



## MIAMI DADE ELECTION REFORM COALITION 2007 POSITION PAPER ON FLORIDA VOTING SYSTEMS

The Miami Dade Election Reform Coalition (MDERC) advocates a voter verified paper ballot system which records the voters' choices directly on a machine-readable paper ballot and which allows the voter to confirm and correct her choices.

MDERC advocates that the voter verified paper ballot is the ballot of record for all purposes, including but not limited to canvass, tabulation, certification, recounts, contest of election and audit. Mandatory audits must be conducted in all elections, of all results, including Early Voting and must be conducted in every county by taking a predetermined percentage of precincts for every contest, chosen at random. If any discrepancies are found in the audit or during the canvassing of votes in any precinct that has not been selected for random audit, expanded auditing and additional investigation shall be required. Audit standards must be drawn up after input from technology experts and statisticians.

### OBJECTIONS TO CURRENTLY PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

**"Doing Nothing" Is Not A Viable Option Because In Addition To Their Well-Documented Access, Usability, Technology and Security Deficiencies, Florida's Currently Certified Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) Systems Cannot be Audited Effectively:** It is a mistake to assume that an audit can be accomplished with the DRE systems that are currently certified in Florida. All of the paper that can currently be produced from these systems is, at best, a simple print out of what the computer has recorded, perhaps best described as "garbage in, garbage out".

**Retrofitting Florida's Existing DREs With Printers Is Not A Viable Option:** The generations of DREs currently in use in Florida were never designed for use with a printer and significant problems have arisen in jurisdictions attempting to retrofit them.

**Replacing Florida's DREs with Currently Certified Precinct Counted Optical Scan Systems (PCOS) Is Not a Viable Option:**  
**Disability access:** Sight impaired voters and voters with some severe motor impairments cannot vote unaided or in secret on the currently certified PCOS systems. This is why the requirement of disability access is currently being attempted to be met through the use of DREs.

**Minority Language Access:** Many Florida counties must provide ballots in more than one language under the Voting Rights Act or local ordinance. Precinct scanners reject overvoted ballots and notify voters about problems. Even when paper ballots are created in multiple languages, the crucial feedback explaining ballot problems to voters is not available in more than one language on any of the PCOS systems currently certified in Florida.

### IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS

#### **Creation of Standards and Specifications for System Innovation and Roll out Under Realistic but Expedious Deadlines**

- The Florida Legislature must require speedy development of detailed standards and specifications for the creation of one or more voting systems meeting the following general requirements:
- The system(s) must be secure, accurate, accessible, usable and capable of producing a machine-readable paper ballot verified by the voter.
- The system(s) must protect the privacy of the voter and the secrecy of the ballot.
- They should provide elections officials with the ability to conduct elections using citizen volunteers.
- The Legislature must create a timetable for the development, certification, acquisition (including putting specifications out for bid), and roll out of new voting systems, and must set realistic but expeditious deadlines for every phase of the process.
- The Legislature must create specific standards for testing any proposed new voting system at every phase of the process.
- The Legislature must direct the Office of the Secretary of State to immediately conduct usability studies that address Florida's diverse voters, including language minorities, the elderly and the disabilities community. Those studies must be completed and used as part of developing system standards and specifications.
- The Legislature must direct the Office of the Secretary of State to immediately begin investigating all funding options, including federal funding options, for development, certification, acquisition, roll out and testing of new voting systems.
- Policies and procedures must be developed at the state and county levels to promote the right of all eligible voters to engage in the process of voting, from registering to vote, to casting a ballot.

#### **State-wide Mandatory System Audits and Audit Standards for Immediate Implementation**

- **Auditing of ballots counted by software:** For currently certified DRE systems, the Florida Legislature must mandate parallel testing during elections, as well as random review and analysis of ballot image reports and event logs. For currently certified PCOS systems, the Legislature must mandate the auditing of a random sample of all ballots, as described above.
- **Auditing voting systems for accuracy and procedural integrity:** The Legislature must mandate detailed audits of all voting systems per Florida Statute §101.591 and appropriate funding for thorough audit processes. At present the state has more detailed audit requirements for slot machines than it does for elections.
- **Auditing elections:** The Legislature should mandate development of uniform minimum standards for auditing elections.
- **Election night reconciliations:** The Legislature should mandate development of uniform specific procedures for reconciling the number of ballots with the number of voters signing in to vote and for investigating discrepancies

#### **Creation of Uniform Leasing Standards for Immediate Implementation**

In order to ease the cost burden on Florida and Florida's counties and to encourage continuing innovation and upgrades, the Florida Legislature must develop short-term and long term voting system leasing standards.

Contact: Sandy Wayland 305-297-9921