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## [Dispatch From Richmond: Huge Turnout](#)

Posted by [Jason Cherkis](#) on Nov. 4, 2008, at 5:30 pm

**Doug Sparks**, a D.C. lawyer stationed in **Richmond** to monitor voting, has just stumbled into the Holiday Inn. He's heading to the bar, he says.

Sparks needs to charge up his cellphone. And, he says, he needs a drink.

It is 5:12 p.m. Sparks has been working at one precinct since 5:30 a.m. He says the turnout was huge and may be a record.

"I think our precinct is in the running for highest voter turnout in the state," Sparks says. "There is 2400 registered voters in our precinct. That's what we were told. As of a half an hour ago, there had been 1670 votes cast in our precinct today. In addition to that, there were 297—about 300—absentee ballots cast. I'm pretty confident that there is going to be over 2200 voters out of 2400 that cast their ballots...It goes until 7."

Sparks goes on: “This is an overwhelmingly dedicated **Obama** emancipation group that absolutely wouldn’t have missed it for the world. It’s going to exceed 90 percent in our precinct. I wouldn’t be surprised if it didn’t exceed 95 percent.”

I ask Sparks if there were any problems. He mentions there was at least one instance of a touch screening screwing up—it went to the page for the presidential race and then just showed a blank screen. One voter said that he didn’t get a chance to vote—the screen promptly said he had already voted.

In more **McCain**-friendly precincts, Sparks reports, the turnout was way low.

“I can tell you I feel very very good about what I saw,” Sparks says. “This is one of those rare elections where really, really nasty weather benefits the Democrats....”

“I’m totally dead tired,” Sparks adds.