



SECURE, TRANSPARENT, AND ACCURATE VOTING TECHNOLOGY

In an election system riddled with problems, one of the key issues is whether Americans can be assured their vote will be counted as cast. Before the debacle in Florida in the 2000 election, most voters took for granted that their vote was in fact counted and counted accurately, no matter what technology they used to vote. But the intense scrutiny of the election system since then has raised serious concerns about voting technology. The now-infamous and discredited punch-card technology, along with outdated lever machines, soon will be a thing of the past.

The requirements placed on voting equipment today – that it be accessible to voters with disabilities, that it be able to be used by non-English speakers, that it be accurate, that it be able to provide a meaningful recount – make the design of such equipment critically important. At present, there is no perfect voting technology available. The weaknesses of various options must be weighed against the standards of **accessibility**, **accuracy**, and **accountability**. Above all, the technology employed must merit the confidence of the voters.

Why is verification important and how can it be accomplished?

We are deeply concerned that all Americans' voting rights are protected and that all Americans have equal access to voting and the right to vote privately and independently. We also believe that no one's right to vote has meaning if the voter cannot be reasonably assured that their vote was counted as cast. Our goal is to have secure and accurate voting technology that is accessible to all voters.

- **Voter confidence is the cornerstone of free and fair elections.** Enabling voting systems to provide voters with an independently accessible voter verifiable audit trail is an important component of helping to ensure the integrity of the voting process. Every voter should have the opportunity to verify in an independent and private manner that his or her vote will be cast and counted as directed by the voter. Voting machines should produce a voter verified audit trail, such as a paper ballot or an audio audit trail that can be made accessible to voters with a wide range of disabilities and to language minorities and conforms to or exceeds the voluntary standards established by the US Election Assistance Commission. Verification methods should be transparent to voters and simple to employ in recounts and audits.

- **Requirements for such a voter verified audit trail should not be enacted until such machines are fully developed and deployed.** Until such time, we strongly support the Help America Vote Act mandate that every polling place must have at least one machine accessible to voters with disabilities in place by January of 2006.

Why are transparency and accountability important?

The entire voting system – from planning for elections to equipment purchase and deployment of machines must be transparent and accountable. Vendors’ concerns about protecting proprietary information should not trump core democratic values of openness and public accountability. The companies that produce equipment for elections must be held to a high standard of accountability and transparency.

- **State and local elections officials must be far more vigilant in their oversight of the vendors.** The government, not the vendors, must be in control of our system of voting.
- **Vendors should adhere to strict nonpartisan policies and practices.**
- **There must be competitive and open contracting processes for the purchase of voting machines.**
- **There must be strict conflict of interest codes for elections officials and vendors.**

How can security and accuracy be guaranteed?

- **Testing of machines should be done publicly and by a truly independent body.** Testing should be done at every step of the process, including random testing of machines on Election Day.
- **To reduce security vulnerabilities, voting machines should not be networked or connected to the Internet.**
- **There must be truly independent inspection of software.**
- **There should be random audits of a percentage of voting machines in every election** to determine if there were malfunctions or deliberate manipulation of vote counts.

How can a recount be completed accurately?

- **In order to be meaningful, the accessible voter verified audit trail must be used as the ballot of record and in all recounts and audits.**