$200,363.97
Number of elections held.....	2	2	4	1
Total number of votes cast.....	248,127	236,841	513,674	104,829
Voting machine charge for interest and depreciation.....	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00
Combined total.....	\$426,505.43	\$348,322.04	\$538,604.28	\$320,363.97
Average cost per vote cast, including voting machine charge	\$1.71	\$1.47	\$1.05	\$3.20

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Summary and Analysis of Election and Registration Costs of San Francisco, 1926-29

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Office force and commissioners	\$255,190.77	23.1
Extra help and overtime	302,203.19	27.4
Judges and clerks (elections)	254,070.00	22.9
Total Salaries	\$811,463.96	73.4
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Stationery and supplies	3,604.70	.3
Office furniture and equipment	11,013.23	1.0
Postage	68,341.38	6.2
Printing: forms, books	63,512.86	5.7
Printing: lists of voters	45,156.84	4.1
Printing: ballots	25,713.20	2.3
Printing: maps	4,412.90	.4
Rental polling places	64,660.00	5.9
Cartage and storage	2,430.90	.2
Voting machines: storage and cartage	33,302.92	3.0
Auto hire	8,839.44	.8
Legal advertising and posting	5,490.01	.5
Miscellaneous	5,863.38	.6
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 342,341.76	31.0
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,153,805.72	104.4
Total vote cast		1,104,471
Voting machine charge, interest, and depreciation		\$480,000.00
Combined total		\$1,633,805.72
Average cost per vote cast, including voting machine charge		\$1.42

Election and Registration Costs for City of Omaha and Douglas County, 1927-30

	1927	1928	1929	1930
SALARIES				
Office force and commissioners.....	\$ 7,560.00	\$ 7,560.00	\$ 7,590.00	\$ 7,749.96
Extra help and overtime.....	8,008.29	22,238.09	4,573.10	22,257.73
Judges and clerks (elections).....	21,562.25	42,980.60	no election	72,235.94
Total Salaries.....	\$37,130.54	\$72,778.69	\$12,163.10	\$102,243.63
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Stationery and supplies (printing).....	767.92	4,997.33	2,788.95	11,209.75
Office furniture and equipment.....	168.70	1,104.57	1,220.50	876.53
Postage.....	640.00	1,050.00		900.00
Ballots.....	3,803.50	14,972.20		15,093.29
Maps.....			691.98	
Rental of polling places.....	1,552.00	1,809.60		5,527.50
Janitor hire.....	332.00	517.00		1,075.50
Polling place equipment (new).....	178.30	2,842.69	484.55	1,509.33
Repair and maintenance.....	100.00	174.00	88.00	
Cartage and storage.....	1,265.50	2,007.20		3,853.25
Auto hire.....	200.00	300.00		
Legal advertising and posting.....	578.20	4,720.02		7,167.58
Miscellaneous.....	48.20	137.14	15.71	46.38
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$ 9,636.32	\$ 34,631.75	\$ 5,289.69	\$ 47,259.11
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$46,766.86	\$107,410.44	\$17,452.79	\$149,502.74
Number of elections held.....	2	3	0	5
Total number of votes cast.....	94,102	167,699	0	255,834
Average cost per vote cast (cents).....	49.6	64		58.5

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Summary and Analysis of Election and Registration Costs of Omaha, 1927-30

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Office force and commissioners.	\$ 30,495.96	5.9
Extra help.	57,077.21	11.0
Judges and clerks.	136,778.79	26.4
Total Salaries.	\$224,315.96	43.5
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Printing—stationery.	19,763.95	3.8
Office furniture and equipment.	3,372.30	.6
Postage.	2,590.00	.5
Ballots.	33,868.99	6.5
Rental of polling places.	8,889.10	1.7
Janitor hire.	1,924.58	.4
Polling place equipment (new).	5,014.87	.9
Polling place equipment (repair).	362.00	
Polling place equipment (cartage and storage).	7,127.95	1.4
Auto hire.	500.00	.1
Legal advertising.	12,465.80	2.4
Miscellaneous.	247.43	
Total Operating Expenses.	\$ 96,816.87	18.7
GRAND TOTAL.	\$321,132.83	62.0
Total vote cast.		517,635
Average cost per vote cast (cents).		62

Election and Registration Costs for Denver, 1928-31

	1928	1929	1930	1931
SALARIES				
Commissioners	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Office force	7,645.25	4,071.50	5,614.75	6,217.00
Judges and clerk	57,340.00	29,192.50	61,121.25	30,432.50
Labor and janitor hire	964.00	248.00	819.75	795.50
Total Salaries	\$67,949.25	\$35,512.00	\$69,555.75	\$39,445.00
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Office supplies	2,559.25	1,199.91	1,668.00	616.98
Equipment repair	2,202.50	619.50	1,530.00	744.48
Drayage	1,017.50	736.00	357.50	820.75
Ballots and election supplies	8,709.95	2,130.65	5,816.36	4,419.38
Advertising	490.60	545.04	1,383.60	523.50
Rent of polling places	10,752.00	6,240.00	11,544.00	6,240.00
Election building	2,000.00	1,981.82	2,000.00	1,999.98
Other expenses	1,137.82	2,292.19	444.27	577.55
Total Operating expenses	\$28,869.42	\$15,745.01	\$24,743.73	\$15,942.62
GRAND TOTAL	\$96,818.67	\$51,267.01	\$94,299.48	\$55,387.62
Number of elections held	2	1	2	1
Total number of votes cast	156,234	49,147	138,865	94,874
Cost per vote cast (cents)	61.9	104.1	68.0	58.4

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Summary and Analysis of the Registration and Election Costs of Denver, 1928-31

