

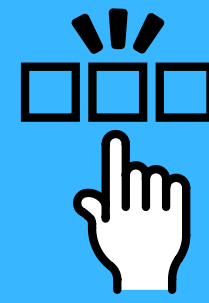
Overseas and New Methods of Voting

Pros and Cons



OVERSEAS VOTING

- **PROS: Keeping the power of democracy in voter's hands**
- Overseas citizens can participate into voting
- Citizens can review their choices at home
- Able to take all the time they need to study the issues
- **CONS: Possibly low voting turnouts**
- FACTS: Only 10.5% out of 100% of overseas citizens participated in 2004 Australian federal elections
- **CONS: Complicated registration and voting procedures**
- Australia: requirements to apply overseas voting online in advance & requirements on authorisation by authorised Australian citizens or local Australian Consulate before and during voting processes (Source: experience of Australian Overseas Citizens)
- >> Potential discouragement on voting overseas



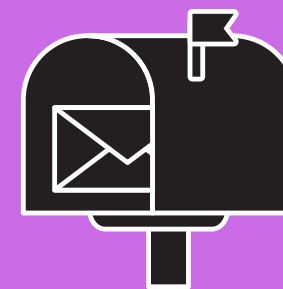
E-VOTING

- **PROS: Bringing convenience to voters**
- Less time consuming for voters to cast their votes
- Not required to vote in person on election day
- Elections can still take place as scheduled under emergency circumstances e.g. 2020 US Election under COVID-19
- **PROS: Increase efficiency in election process**
- Significantly reduce time required on counting votes
- Reduce the risk of errors in counting votes
- **PROS: Reduce cost of election process**
- Reduce printing, storage and transportation cost of ballots
- Reduce labour costs on counting and re-validating ballots
- **CONS: Potential obstacles in voting process**
- Difficulties for specific groups e.g. people with limited information skills to cast their votes online or via voting machine



EARLY VOTING

- **PROS: Bringing convenience to voters**
- Voters can vote on or before the Election Day
- Reduced waiting time on election day
- Elections can still take place as scheduled under emergency circumstances e.g. 2020 US Election under COVID-19
- **CONS: Possibly lower voting turnouts**
- Study of University of Wisconsin in 2013: "Early voting lowers likelihood of turnout by three to four percentage points"
- **CONS: Possibilities on ill-informed voting**
- Voters not having knowledge of events that may occur later in a campaign or just before election day before casting their votes
- **CONS: Increase campaign cost**
- Candidate who limits spending on voter mobilization to the last few days before election day will be at a serious disadvantage

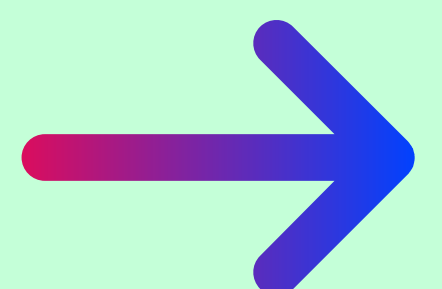


MAIL-IN VOTING

- **PROS: Bringing convenience to voters**
- Voters can vote by mail in prior to election day
- Not required to vote in person on election day
- Elections can still take place as scheduled under emergency circumstances e.g. 2020 US Election under COVID-19
- **PROS: Reduction of costs**
- FACTS: Per-vote expenses declined 40% on average in election administration related industries after counties in Colorado, USA practiced mail-in voting in 2014
- Reduced needs on opening polling stations in remote areas
- **CONS: Potential obstacles and chaos in voting process**
- Potential needs on tracking ballots due to concerns about the arrival time of ballots
- Election disputes e.g. whether the ballots arrives after the deadlines due to unexpected circumstances should be counted

Vulnerabilities in Electoral Process

Suggested Preventive Measures





Vulnerabilities in Election Process & Suggested Preventive Measures



Poll Books and Database

- Contains voter registration database
- Verifying voters' eligibility and process registration
- Vulnerabilities :
 - Disclosure or alteration of entries from the poll book
 - Leakage on voter's information
 - Delay of election process due to expected alteration of entries from the poll books, undermining public trust on election process
- Suggestions :
 - Establish sharing centres to provide a mechanism for stakeholders to share data on vulnerabilities more quickly against emerging threats or cyber attacks

