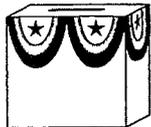


ture is considering proposals to create an appointive system for judges, and the legislature may be inclined to propose a constitutional amendment—subject to voter approval—to make appellate judge-ships appointive rather than elective.<sup>38</sup> That would help streamline the ballot.

3. *Weekend or Holiday Voting.* Some election reformers have proposed that North Carolina consider voting on a weekend day, such as a Saturday or Sunday, or on a holiday, in an effort to boost turnout. The theory is that if the public did not have to work, voters would be more likely to take the time to vote. In fact, some elections have been held on weekend days—including the 1964 guber-

natorial primary and the runoff primary. But holiday voting doesn't always work as expected. With a mobile population and many outlets for leisure activities, voters may well opt for a trip to the beach or mountains rather than staying home to vote. Thus, weekend or holiday voting is rarely regarded as a practical solution—particularly since it would require a federal constitutional amendment to change the federal voting day of the second Tuesday in November for general elections. The 1973 Commission on Election and Voting Abuse in North Carolina recommended against Saturday elections, and the subject has not come up for serious debate in years.<sup>39</sup>

## *What Can the Kids of Arizona and Costa Rica Teach Us About Voting ?*



Nearly every state in the union is wrestling with how to improve voter registration and voter turnout, and many have adopted innovative programs aimed at increasing citizen participation in the electoral process. But none may be more innovative than the program some public-spirited Arizonans saw at work in the Central American country of Costa Rica, a tiny democracy without a military force, without good transportation or communications programs, but with a traditionally high voter turnout rate.

Arizona's experiment began in 1987 when three Phoenix businessmen heard about the 90-percent voter participation rate in Costa Rica. There they learned that Costa Rican children are allowed—in fact, encouraged—to go into voting booths with their parents so they can learn more about the election process. Concerned about Arizona's turnout of only 45.2 percent in the 1984 presidential election year, the trio came home to launch a pilot project in 1988 with 30,000 school pupils in

Phoenix schools. They organized a mock election, taught the children about politics and candidates and issues and the voting process, and registered them to vote in the mock election. That fall, in the 65 precincts where the Kids Voting program was in effect, nearly 7,000 children accompanied their parents to the polls, and turnout was 3 percent greater than in the rest of the county and the state.

That may not sound like a huge increase, but it is. "A 3 percent increase in voter turnout is significant," says Bruck Merrill, a professor at Arizona State University and director of the media research program at ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunications. Translated statewide, 32,000 more voters would have participated, more than enough to make the difference in many elections. Merrill pointed out that John F. Kennedy in 1960, Richard M. Nixon in 1968, and Jimmy Carter in 1976 won the presidency by a margin of less than 3 percent. Now a group of Arizona businesses have adopted the project, with hopes of increasing statewide voter turnout by 5 percent. —*Jack Betts*