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Commissioners	\$ 8,000.00	1.8
Office force	23,548.50	5.4
Judges and clerks	178,086.25	40.6
Labor and janitor hire	2,827.25	.6
Total Salaries	\$212,462.00	48.4
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Office supplies	6,044.14	1.4
Equipment repair	5,096.48	1.2
Drayage	2,931.75	.7
Ballots and election supplies	21,076.04	4.8
Advertising	2,942.74	.7
Rent of polling places	34,776.00	7.9
Election building	7,981.80	1.8
Other expenses	4,451.83	1.0
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 85,300.78	19.4
GRAND TOTAL	\$297,762.78	67.8
Total number of elections		6
Total vote cast		439,120
Cost per vote cast (cents)		67.8

COSTS

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Cost of Elections in Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County, 1928-31¹

	1928	1929	1930	1931
SALARIES				
Temporary employees.....		\$ 2,989.49		
Judges and clerks.....	\$ 9,314.79	4,221.80	\$ 8,546.84	\$ 5,658.35
Registrars.....	8,732.20	4,822.81	13,192.17	8,624.55
Total Salaries.....	\$18,046.99	\$12,034.10	\$21,739.01	\$14,282.90
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Advertising, ballots, and supplies, etc.....	4,178.77	3,199.53	7,372.70	8,653.24
Booths and repair.....	1,394.93	1,143.50	1,500.72	12.67
Rent of polls.....	1,725.50	2,195.00	2,788.00	2,803.50
Miscellaneous.....	154.86		322.59	14.00
Total Operating Expense..	\$ 7,454.06	\$ 6,538.03	\$11,994.01	\$11,583.41
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$26,501.05	\$18,572.13	\$33,733.02	\$25,876.31
Number of elections held.....	1	2	2	4
Total vote cast.....	69,511	45,749	69,732	89,638
Average cost per vote cast (cents).....	38.2	40.7	48.2	28.9

¹ In this table the expenses of the city and county have been combined. The county elections were held in even-numbered years, there being only the one election throughout the county in each of these years, though there was also a special city election in 1930. The total vote cast item for 1928 and 1930 includes the vote cast in the general election throughout the county. The regular city elections are held in odd-numbered years, and the cost of holding the elections in these years is a city cost. The registration cost amounted to \$9,102.94 in 1929 and \$10,438.24 in 1931. It should be noted that no item is included in the table for the clerical work of the office of the county clerk and that of the city clerk in connection with registrations and elections. This cost is not large, and would be difficult to estimate. The work is done by the regular employees of the state along with their other duties. The omission of this item of overhead clerical costs is offset by the fact that the registration charges for odd-numbered years includes the cost throughout the county, whereas properly only the city registration costs should be included, since the statistics on the total vote cast for the odd-numbered years cover only city elections. The total population of Salt Lake City in 1930 was 140,267, while that of the county was 194,102

Summary and Analysis of the Registration and Election Costs of Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County, 1928-31

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Temporary employees.....	\$ 2,989.49	1.1
Judges and clerks.....	27,741.78	10.1
Registrars.....	35,371.73	12.8
Total Salaries.....	\$ 66,103.00	24.0
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Advertising, ballots, supplies, etc...	23,404.24	8.5
Booths and repair.....	4,051.81	1.5
Rent of polls.....	9,512.00	3.5
Miscellaneous.....	501.45	.2
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$ 37,469.50	13.7
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$103,572.50	37.7
Total number of votes cast.....		274,630
Average cost per vote cast (cents).....		37.7

COSTS

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Election and Registration Costs for the State of Ohio, 1930¹

	Cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
SALARIES		
Members of the boards	\$238,626.07	10.6
Clerks of the Boards	91,125.44	4.3
Deputy Clerks	49,536.54	2.2
Assistant Clerks (Full Year Time)	204,624.77	9.1
Employees (Part Time)	120,089.86	5.2
<hr/>		
Total Office force	\$ 704,002.68	31.4
Precinct Judges and Clerks	1,008,135.14	44.4
Precinct Registrars	241,429.00	10.7
<hr/>		
Total Salaries	\$1,953,566.82	87.0
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Printing ballots	103,183.09	4.6
Poll books	100,511.03	4.4
Registration Equipment	201,834.66	
Precinct Registration lists	88,212.92	
Transportation of Precinct equipment	40,387.55	1.8
Storage of Precinct equipment	10,933.56	.5
New polling booths and precinct equipment	15,889.36	.7
Repairs on old polling booths and precinct equipment	41,068.82	1.8
Office furniture and equipment	42,919.03	1.9
Rent:		
Offices of boards	54,930.99	2.4
Registration places	44,214.48	1.9
Polling places	69,200.48	3.1
Advertising	6,953.52	.3
Miscellaneous expenses	95,506.72	4.2
<hr/>		
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 905,745.98	40.0
<hr/>		
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,859,312.80	127.0
<hr/>		
Total vote cast		2,252,302
Average cost per vote cast		\$1.27
Average cost per vote, not including new permanent registration equipment		\$1.18

¹ From the report of the Secretary of State.

Personnel Costs. It is quite apparent that the personnel item is the most important factor—seventy per cent—in election costs, and that any substantial saving must come largely through a reduction of this cost. The range of the salary costs per vote cast is from twenty-four cents to \$1.46 in the cities listed below:

Election Personnel Costs in Selected Cities

City	Per cent of total cost	Cost per vote cast (cents)
New York City	49.1	66.7
Chicago	67.8	91.8
Boston	74.4	64.2
Detroit	82.3	65.1
Baltimore	66.9	91.3
Cleveland ¹	66.1	108.6
Cincinnati	61.4	93.7
Columbus	65.0	146.2
Dayton	69.3	130.0
St. Louis	67.6	51.0
Kansas City	58.2	89.7
Milwaukee	63.7	35.7
Minneapolis	84.2	31.2
San Francisco	70.3	73.4
Omaha	69.8	43.5
Denver	71.4	48.4
Salt Lake City	63.8	24.0
State of Ohio	68.4	87.0

¹ The statistics for the Ohio cities are for the counties in which they are located.