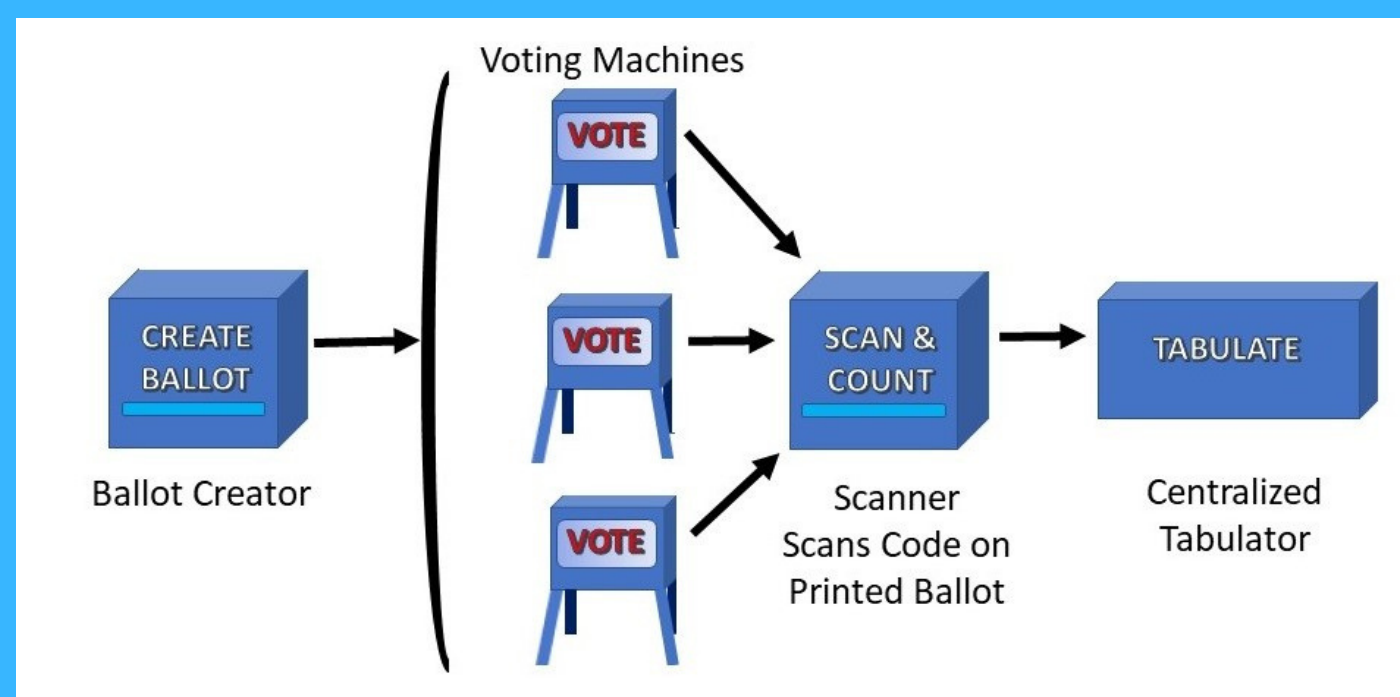


Voting Machines

- Voters cast their votes on voting machines
- Vulnerabilities :
 - Insertion of malicious code by hackers
 - Alteration of parts in voting machines by unauthorized personnels
- Suggestions :
 - Purchase new voting machines & outlawing optical scan technologies that do not leave paper trails
 - Generate a voter-verified paper audit trail work by the voting machine as a bulwark against hacking & build trust
 - Secure the hardware of existing voting machines e.g. use tamper proof seals & lock them up physically when not in use
 - Establish sharing centres to provide a mechanism for stakeholders to share data on vulnerabilities more quickly against emerging threats or cyber attacks



Tabulation System



(Source: <https://www.darkreading.com/risk/how-can-we-make-election-technology-secure/a/d-id/1336975>)

- Collecting and combining results of election
- Vulnerabilities :
 - Manipulation of tabulation process through hacking of tabulation system between precincts
- Suggestions :
 - Update the security patches of operating system and the antivirus definitions of machines regularly



Dissemination System

- Reporting election results to citizens through news media
- Vulnerabilities :
 - Inaccurate election result reported
 - Possibility of election day chaos created
- Suggestions :
 - Create verified, secured & redundant lines of communication with media organizations to share information timely and credibly
 - Media: Take care to be skeptical of hacking reports

Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it.

