



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DELAWARE SUPPORTS ACQUISITION OF VOTING EQUIPMENT THAT PRODUCES A PAPER TRAIL

The League of Women Voters of the U.S. (LWVUS), at its 2006 convention, affirmed strong support and preference for voting systems which employ a voter-verifiable paper ballot or other paper record which can be verified by the voter while still in the process of voting, and which can be independently hand-counted for audits and recounts.

A task force requested by Delaware's Department of Elections is currently reviewing our state's voting equipment. Since our voting machines are two decades old, what kind of system should we invest in to modernize or replace them? We believe that the most important change we need is to incorporate the use of paper, in order to have a tangible record of each person's vote.

For several years after the 2000 voting debacle in Florida, many states turned to the same kinds of paperless touchscreen or DRE voting machines that Delaware still uses. However, by now (2016) 35 states use voting machines that leave a paper trail—mostly optical scanners or machines that print out a paper receipt. *Delaware is one of only five states* that almost exclusively use paperless systems. (The other states are New Jersey, South Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana.<sup>1</sup>) Delaware uses optical scanning only to record absentee votes.

There are many potential problems with paperless voting. Without a paper backup, it is difficult or impossible to verify whether a machine is malfunctioning. In the 2016 primary election, the North Carolina NAACP reported that some machines were “flipping” votes, i.e. recording a different candidate than the voter had chosen. The NC Board of Elections then advised voters to double check their paper ballots.<sup>2</sup> Without any paper backup, obviously, this could not be done. Any post-election audit is also aided tremendously by having a physical record of voter intent (and handicapped without it).

Paperless voting fuels “rigged election” claims, and in Georgia, which does not normally use paper, there is currently an FBI investigation of possible hacking of the center that inspects and programs the state's electronic voting machines. Until that investigation is completed, citizens' groups such as Common Cause have called for exclusive use of paper ballots due to uncertainty about the reliability of the machines.<sup>3</sup>

In an age of increasingly close elections, recounts, and fears of tampering with our election process, Delaware should adopt a system that leaves a paper trail to ensure that voters can see and have confidence in the integrity of the state's elections. Due to the age of our machines and problems that have been seen in other states, we recommend that this change be made as soon as possible.

---

<sup>1</sup> CSMonitor.com Do electronic voting machines put 2016 election at risk? Sept. 1, 2016

<sup>2</sup> WBTV.com: NAACP calls for action after reported voter irregularities. Oct. 24, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Commoncause.org press release: FBI investigation of Georgia election systems breach. Mar. 14, 2017