The first item to be considered in personnel costs is that of the board of election commissioners, or the officers in charge of the conduct of elections. In most large cities there is a special board in charge, but in smaller communities elections are usually under some regular city or county officer.³ Where the latter is the case, it is difficult to make any reliable estimate of the cost of general supervision and control. In general, elections are more economically handled when the work is entrusted to a regular city or county officer instead of to a special board. Election boards are notoriously political in their administration, frequently using the election positions

³ See Chapter III above.

to take care of partisan workers and employing many more regular and extra employees than are actually needed.

The salaries paid to the members of the election board in some cities are out of all proportion to the work involved. It sometimes exceeds that of the regular employees, which is obviously absurd. In Kansas City, for example, the salary of the board members over a four-year period was \$48,000, each of the four members being paid \$3000 annually, while the salaries of the permanent employees of the office for this period amounted to only \$23,600. In a study made of election costs in Ohio by the Ohio Institute, it was discovered that in the largest counties of the state the salaries of members of the board of elections exceeded that paid to the members of the board of county commissioners. The following table, which has been taken from this report, gives a comparison of salaries of boards of elections and boards of county commissioners in the fifteen largest counties for 1930:

Comparative Salary Costs of Election Boards and County Commissioners in Fifteen Ohio Counties¹

County	Total salaries paid boards of elections ²	Total salaries paid boards of county commissioners ³
Cuyahoga.....	\$16,800	\$12,075
Hamilton.....	16,572	12,000
Franklin.....	11,888	12,075
Lucas.....	11,744	11,675
Summit.....	12,064	6,986
Montgomery.....	9,432	10,847
Mahoning.....	8,744	7,162
Stark.....	8,272	7,066
Trumbull.....	4,304	4,837
Butler.....	4,688	6,024
Lorain.....	4,776	5,517
Belmont.....	4,584	5,175
Clark.....	4,320	6,034
Jefferson.....	3,920	4,802
Columbiana.....	4,152	5,465

¹ Ohio Institute, *Election costs in Ohio and how they may be reduced*, p. 22 (1931).

² From Secretary of State's Annual Report of Elections, 1930.

³ From county financial reports. Figures do not include fees from ditch, sewer, and water district improvements.

The report went on to point out that the members of many public boards, such as school boards, library boards, hospital boards, and others serve without pay, and advocated the elimination of the salaries of members of election boards altogether. In 1930 the salaries paid to election boards in the several counties of Ohio amounted to \$238,626. To quote from the report:

Aside from meeting occasionally to approve payrolls and vouchers, there is little for a board of elections to do except during the period preceding and immediately following an election. The conduct of elections is a routine matter, which can and should be left largely to the clerk of the board.

In the cities where large salaries are paid, prominent party leaders are often appointed as members of the board. It is hardly necessary to point out that this practice, since it places the bitterest partisans in control of elections, and turns the office over to the party machines for use as patronage, is indefensible. Lower salaries would make the membership somewhat less attractive to professional politicians. The way out, however, for most communities is to place elections under a regular official of the city or county, or to provide for a single election commissioner, thus dispensing with a board altogether.

The cost of election boards per vote cast over a four-year period (except where otherwise indicated) is given in the table on the following page.

It is interesting to note that the average cost of the election boards in Ohio per vote cast, during 1930, was 10.6 cents, while the cost in the several Ohio cities listed in the table ranged from 5.7 to 14.4 cents per vote. The cost per vote in Boston, Baltimore, and Kansas City is only slightly less. Such costs are out of all reason. These facts offer further proof of the exorbitant salaries paid to boards of election.

Cost of Election Boards in Selected Cities

City	Cost for a four year period	Total number of votes cast	Cost per vote cast (cents)
New York City.....	\$128,000.00	6,434,683	2.0
Chicago.....	72,000.00	6,339,039	1.1
Boston.....	85,838.63	1,083,205	7.9
Detroit.....	<i>ex officio</i>		
Baltimore.....	40,000.00	697,211	5.7
Cleveland.....	16,800.00 ¹	286,007	5.9
Cincinnati.....	16,572.00 ¹	220,038	7.5
Columbus.....	11,887.68 ¹	100,099	11.9
Dayton.....	9,432.00 ¹	65,291	14.4
St. Louis.....	48,000.00	1,425,520	3.0
Kansas City, Mo.....	48,000.00	758,324	6.3
Minneapolis.....	<i>ex officio</i>		
Milwaukee.....	15,120.00	903,164	1.7
San Francisco.....	20,000.00	1,104,471	1.8
Omaha.....	19,200	517,635	3.7
Salt Lake City.....	<i>ex officio</i>		
Portland, Ore.....	<i>ex officio</i>		
State of Ohio.....	238,626.07 ¹	2,252,302	10.6

¹ One year.

Regular Employees. The problem of regular election office employees as it bears upon the cost of elections is indicated in the table on the following page.

While the clerical work involved in holding elections is by no means the same in various states, the table below indicates an extraordinary variation in the size of the clerical force, which cannot be explained by differences in the elections laws. Disregarding the unusually fine showing of Milwaukee in the number of registered voters handled per permanent employee, we may take Minneapolis, Omaha, or Detroit, each with approximately 43,000 registered voters to the employee, as a norm. In comparison with this standard, New York has two and a half times as many employees as it should have; Chicago four times as many; Boston seven times the necessary number; Cleveland, four times; San Francisco, five times; and Cincinnati has nearly six times the number of employees needed. It would seem to be reasonable to set up as a standard one regular employee per 40,000 registered voters, and a cost for the regular office force of not more than

Number and Cost of Regular Election Office Employees in Selected Large Cities, 1930¹