Susan B. Anthony

DATES AND HOURS OF EXTERNAL ELECTION

2007 PHILIPPINE MID-TERM ELECTION

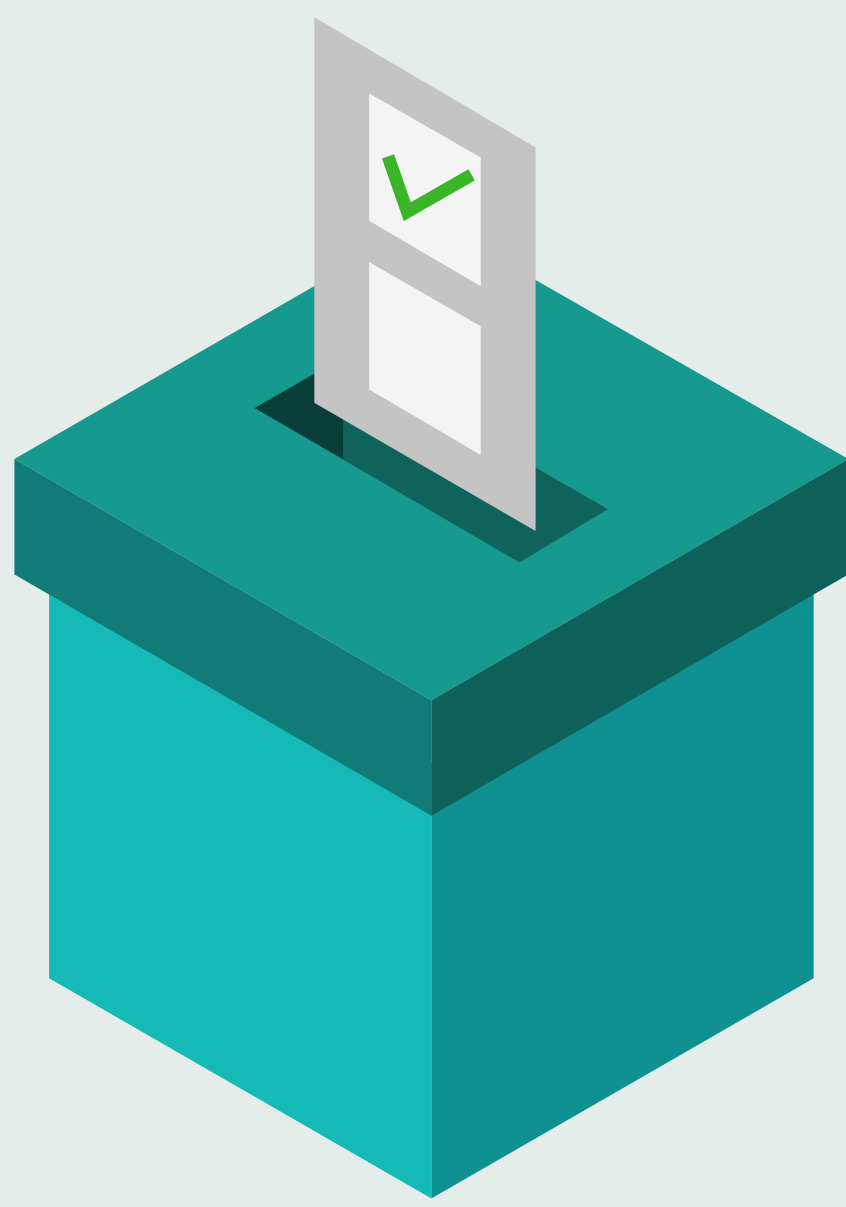
only 12.9% of the Filipino overseas citizens went to polling stations in Taipei(台北), Taichung(台中) and Kaohsiung(高雄)

2016 PHILIPPINE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The Philippine government usually gives **about a month** for their overseas citizens to vote. However, the targeted Filipino workers are only allowed to go out **on a Sunday** **four weeks a month** by their employers.

