

Rep. Rush Holt's Summary of H.R.2239 Legislation to Require All Voting Machines To Produce A Voter-Verified Paper Trail

"Voting should not be an act of blind faith. It should be an act of record," said Rep Rush Holt. "But current law does nothing to protect the integrity of our elections against computer malfunction, computer hackers, or any other potential irregularities."

There have already been several examples of computer error in elections. In the 2002 election, brand new computer voting systems used in Florida lost over 100,000 votes due to a software error. Errors and irregularities were also reported in New Jersey, Missouri, Georgia, Texas, and at least 10 other states.

"A recount requires that there be a reliable record to check," said Holt. "Without an actual paper record that each voter can confidentially inspect, faulty or hacked computer systems will simply spit out the same faulty or hacked result. Every vote in every election matters. We can and should do this in time for the 2004 federal election."

Key provisions of **The Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2003** (H.R. 2239) include:

- 1) **Requires all voting systems to produce a voter-verified paper record for use in manual audits and recounts.** For those using the increasingly popular ATM-like "DRE" (Direct Recording Electronic) machines, this requirement means the DRE would print a receipt that each voter would verify as accurate and deposit into a lockbox for later use in a recount. States would have until November 2003 to request additional funds to meet this requirement.
- 2) **Bans the use of undisclosed software and wireless communications devices in voting systems.**
- 3) **Requires all voting systems to meet these requirements in time for the general election in November 2004.** Jurisdictions that feel their new computer systems may not be able to meet this deadline may use an existing paper system as an interim measure (at federal expense) in the November 2004 election.
- 4) **Requires that electronic voting system be provided for persons with disabilities by January 1, 2006 -- one year earlier than currently required by HAVA.** Like the voting machines for non-disabled voters, those used by disabled voters must also provide a mechanism for voter-verification, though not necessarily a paper trail. Jurisdictions unable to meet this requirement by the deadline must give disabled voters the option to use the interim paper system with the assistance of an aide of their choosing.
- 5) **Requires mandatory surprise recounts in 0.5% of domestic jurisdictions and 0.5% of overseas jurisdictions.**