City	Number of registered voters	Number of office employees	Average no. voters per employee	Total cost	Annual cost per registered voter (cents)
New York	1,568,305	96	16,336	\$332,086.75	20.6
Chicago	1,264,234	117	10,805	239,387.85	18.9
Boston	279,313	47	5,942	95,177.44	32.9
Los Angeles County	853,676	25	34,147	58,367.48	6.8
Detroit	522,842	12	43,570	32,570.68	6.2
St. Louis	300,653	14	21,475	28,399.00	9.5
Baltimore	295,929	18	16,440	35,200.00	11.9
Cleveland	312,900	31	10,096	67,594.63	21.6
San Francisco	227,979	27	8,443	67,522.20	29.7
Milwaukee	184,530	2	92,265	5,700.00	3.1
Minneapolis	218,840	5	43,768	7,860.00	3.6
Rochester, N. Y.	159,617	10	15,961	18,666.00	11.7
Portland, Ore.	148,454	4	37,113	6,168.00	4.2
Syracuse, N. Y.	130,350	2	65,175	1,820.00	1.4
Omaha	84,029	2	42,029	2,949.96	3.6
Cincinnati	186,241	24	7,760	54,170.82	29.1

¹ The statistics for Boston are for the year 1929; the statistics for Chicago include the outlying municipalities under the jurisdiction of the board of election; the statistics for Cleveland, Rochester, Syracuse, Portland, and Cincinnati include the entire county in which they are situated, or the registration area within the county.

five cents annually per registered voter. Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Omaha each has a cost of less than this amount. In each city the office handles the permanent registration of voters and performs the various election duties efficiently and thoroughly.

The discrepancy between the cost per registered voter in the several cities is equally startling. The best record is made by Syracuse, with a cost of only 1.4 cents, but since much of the work is done by the commissioners of election, this showing is not entirely accurate. Milwaukee and Minneapolis each has a cost slightly exceeding three cents, while Detroit and Los Angeles have a cost of over six cents. These are all reasonable costs. Little explanation can be made of the excessive costs in New York, Boston, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Cincinnati, except political patronage. So long as the clerical positions in the election offices of our large cities are used as political spoils, it is too much to expect that the number employed will be kept within reasonable bounds. The only

solution is to place the employees of the office under civil service, thus restricting the opportunity to use the office as a dumping ground for political henchmen who can not be placed elsewhere. The work of elections is highly seasonal in character, and it is unwise to employ a large number of persons who will have little or nothing to do between elections. In Detroit, which holds perhaps more elections per year than any other large city in the country, the chief supervisor of elections related to the writer that since there is so little to do between elections he asked the council to assign other duties to the department as a means of keeping the men occupied and maintaining morale. In some states there are no elections at all held on certain years, and it would seem to be particularly absurd to have a large office force during these years.

The salary scale paid to election office employees in many cities is also out of all proportion to the duties and type of work performed. To quote from the report of the Ohio Institute on Election Costs in Ohio:

The reduction in the size of the election personnel should be accompanied by a revision of salaries. Salaries of \$150 and more per month are usual in the larger counties. Such salaries are not warranted by the type of work performed. Election office service consists chiefly of typing, filing, and other routine clerical work. Salaries in election offices should be adjusted to the normal standard for similar service in private employ. Excluding the clerk and deputy clerk in large counties, salaries of \$125 per month would be ample in most cases.⁴

Temporary Employees. The cost of the temporary employees must be considered in connection with the cost of the regular employees, and the total clerical costs of the election. Some offices follow the policy of using regular employees to do the work which is done in other offices by temporary employees. There is, accordingly, presented in the table below, the separate costs of regular and temporary employees and the combined costs for a number of large cities. The cost is

⁴ Page 17.

given in cents per vote cast and covers a four-year period, except for the cities in Ohio and Ohio State. It will be noted that this does not conform to the preceding table, which gave the annual cost per registered voter.

Cost of Temporary Election Employees in Selected Cities (in cents per vote)

City	Regular employees	Temporary employees	Combined cost
New York.....	19.6	5.1	24.7
Boston.....	34.4	2.8	37.2
Chicago.....	14.9	6.8	21.7
Detroit.....	6.1	12.3	18.4
Baltimore.....	16.2	2.6	18.8
Cleveland.....	23.6	10.0	33.6
Cincinnati.....	24.6	7.5	32.1
Columbus.....	36.7	2.8	39.5
Dayton.....	42.7	6.8	49.5
Kansas City.....	4.5	43.0	47.5
Minneapolis.....	3.4	2.5	5.9
Milwaukee.....	2.5	8.5	11.0
San Francisco.....	21.3	27.4	48.7
Omaha.....	3.6	11.0	14.6
State of Ohio (1930).....	15.6	5.2	20.8

It will be noted that the highest cost of temporary employees is in Kansas City and San Francisco, but for the other cities there is considerable variation. In general, the cost of temporary employees is considerably smaller than that of permanent employees. The combined cost in Minneapolis is only 5.9 cents per vote cast, while for most of the other cities it runs from twenty to nearly fifty cents per vote. The explanation is that the Minneapolis office is efficiently run without political interference and with a satisfactory system of records, while other offices are usually called upon to employ political workers in the interest of the political parties.

The rate paid for temporary employees varies, with fifty cents per hour being the prevailing rate in many cities. In general it is sound policy for most of the clerical work of the election office to be performed by temporary employees, thus avoiding the necessity for maintaining a staff of permanent employees during the slack seasons between elections. The clerical work involved in the conduct of registrations and elec-

tions in the central office is not large, and a combined expenditure for both permanent and regular employees of over ten cents per vote cast would seem to be excessive.

