

## The important work of the Open Voting Consortium

October 16, 2007

Democracy today is at risk by the very instrument that seeks to uphold it. Electronic voting machines with proprietary software, meager security, significant technical flaws and lack of voter verification procedures threaten to undermine our voting rights and thus the reliability of the election process. These voting machines are being marketed by for-profit companies and bought by states, counties and municipalities at an alarming rate. We cannot wait for Congress to pass legislation to address this danger. We, the people, must take action NOW to ensure the accuracy and integrity of upcoming elections.

Election integrity cannot be assured without openness and transparency. Using proprietary electronic voting machines to conduct elections is dangerous to democracy because there is no way of ensuring their accuracy. It is imperative that there be a required voter-verified paper trail for every election so that any errors and irregularities caused by the voting machines can be discovered.

With the so-called "Direct Recording Electronic" computer technology in use, there is constant risk of a program flaw — or worse, tampering with the software, which could change votes and thus change the outcome of elections. Without a "voter verified audit trail," meaning a permanent record of each vote that the voter can check to verify that it represents his or her intent, these changes might never be detected.

Recent studies have reported numerous very serious technical flaws in electronic voting machines, including allowing a person to: vote more than once, see ballots that have been cast on a machine, change party affiliation on ballots, alter the counting of votes, modify, create or even delete votes inside the voting machines and interfere with audit logs and election results. Their analysis shows that the voting system is far below even the most minimal security standards, placing our future elections at risk to both insider and outsider attacks.

While I believe the most dependable and failsafe method of voting is to use hand-marked and hand-counted paper ballots, I understand that the method of voting is a local decision, and that many jurisdictions are choosing to use some form of electronic voting system.

As such, and I support and endorse the work of the Open Voting Consortium in its attempts to develop a voting system that uses standard, non-networked computers and printers running open-source, public domain, independently verifiable software to produce a standardized, permanent, paper ballot that the voter can personally verify before having it optically scanned. Under the Open Voting Consortium system, once scanned the paper ballot would be securely held and be available for hand inspection and counting.

Thus the Open Voting Consortium proposal would provide a voting system that:

- Stops Secrecy in Vote Tabulation
- Provides a Voter-verifiable Paper Trail
- Is Scientifically Verifiable at all stages
- Saves Money:
- Provides for Multi-lingual, Handicap Accessible Voting:
- Can be deployed on non-networked, locked down, standardized personal computers and printers.

I join in supporting my colleague in the House of Representatives, Rep. Maxine Waters; peace and civil rights activists such as Medea Benjamin, and many other supporters, in endorsing the work of the Open Voting Consortium.

