

Subject: RE: Review of California voting systems
Sent: Friday, March 23, 2007 8:35 AM
To: Voting Systems
Subject: Review of California voting systems

To Whom it May Concern:

Since free and fair elections are the very basis of our form of government, implementing free, fair, and accountable elections and methods is critical.

The system used by my county for many years was a paper ballot and optical reader. This allows the authenticity of a human hand marking a ballot, an authentic hard copy for recounts, and the speed and accuracy of optical reading for initial counts. This system is simple, and removes many layers of possible tampering that exist in electronic machines, even those with a paper trail.

I worked as an election judge in my precinct last year, and a number of people expressed issues with the method in which the paper trail was generated. They said it was difficult to review, and they did not feel they had ample opportunity to verify that their choices on the computer were in fact reflected on the paper ballot. One person even left not feeling convinced that the record she saw pass under the glass on the machine was actually paper - she felt it was computer generated.

Public confidence in our election methods is crucial. This is a situation where perhaps using the latest technology creates more problems than it solves. What gives people the most confidence that their vote has been fairly marked and recorded? This should be a major issue in determining the method of conducting our elections.

Please consider returning to (or initiating) a paper ballot read by an optical scanner as our primary method of counting votes. In the case of those who need special access, electronic machines may be appropriate, but should be as secure as is possible, and should be open source, to ensure that all methods of collecting, recording, and counting entered information are known, and can be seen to be accurate.

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring free, fair, and accurate elections in this state.