Precinct Officers. The largest single item of the cost of elections is that of the precinct officers, usually amounting to about half of the total cost. The cost of precinct officers may be divided into registration and election work, and the detailed analysis of the costs for the various cities usually contains such itemization. In many cities with permanent registration there is no cost involved in precinct registration, the work of registering the relatively small number of new voters being done by employees at the main election office of the city or county. In other cities, however, there is a heavy registration charge, particularly during the year of the start of a new registration.⁵

The cost of precinct officers for registrations and elections over a four-year period, in some of the large cities in the country is indicated in the following table:

Costs of Precinct Officers in Selected Cities (in cents)

City	Cost per vote cast registration	Cost per vote cast elections	Combined cost
New York.....	—	—	42.0
Chicago.....	—	—	68.2
Boston.....	none	17.0	17.0
Detroit.....	2.4	42.3	44.7
Baltimore.....	28.4	38.4	66.8
Cleveland.....	20.9	48.2	69.1
Cincinnati.....	14.4	39.7	54.1
Columbus.....	22.7	72.1	94.8
Dayton.....	13.4	52.7	66.1
St. Louis.....	—	—	34.3
Kansas City, Mo.....	20.2	15.7	35.9
Milwaukee.....	none	23.0	23.0
Minneapolis.....	none	22.7	22.7
San Francisco.....	none	22.9	22.9
Omaha.....	none	26.4	26.4
Salt Lake City.....	12.8	10.1	22.9
State of Ohio.....	10.7	44.4	55.1

⁵ For an account of the cost of registration, see my *Registration of voters in the United States*, Chap. X.

It will be noted that in a number of the cities and for the State of Ohio the cost of the precinct officers for elections amounts to forty cents or more per vote. This amount includes only the salary of precinct officers, and does not include the cost of rental of polling places, ballots, supplies, etc. Forty cents is obviously too great a cost for the routine clerical work involved in handling a voter at the polls and counting the ballot which he casts. This is readily indicated by the fact that the cost in other cities is as low as ten cents per vote cast (Salt Lake City), or even lower for many smaller communities. Boston is able to make a good showing (seventeen cents) because of the use of large precincts, while Kansas City has a cost of only 15.7 cents per vote, though the other election costs of Kansas City have been unusually high in the past. Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Omaha, with good election administrations, show a cost of 22.7, 23.0, and 26.4 cents respectively.

The cost of precinct officers depends upon a number of factors, including the number and kinds of elections held, the size of the voting precinct, the number of officers used to the precinct, the salary paid, the use of voting machines, and the use of extra counting boards. These items will be taken up in turn.

The effect of numerous elections upon the cost of elections has already been commented upon. The more numerous the elections, obviously the greater the total cost. A program for the reduction of election costs will necessarily include the reduction of the number of elections. The holding of frequent elections, or special elections, at which few votes are cast, will serve to increase the cost per vote cast for the precinct officers, as well as the unit cost for other items. Many election costs are relatively stable for each election, and a small vote cast means a high unit cost per vote. This high unit cost can be avoided in two ways: first, by avoiding special, minor, and frequent elections, or by reducing them as far as possible; and second, by setting up an election organization which can

be adapted to the anticipated vote at each election. The use of larger voting precincts generally, with the number of precinct officers to a precinct varied according to the anticipated vote, would seem to be the most practicable method of adjusting the election machinery to the size of the precinct. A voting precinct of one thousand voters might require four to six persons to man the polls at heavy elections, but could be taken care of by two or three officers during light elections. It is absurd to use the same number of officers at every election, regardless of the size of the vote anticipated. Some states already provide for the use of fewer election officers at certain minor elections. New York, for example, dispenses with the services of the two election clerks in each precinct for primary elections. In Salt Lake City only thirty precincts were used for special elections in 1930 and 1931, instead of the usual number of 149. The cost of precinct officers was reduced from an average of \$2,266.75 for the regular elections to \$415.85 at one of the special elections. Other costs, except advertising, were reduced proportionately.

The size of voting precincts in various cities throughout the country is indicated in the following table, showing the average number of votes cast per precinct in the 1930 general election:⁹

City or County	Vote cast per precinct
Group 1. Cities with 100-199 votes per precinct	
San Francisco (voting machines)	137
Los Angeles	145
Oakland	171
Seattle (King County) (voting machines)	172
Portland, Ore. (Multnomah County)	178
Youngstown	184
Columbus	189
Akron	191

⁹ The statistics for most cities have been taken from the report of the Ohio Institute, Election costs in Ohio. Cities using voting machines throughout, or practically throughout, are indicated in the table. For statistics on the number of registered voters per precinct for selected cities, see above, Chap. VI.

Group 2. Cities with 200-299 votes per precinct

Toledo	201
St. Louis	236
Baltimore	243
Detroit	251
Dayton	256
Denver	262
Omaha (Douglas County)	262
Cleveland	266
Pittsburgh (Allegheny County)	269
Kansas City, Mo.	294
Flint, Mich. (voting machines)	294
Milwaukee	296

Group 3. Cities with 300-399 votes per precinct

Cincinnati	302
St. Paul	309
Jersey City (Hudson County)	312
Chicago	325
Grand Rapids (voting machines)	333
Minneapolis	363
Buffalo (voting machines)	383
Rochester (Monroe County) (voting machines)	389

Group 4. Cities with 400-499 votes per precinct

New York (voting machines)	421
Indianapolis (Marion County) (voting machines)	428
Syracuse (Onandaga County) (voting machines)	461

Group 5. Cities with 500 or more votes per precinct

Boston	617
Hartford (voting machines)	701
Springfield, Mass.	1008
Providence	1062
Worcester, Mass.	1212
New Haven (voting machines)	1406

It is, indeed, significant that the average size of voting precincts in large cities varies from 137 voters in San Francisco to 1406 in New Haven. It is interesting to note, also, that both of these cities use voting machines. The number of voters to the precinct is greatly affected by the size and char-

acter of the ballot. California has an extraordinarily long ballot because of the numerous referendum propositions usually submitted (often as many as fifty at a single election), and consequently finds it necessary to have small voting precincts. The Oregon ballot is also very long, necessitating small precincts. While this affords some explanation of the smallness of the precincts of some of the cities in the first group, it does not follow that the precincts in these cities may not be increased in size. With the use of two or more voting machines to the precinct, or of extra persons to assist in the counting at the close of the day (where paper ballots are used), it would be entirely feasible to increase the size of the precincts. In California, however, at the present time, a double election board is used in precincts where two voting machines are used, thereby eliminating any economy which might follow from the use of larger precincts.

