The Washington Poll
King County Exit Poll, November 7, 2006

The exit poll was conducted by the University of Washington at a random sample of 65 polling place precincts throughout King County. At each polling place, a random selection of voters were asked to complete a self-administered survey and was available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian and Spanish. The sample design included an over-sample of precincts with traditionally low vote-by-mail rates, as well as minority and low-income precincts, in an effort to compare attitudes on vote-by-mail across different groups of votes. A total of 2,518 interviews were conducted with a margin of error of +/- 1.9%. Prof. Matt Barreto, department of Political Science, was the director of the exit poll.

Table 1

As you may have heard, King County will be switching to an election system in which all voters must vote by mail. Do you support or oppose this policy?

	Total
Strongly support	18%
Somewhat support	32%
Somewhat oppose	25%
Strongly oppose	25%

How confident are you that your ballot will be delivered safely to the County, if you vote by mail in the future?

Very confident	35%
Somewhat confident	39%
Only a little confident	14%
Not at all confident	13%

How confident are you that the integrity of your vote will be maintained once received and processed by the County, if you vote by mail in the future?

Very confident	31%
Somewhat confident	42%
Only a little confident	13%
Not at all confident	13%

Table 2

How confident are you that your ballot will be delivered safely to the County, if you vote by mail in the future?

	Among voters who support vote-by-mail	Among voters who oppose vote-by-mail	Total Countywide Sample
Very confident	45%	24%	35%
Somewhat confident	44%	32%	39%
Only a little confident	8%	20%	14%
Not at all confident	3%	24%	13%

How confident are you that the integrity of your vote will be maintained once received and processed by the County, if you vote by mail in the future?

	Among voters who support vote-by-mail	Among voters who oppose vote-by-mail	Total Countywide Sample
Very confident	42%	20%	31%
Somewhat confident	48%	36%	42%
Only a little confident	8%	18%	13%
Not at all confident	2%	25%	13%

The results indicate that polling place voters are evenly divided on the vote-by-mail issue. Exactly one-half of the polling place voters support the move to vote-by-mail, while the other half oppose the new voting system in King County. Overall, polling place voters are mostly confident in the delivery system – i.e. postal service – regarding the vote-by-mail process. However, a noticeable margin, about one-quarter of polling place voters are not very confident. Similarly, with regard to the integrity of the mail ballots during processing by the County, a majority of polling place voters are confident that the County will do a good job, while one in four is not very confident.

When the results for confidence in vote-by-mail are broken down by those who support or oppose, it becomes more clear that voters who oppose the transition to vote-by-mail have far less confidence in the system. For example, 44% of polling place voters who oppose the transition to vote-by-mail stated that they were not confident that the mail ballots would be delivered safely to the County, compared to just 11% of those who supported vote-by-mail. Likewise,90% of vote-by-mail supporters were confident that the integrity of the vote would be maintained during the processing, compared to 56% confident among polling place voters who were opposed to vote-by-mail.

The findings suggest a glass half-empty, half-full outcome for polling place voters. One the one hand, many voters are comfortable with the transition to vote-by-mail and have total confidence in the delivery and processing of the mail ballots. On the other hand, those who are opposed to the transition to vote-by-mail have stated significant concerns, which might be related to a lack of information about exactly how the vote-by-mail process works now, and will work in the future.

Table 3

As you may have heard, King County will be switching to an election system in which all voters must vote by mail. Do you support or oppose this policy?

	Support	Oppose
Democrat	54%	46%
Independent	50%	50%
Republican	44%	56%
White	50%	50%
African American	60%	40%
Asian American	62%	38%
Latino	52%	48%
Other	41%	59%
Less than $40,000	52%	48%
$40,000 - $80,000	49%	51%
More than $80,000	51%	49%
No college degree	53%	47%
College degree	50%	50%
Graduate degree	49%	51%
18 – 29 years old	56%	44%
30 – 44 years old	47%	53%
45 – 65 years old	50%	50%
Over 65 years old	56%	44%
Male	47%	53%
Female	55%	45%

Table 4

How confident are you that your ballot will be delivered safely to the County, if you vote by mail in the future?

	Confident	Not confident
Democrat	77%	23%
Independent	69%	31%
Republican	67%	33%
White	73%	27%
African American	72%	28%
Asian American	77%	23%
Latino	75%	25%
Other	70%	30%
Less than $40,000	73%	27%
$40,000 - $80,000	68%	32%
More than $80,000	78%	28%
No college degree	72%	28%
College degree	73%	27%
Graduate degree	74%	26%
18 – 29 years old	77%	23%
30 – 44 years old	69%	31%
45 – 65 years old	73%	27%
Over 65 years old	78%	22%
Male	73%	27%
Female	74%	26%

Table 5

How confident are you that the integrity of your vote will be maintained once received and processed by the County, if you vote by mail in the future?

	Confident	Not confident
Democrat	80%	20%
Independent	68%	32%
Republican	64%	36%
White	74%	26%
African American	76%	24%
Asian American	80%	20%
Latino	82%	18%
Other	61%	39%
Less than $40,000	72%	28%
$40,000 - $80,000	71%	29%
More than $80,000	77%	23%
No college degree	72%	28%
College degree	73%	27%
Graduate degree	77%	23%
18 – 29 years old	75%	25%
30 – 44 years old	71%	29%
45 – 65 years old	74%	26%
Over 65 years old	80%	20%
Male	72%	28%
Female	76%	24%

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