



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Is Your State Ready For A Recount?

The Free Congress Foundation Releases Its State-By-State Voter Readiness Report Card.

Washington, D.C. – The Free Congress Foundation released its voter readiness report card today. Jill S. Farrell, Director of Communications of the Free Congress Foundation, released a voter readiness report card for the 50 States and Washington D.C. Farrell points out, “On the whole, America receives a C+. For example, an A+ goes to Nevada while Georgia receives an F-.” Grades were based on reliability of equipment and verifiable recount preparedness.

This November up to 50 million people will cast their votes using controversial electronic voting machines. The major complaint regarding the touch-screen -- Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) -- voting machine systems is their lack of a verifiable paper trail.

Without an actual paper ballot we are then left with only the computer’s “word” for the election results. Computer experts, voting experts and voters rights groups see several potential dangers inherent in this paperless system: machines malfunction; engineers and programmers make mistakes; operators make errors. Usually it will be honest mistakes that occur; other times we might expect malicious intent.

Paul M. Weyrich, Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation said, “A verifiable vote is imperative. If this election is as close as Zogby and others are predicting, every precinct in every county will be under scrutiny.” He added, “Since some citizens are so devoted to the democratic process that they vote from the grave and America cannot call for a re-vote if the results are unclear, we must have a verifiable count the first time.”

After the contentious 2000 elections, Congress passed The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) in the hope of avoiding a similar tragedy in the future by mandating reform of the voting process. Though well intended, HAVA has spawned questionable results. As with any law, the key is in the interpretation.

Jill Farrell explained, “Many proponents of touch-screen voting systems are claiming that a simple printout at the end of the day will suffice. It is our contention that a recount in this scenario would not supply new information, but simply provide an identical report.”

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