It is obvious that the greater the number of voters to the precinct the smaller will be the cost of elections. For many items the cost per precinct is about the same, whether the number of voters be large or small. The New England states, which have very large precincts, use from six to eight officers to the precinct, while states with small precincts use ordinarily five or six precinct officers, sometimes as few as three where voting machines are used. Boston, with its large precincts, averaging 617 voters in 1930, had a cost for precinct officers of only seventeen cents per vote cast, while the cities of Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, Dayton, and Columbus (all of which had precincts averaging from 200 to 299 voters) had a combined average cost for election officers of forty-three cents. There are some cities with small precincts which have relatively small costs for precinct election officers, such as San Francisco, Kansas City, Minneapolis, and Salt Lake City. This low cost is due either to the use of few officers per precincts with voting machines, or to the low scale of pay of precinct officers.

It would seem that precincts should average at least five hundred voters in any city, regardless of the complexity of the

ballot, provided a proper organization and procedure is used, and that in most cities precincts should approach an average of one thousand voters. This would greatly reduce the cost of elections and provide a much needed flexibility to take care of elections of varying importance. With precincts of this size two or more voting machines would be required, or if paper ballots are used, two counting teams should be provided in heavy elections. In minor elections the number of precinct officers required would be much less, and the cost could be reduced by half or even more.

At the present time the number of election officers used to the precinct is usually five or six.⁷ Very few places get along with less, and some require even seven or eight. There is no necessity for using so many officers to the precinct, regardless of size. Ordinarily two clerks of election, usually called poll clerks, are required to write out the two poll lists of voters. This is unnecessary. The voters may be required to sign their own names in the poll book when they appear, and one copy is quite sufficient for all purposes. The official record of the voters, or poll book, as it is called, should be simplified. Only the name and the address of the voter is required on this record. The recording of the number of the ballot handed to the voter is an unnecessary formality. If the voter's signature copy is made the official poll list, the two poll clerks may be dispensed with, and thus the cost of precinct officers would be cut almost in half. The signature copy of the poll list is preferable to the usual copy prepared by a poll clerk.

One employee is sufficient to check the registration of the voters who apply to vote. It is unnecessary to have two or more copies of the register at the polls and two or more election officers checking off the names. The fact that in many states only a single record is sent out is ample proof of the contention that one is enough. No better example of expensive procedure could be cited than that of having two or three registers at the polls, with precinct officers hired to check each one. One other officer is needed to hand out the ballots and

⁷ For table showing the number in large cities, see above, Chap. IV.

to receive them, or to see to it that they are properly deposited in the ballot box. One person can do this work quite satisfactorily. If voting machines are used, one person is required to take care of the machine and to instruct the voters. In either event, two persons can easily man the polls, and, with proper records and facilities, handle a thousand or more voters during the day. Election jams are usually caused by insufficient voting accommodations in the form of voting booths or voting machines, or by poor records or incompetent employees. If it is thought to be necessary to have at least two officers on duty at all times, however, three should be provided. In heavy elections an extra officer might be employed to assist in taking care of the voters with dispatch. If paper ballots are used, extra persons should be employed in heavy elections to assist in making the count, so that two or more teams may be counting at one time.⁸

The salary paid to election officers varies so greatly that it is difficult to generalize. In many states it is not fixed by state law, but is left, as it should be, to the local authorities. It is quite common for the judges or inspectors to be paid at a higher rate than the clerks, though there is little or no reason for such difference. The salary scale varies from as low as two dollars per day in some Southern cities to as high as twenty-five dollars per day in Newark and Jersey City. Both extremes are unwise. Ten dollars per day is a common salary for large cities, and with paper ballots, involving a night counting session, is not unreasonable, though it is somewhat high for most communities. In small cities and rural communities a salary of four to six dollars per day would seem to be more in line with the present scale of wages. Excessive salaries tend to make the job a prize to be awarded for political service. If voting machines are used, the number of hours required of the election officer is less and the salary should be correspondingly less.

While it is highly desirable in many cities to lower the

⁸ For a detailed statement of methods for conducting the count by two or more separate counting teams, see above, Chap. VI.

salary paid to election officers, at the same time unnecessary trips to the election office and other inconvenience, such as the requiring of a trip to secure the salary, should be eliminated, thus making the position more attractive. Election records and supplies should be delivered either to the polling place or to the home of one member of the election board, and a signed receipt secured for the records. The cost of precinct officers is reduced by the use of voting machines, since fewer officers are employed (usually two less), and since, because of the shorter hours, lower compensation is paid. It is also claimed that larger precincts may be provided if machines are adopted, but most cities using machines have not seen fit to use large precincts with two or more machines each.

Operating Expenses. This item is used to cover all expenses other than personnel, such as rental of polling places, drayage, storage, advertising, ballots, supplies, etc. The terminology used by the various election offices is not uniform, and comparisons here will be more difficult. In many of the cities several important items are lumped together. The methods of holding elections also vary enough from city to city to make comparisons difficult.

Ballots. The cost of ballots in the cities for which data is available is given in the following table:

City	Cost per vote cast (cents)
Chicago	10.9
Boston	state expense
Baltimore	8.9
Cleveland	3.1
Cincinnati	1.8
Columbus	5.6
Dayton	3.9
Kansas City	14.3
Minneapolis	1.6
San Francisco	2.3
Omaha	6.5
Denver (includes supplies)	4.8
State of Ohio	4.6

The wide variation in costs from city to city is very noticeable. In view of the cost of Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Minneapolis, it would seem that a cost of more than three cents per vote cast is excessive. Ballot costs are high in many jurisdictions because of politics in awarding the printing contract and absence of bona fide competition, and the unnecessarily strict state laws governing the rotation of names and other requirements in printing. The costs in Chicago and Kansas City both appear to be greatly excessive, though it should be pointed out that both cities have very long ballots in certain elections.