SUGGESTIONS:

Designate a "VOTING DAY" as specific public holiday for **Filipino overseas citizens** to increase the voting rate.

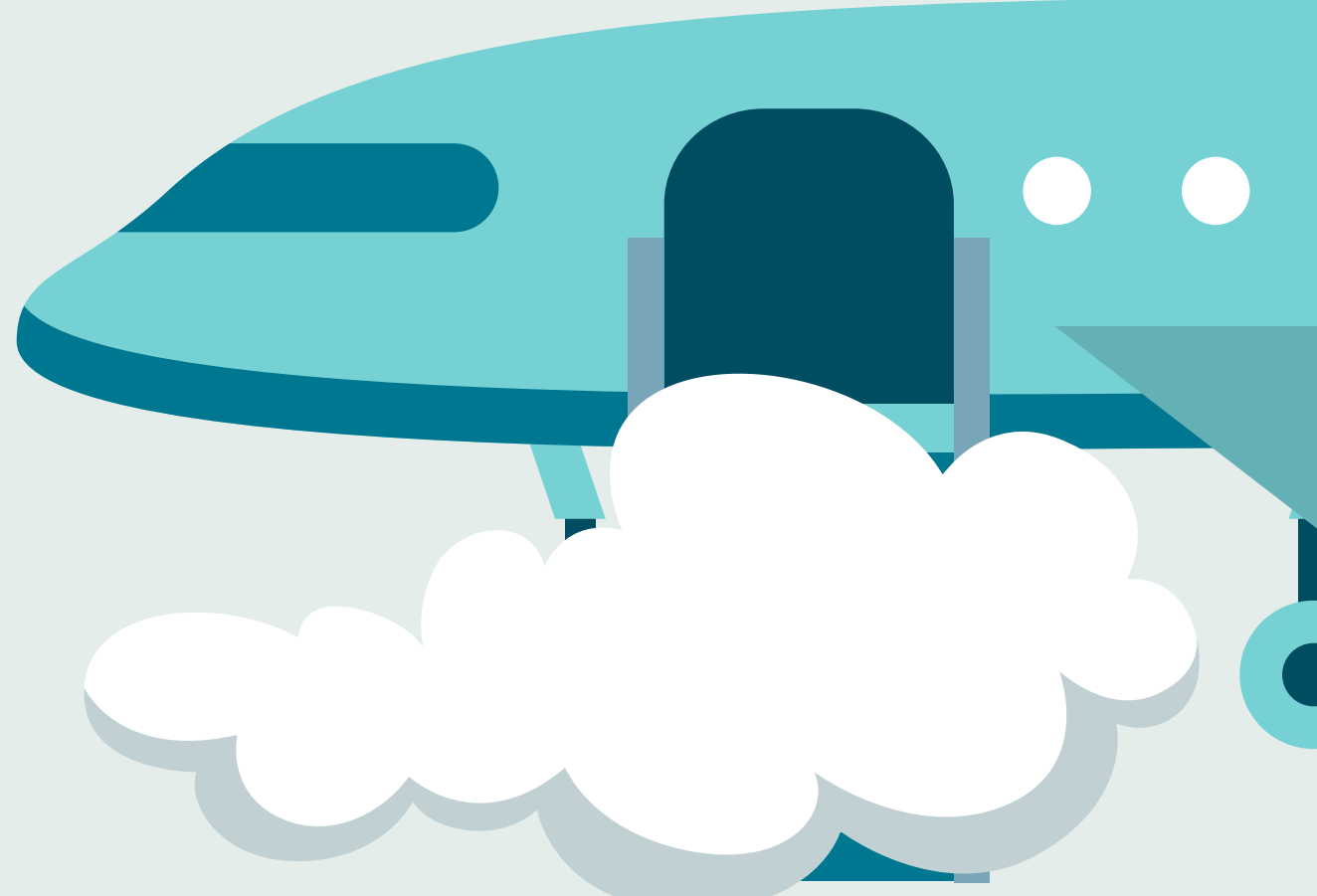


SAME VOTING PERIOD FOR ALL STATIONS

Malaysia's overseas polling stations **all close at 5 p.m** to ensure the fairness of the election.

