

Declaration for Election Quality

We the People trust voting systems that are based on voter verifiable paper ballots and strongly distrust voting systems based on digitally recorded votes. Public voting systems must be based on voter verifiable paper ballots.

The national press is filled with articles detailing horror stories about programming errors, malfunction, and extraordinarily poor security in electronic vote *recording* machines that digitally record and count votes. Computer voting software is currently too vulnerable to undetectable fraud.

Some vendors have offered to supplement digital vote recording with what they call a "paper audit trail." It does not solve the numerous problems. A paper audit trail can be a full-text-ballot or a ballot-summary, but the digital ballot is the one that is counted. The audit trail is used only for recount. If printed after the fact, it shows what was recorded and not necessarily what the voter intended. If printed while the voter is present, it may not reflect what is digitally recorded.

Only by eliminating the digital record and using instead a full-text, voter verifiable paper ballot will the problems associated with these vote *recording* machines be resolved.

Vote recording, verification and casting

We oppose the purchase and use of digital vote *recording* machines even if the machine supplements its digital ballot with a printed ballot. The only acceptable ballot is a full-text paper ballot that is verified and cast by the voter or used to obtain a replacement ballot. No other record of votes should be made or counted.

Ballots used for precinct, early and provisional voting must be identical to the ballots used for absentee and mail ballot voting. Consequently, they can be counted using the same counting system.

There are four reasons for using a machine to mark a paper ballot:

- permit disabled voters to vote in private
- warn voters of under votes
- prevent over votes
- reduce legibility problems that obscure the voter's intent.

We support the purchase and use of vote *marking* (not vote *recording*) machines for use by voters with disabilities so they can vote privately and unassisted. These vote *marking* machines must use a full-text paper ballot only and not create or record a digital ballot. (A blind voter's ability to verify is not weakened by printing the ballot since the printed ballot is no less verifiable to a blind person than is a digital recording.)

We support also the use of *vote marking* (not *vote recording*) machines for able voters. These *vote marking* machines could be the same *vote marking* machines used by the disabled, or a cost reduced model that does not provide the *accessibility* features. It must not keep any record of the voter's choices.

We support for able voters, as an interim and lower cost alternative, the use of hand-marked paper ballots in precincts and early voting places. They are more trustworthy than *vote recording* machines.

When *vote marking* machines are used, voters must be given the choice between using the machine and hand-marking their ballot. This provides a backup in the event that the *vote marking* machines are broken or overloaded.

We would support the use of *vote verification* machines to read a marked paper ballot and inform the voter how the *vote counting* machine will later interpret the votes on the ballot. Verification must provide for full-text descriptions and not simply a summary of votes. A version of this machine could provide audio and large font options and a way for a disabled voter to navigate the verification process.

Vote marking and vote verification machines must not keep a count or record of votes.

Vote counting

We support the use of *vote counting* equipment that counts all of the ballots – early, absentee, precinct, provisional, and, when applicable, mail ballots – by the same method. Alternatively, we would also support hand-counting of the paper ballots, or some combination of vote-counting equipment and hand counting.

Controls must be put in place to manually assess the quality of the counting system results during the counting process. This assessment should include hand-counted samples.

Counting should not commence before Election Day. To prevent voter disenfranchisement and multiple voting, all ballots must be qualified before counting begins.

Therefore, since the people consider voting to be one of our most fundamental rights, and all political parties, all candidate and issue committees, and the public rely on the election system for secure, accurate and reliable election results:

We believe that *vote recording* machines that make a digital record of votes and also count these votes are dangerous. We believe that elected officials must not risk election quality on a technology that has proven to be untrustworthy. We insist on the right to use voter verifiable paper ballots as the only record of votes.