Supplies. The principal cost under the item of supplies is for the election supplies furnished to the precinct officers, consisting of pencils, pens, ink, blotters, sealing wax, envelopes, etc. These articles should cost very little. It would hardly seem necessary to supply the precinct officers with pens and ink at the present time, since almost everyone carries a fountain pen. In many jurisdictions the supplies are divided between the election officers at the close of the polls, and no pretense whatever is made of returning them. Pencils have to be supplied for use in the voting booths. The supplies required for the election office itself consist principally of stationery, etc.

Printing. In addition to the expense of printing ballots, which is usually separately itemized, the election office must provide various records and forms, which are included in the cost of printing. These include the registration books or records, poll books, affidavits, and instructions for absent voters, blank forms for all sorts of documents filed with the election officer, such as nominations, declinations of nomination, certificates of appointment as election officers, etc. These also should involve a very small cost. Another item of printing cost, which is by far larger than all the rest, is that of printing lists of registered voters. The practice of printing registration lists has been discontinued in many cities. It costs from three to fifteen cents per name, depending upon whether the contract is let politically or otherwise. This is unnecessary,

and should be eliminated by repealing the state law requiring such lists to be printed. The lists are useful only to political parties, which can secure a typewritten list at small expense when necessary. The election office of Milwaukee owns a small printing press to print necessary forms and ballots, which is also used by the other city departments for their printing needs.

Rental. The rental of polling places is a substantial item, as is indicated in the following table, covering the cost for elections and registrations:

City	Cost per vote cast (cents)
New York	14.3
Chicago	10.7
Boston ⁹	2.1
Baltimore	13.4
Cleveland ¹⁰	4.9
Cincinnati	12.2
Columbus	11.7
Dayton	8.3
Kansas City	8.9
× Minneapolis ⁹	1.1
San Francisco ⁹	5.9
Omaha ⁹	1.7
Denver	7.9
Salt Lake City	3.5
State of Ohio	5.0

In most of the above cities the rental cost for registration places is about half of the total cost indicated, though several cities with permanent registration do not use precinct registration. It is significant that there is such a wide variation in the cost of polling place rental. The low cost in Boston (2.1 cents per vote) may be attributed to the use of large voting precincts. The low cost in Omaha and Minneapolis may be attributed in part to the use of public buildings and in part to a low rental. The high cost in New York, Chicago, Balti-

⁹ No precinct registration.

¹⁰ Uses portable houses extensively.

more, Cincinnati, and Columbus may be attributed to the failure to use large precincts and to make wider use of public buildings. All of these cities use public buildings to some extent, and the high rental cost per vote is all the more significant in view of this fact. Several cities also use portable houses in part, which item is not included in the above table. Cleveland, for example, had a cost of 4.8 cents for repair of voting houses, making the total cost of polling places amount to 9.7 cents per vote, but even this figure is not complete, for in addition there should be included items for the hire of regular employees in connection with the portable houses, and interest and depreciation on the houses, as well as certain other items which are properly chargeable to polling places.

It is significant that the city of Milwaukee does not rent any polling places. It uses public buildings very widely, and supplements them with portable houses in some precincts where there is no public building near enough to use as a polling place. The election law of Wisconsin permits the use of polling places anywhere within the ward for each precinct of the ward, thereby making it possible for the election authorities to place a number of polling places within a single building. One school building in Milwaukee serves as the polling place for seven precincts. In this case, however, the voters farthest away have to come only four or five blocks to the polls, and there is no confusion or trouble of any kind in having several polling places in one building. New York City has as many as four polling places in a number of public buildings, the state law permitting the location of a polling place either within the precinct which it serves, or in an adjoining precinct. State laws which require polling places to be located within the precinct boundaries are unwise and cause extra expense. It is not only cheaper to place several polling places in a single public building than to have separate polling places within each of the precincts, but it also serves the electors better, for they know where the polling place will be

each time, and the facilities are better than in rented quarters. With full use of public buildings the rental item for polling places all but disappears. The practice of some cities, however, of paying school janitors substantial sums for extra work tends to offset this saving. If any extra compensation is paid, it should be moderate.

Repairs. The repair item applies particularly to precinct equipment and portable houses. Ordinarily it is very small, but in a few cities a suspiciously high charge is made. In Baltimore, for example, we find an annual item of \$1300 for "overhauling and cleaning" ballot boxes. It is hard to understand why they should require cleaning, or any extensive repairs, for that matter. There are 668 precincts in Baltimore, making the annual cost of cleaning and overhauling of ballot boxes \$1.95 per box.

Cartage. The cost of delivering the election supplies to the precincts and returning them later to the warehouses is a fairly substantial item, particularly where voting machines are used. The items covering this work are not identical from city to city, and it is not possible to make a satisfactory comparison. In New York City, it is interesting to note, the transportation cost over a four-year period amounted to \$286,152.88, or 4.5 cents per vote cast. The cost in the State of Ohio in 1930 was \$40,387.55, or 1.8 cents per vote cast, but this does not include an item of \$63,933.64, which was paid to the presiding judges as extra compensation for delivering election supplies. The total cost for delivering election supplies in Ohio in 1930 was, accordingly, \$104,321.19, or 4.6 cents per vote cast. The cost in Detroit, on the other hand, where portable houses are widely used, was only 1.6 cents per vote cast, and that of Minneapolis, where portable houses are not used, was only .3 cent per vote. The practice of paying a bonus to the election officers for calling for and returning certain election supplies is unduly expensive. It is much more economical for the election office to deliver the election supplies, records, and ballots to the home of

the chairman of the board, taking a receipt. This is fully as safe as turning them over to the chairman at the election office. Even in rural districts, it would hardly seem necessary to have one of the members of the election board call for the supplies, though it is probably necessary to have the records returned by them at the close of the election. There is no good reason why the county election office should not send out the election records and supplies to all the precincts of the county, the delivery truck going from precinct to precinct.

Storage. The cost of storage of election equipment and supplies is also a considerable item. Where the city or county owns the building used, no charge is made on the books of the election office to cover this item. If voting machines are used the storage requirements are somewhat increased.

Advertising. Ordinarily, advertising is a very small item, but in some states it is substantial because of compulsory advertising requirements, which often entail useless expenditures.

