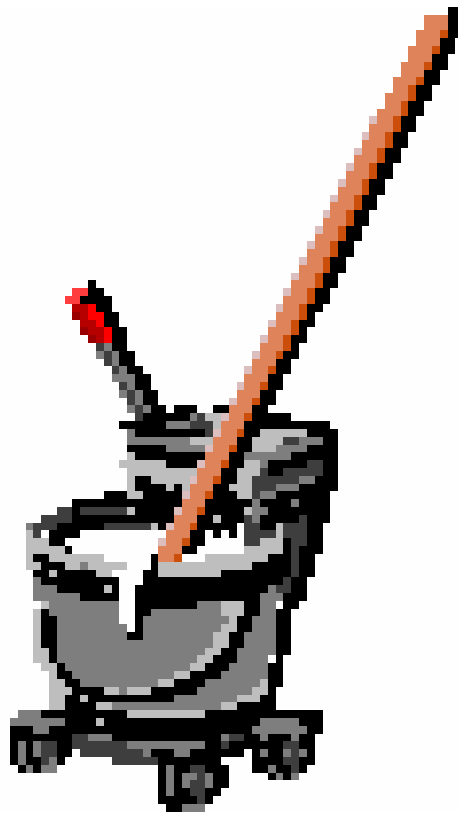


A Report by
**Fairfax County Republican
Committee**
**“Operation
Ballot Integrity”**



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For full report: http://fairfaxco-gop.org/download/ballot_integrity.pdf

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 3, 2003, Fairfax County used, for the first time in a full Election, Direct Recording Equipment (DRE). The DRE - lap top computer voting devices – were purchased by the County in anticipation of the federal Helping Americans Vote Act, a law to enhance voting opportunities for the disabled, and upgrade voting equipment nationally. The Fairfax experience was a bitter disappointment – at best.

On Election Day, the Electoral Board and Fairfax County Republican Committee (FCRC), among others, received many complaints and criticisms of the new system. When several failed machines were removed from their polling places by the Electoral Board - and then returned - FCRC filed and was granted a court injunction to prevent irreparable harm should the failed machines contain compromised votes. The Court Ordered a public investigation of the machines' data and the procedures used to address the problems. The good news: the number of votes cast prior to the machines failing was the same number of votes that appeared in the memory of the machines at the public meeting. The bad news: the failure of these machines and the questionable decision to remove the machines was the proverbial tip of a very troubling iceberg.

FCRC, while litigating the “Ten Voting Machines” matter, initiated an investigation into the processes, procedures employed on Election Day and voter complaints about the machine hardware and software and prepared “Operating Ballot Integrity” and FCRC Report. In the Report FCRC has compiled a list of conclusions and Recommendations, proposed questions that must be answered before the voters of Fairfax County should ever feel confident in the vote, and 12 proposed solutions. FCRC's main conclusion: neither the Fairfax County Electoral Board, nor the new voting machines, was ready for Election Day. Technical failures of the machines ranged from machines, which were never available, to machines that failed during the day (causing further complications and delays in the polling places), to at least one machine that *subtracted* one vote for every 100 cast in favor of a candidate for the Fairfax School Board. These problems were compounded when it was learned that the voting machines do not have a voter verified paper ballot backup, among other technical failings. Procedural problems included the removal of voting machines to inadequate training of Election Officers. In the category of ‘unintended consequences’ – voters complained that the machines failed to offer privacy in casting their vote and were not user friendly.

Based on its investigation, FCRC is offering recommendations and solutions to restore confidence in the vote. The primary recommendation: establish a local or state independent study – open to the public - to review software, hardware and failings associated with Fairfax County voting machines. Further, **FCRC recommends that the Virginia General Assembly enact statutes that require: (1) a voter verified paper audit trail incorporated into all state-certified voting systems ; (2) that the voter verified paper ballots be compared – in a select number of polling places – to the vote totals recorded on the DRE; and (3) that the law be amended to prevent the removal of voting machines from polling places on Election Day. Essentially, FCRC is challenging our elected and appointed officials to **pro-actively return confidence in the vote.****