FINLAND'S ADVANCED VOTING STATION

Finland has an advanced voting station in **75** countires.



SUPERVISION ON THE POLLING STATION

(THE FORMATION OF ELECTORAL COMMITTEE ABROAD)



PHILIPPINES

OFFICE OF OVERSEAS VOTING (OFOV)

- Under 'COMELEC' (the election committee)
- Composed of 7 departments
- In charge of OVERSEAS VOTING (registration, IT, Finance, etc.)

MALAYSIA

ELECTION COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (EC)

- Composed of 7 members, (civil servants, scholar, NGO and police)
- Only postal votes
- A department to verify votes

SINGAPORE

ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT SINGAPORE (EDS)

- Under the Prime Minister's Office
- No department for external voting
- Only 10 overseas polling station
- Responsible for Online registration, electional finance, verification,etc.

SUGGESTIONS:

Fairness and efficiency should be a prioritised.

Therefore, Hong Kong can refer to the case study in Philippines and Singapore, and make adjustments under Hong Kong's situation (e.g. location and numbers of oversea voting stations) to reduce the increase in electoral cost.

If Hong Kong only provides postal/ proxy voting, it is suggested to learn from the UK (relatively mature monitoring mechanism).

IRAN

ELECTION MONITORING AGENCY

- Under the Guardian Council
- responsible of 279 oversea polling station
- make sure the votes will be safely send back to Iran
- Also have rights to DQ candidates without explanations (usually women)

UNITED KINGDOM

THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC)

- Independent agency
- No department for external voting
- Only postal/ proxy votes
- Only verify votes and the validation of oversea citizenship



Types of Election

UK / Philippines:

only national election (e.g. president, legislators) → residents permanently staying abroad are not familiar with the district affairs → X influence to the political context → fairness

Singapore:

Both national and mayoral elections (a small state)

Analysis

HK → only national election (e.g. legislative council election)

→ X District council election

- Overseas Citizens are not familiar with HK's district affairs
- They do not need to suffer the electoral outcome
- National election relates to overseas residents (e.g. diplomatic policy, welfare & support, year budget)
- X district affairs (bus routes, traffic jam...)

Exercise, Enactment & Revision of External Voting-related Legislation by the Ruling Party

ENGLAND

1910: external voting → for those having contribution to military and diplomacy in war period

1983: conservative party became ruling party → the representation of People Act 1985

1985: the condition 'the maximum overseas residence period' is 15 years

2000: it is extended to 20 years (intend to accomplish 'votes for life')

2002: labour party (ruling party) → it is shortened to 15 years again (restrictive) → until now

MALAYSIA

2002: only military members, civil servants, students and their spouses staying overseas could enjoy the external voting right

2011: malaysia select committee → expanded to more overseas malaysian (e.g. work) → relax

2013: the first time of the act → Malaysia legislative & presidential election → ruling party: national front

SINGAPORE

2001: People's Action Party (ruling party) → pass the ordinance of external voting → to strengthen the linkage between overseas citizens / students and Singapore

2006: the first time was 2006 Singapore's presidential election

2009: amendment → from "an aggregate of 2 years within 5 years before the election" to "30 days within 3 years before the election" (relax)

PHILIPPINES

2003: "Overseas Absentee Voting Law (Republic Act (RA) no. 9189" got passed

2004: the first time of external voting → ruling party: Lakes-Christian Muslim Democrats

Analysis

- The exercise of external voting is related to the partisan benefit e.g. the intention of UK conservative party → benefit from the votes from oversea voters
- Rational calculation → source of votes → electoral strategy