Financial Control. The high cost of elections is due in large measure to the absence of any appreciable financial control. Many election expenditures are made compulsory by state law, and the city council or the county board of commissioners cannot trim such items. There is a tendency on the part of such bodies to regard all election expenditures as compulsory, and to pass, without careful scrutiny, the budgets submitted by the election authorities. Elections must be held, and any economy which might invalidate the election must be considered with caution. The state laws regulating elections prescribe in great detail the personnel and the procedure, and some fix the compensation of the election officers. This tends to hamper financial control, though not perhaps as much as might be supposed. Even under existing laws the budget authorities should scrutinize election expenditures and estimates as carefully as those of other departments, and place pressure upon the election office to reduce costs. The real

difficulty is that the election costs must be paid regardless of whether they are within the budget, for the necessary acts in the holding of elections are required by state law, and if the budget proves to be insufficient, the election authorities go ahead and spend beyond the budget, knowing that such additional expenditures must be paid out of the treasury. In some jurisdictions, San Francisco, for example, the election office is not subject to any appreciable financial control, but everywhere the control is limited by the compulsory nature of election expenditures. Another factor limiting such control is the independence of the election office in many places. An election board, separate and distinct from other departments and subject to no administrative control, is able to disregard the budget authorities in preparing its budget, and to refuse to reduce items. In many jurisdictions certain election functions are performed by the county and others by the city or town, which makes financial control difficult.

Obviously, greater financial control is necessary if election costs are to be reduced. The politically dominated election board is under pressure to keep the election costs up rather than to reduce them. Several steps may be taken to establish a greater degree of financial control. First, the use of independent election boards may be abolished and a regular officer of the city or county placed in charge. In this way greater pressure may be exerted to keep down costs. Second, the state law may provide specifically that the election budget shall be subject to review, with the further provision that no expenditures beyond the regular appropriation shall be made unless authorized by an emergency appropriation. This is the practice already in some states where there is effective financial control, and it does not entail any difficulties. Third, the compulsory provisions in state law in connection with advertising, the number of precinct officers to be used in each election, the requirement that precincts be divided when they attain a specific size, etc., may be repealed or modified, permitting the local election officers greater discretion, and elimi-

nating the possibility of voiding elections by not complying with the letter of the law. Fourth, provisions in the state law fixing the salaries of election officers, both precinct and central office employees, may be repealed. Likewise, statutory provisions fixing the number of employees for the offices in the larger communities in the state, with titles and salaries, may be repealed. It is, of course, absurd for the legislature to determine the number of employees to be used in any election office, or to fix their salaries.¹¹

The basic cause of the high cost of elections is the political administration. Almost everywhere election positions are regarded as the patronage and the spoils system prevails throughout. Election jobs are doled out to the faithful workers of both parties, and if there are not enough to go around, more jobs are created. Politically favored printers secure the contracts from the election office at fancy prices, and purchases are made similarly. Under such conditions it is easy to understand why election costs are high. Changes in the laws which would reduce election personnel and costs are vigorously opposed by the organizations. As long as the election administration is spoils ridden, the cost will necessarily be high.

Another cause of high costs is the use of independent election boards. These boards require a special office and office force, though the work during the slack periods is negligible. Since each member of the board has friends or party workers of his organization to take care of, there is a strong tendency to use more regular and temporary employees than are needed. An independent election board is not subject to effective pressure for reducing costs, such as is the case with a single commissioner or a regular official of the city or county. Nevertheless, it may be necessary or advisable to use an independent election board in populous communities, but it should be recognized that its use increases the cost of elections.

¹¹ In Baltimore, where this is the case, it is said that high salaries are paid because the legislature fixes the rates and the city pays the bill.

The Reduction of Costs. The discussion in this chapter, together with the changes proposed, may be recapitulated as follows:

1. Election costs at present are excessive, averaging well above one dollar per vote cast.

2. The variation from city to city is very wide, ranging from thirty-seven cents per vote in Minneapolis and Salt Lake City to \$1.36 in New York City, \$1.35 in Chicago, and even higher in some other cities.

3. Personnel costs constitute approximately two-thirds of the total cost in the majority of cities.

4. The cost of the salaries of members of the election commissions in the largest cities usually ranges from five to ten cents per vote cast. A cost of more than two cents per vote cast for election commissioners is excessive.

5. The cost of the regular employees of the election office varies from less than four cents per registered voter in Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Omaha, to approximately thirty cents in Boston and San Francisco, and over twenty cents in other cities. The number of regular employees should not exceed one per 40,000 registered voters, and the cost should not exceed eight cents per registered voter.

6. The cost of precinct officers is the largest single item of election expenditures. It varies from seventy-two cents per vote cast (not including registration costs) in Columbus, to ten cents in Salt Lake City. Many cities have a cost of twenty-five cents or less, which may be taken as a reasonable maximum cost.

7. The size of precincts varies from an average of only 137 voters in San Francisco to 1406 in New Haven. An average of at least five hundred voters to the precinct should be maintained in every city.

8. The cost of ballots and election supplies varies very widely. These costs may be reduced by securing *bona fide* competition in letting contracts.

9. The cost of rental polling places is substantial, ap-

proaching ten cents per vote cast in many cities. It may be reduced to almost nothing by a full use of public buildings, under state laws permitting the polling place to be located outside of the precinct.

10. Provisions in the election laws which make certain expenditures compulsory should be eliminated as far as possible. Other provisions prescribing in detail the personnel and procedure for the conduct of elections should be repealed or modified.

11. The number of elections in many states should be reduced. Special elections should be avoided except in urgent cases, and when held, should be conducted under special provisions in order to keep down the cost.

12. Greater financial control should be provided by subjecting the election budget to review, and by requiring the election office to expend only such appropriations, regular and emergency, as may be made.

13. The election administration should be divorced from political spoils.

14. The use of special, independent boards to have charge of elections should be confined to the largest cities.