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More States Demanding Paper Trail For Voting

by Michael in New York on [8/10/2005 01:49:00 PM](#)

USA Today has a story on [the growing number of states that are demanding electronic voting machines provide a paper trail](#) voters can check themselves. (My state, New York, just passed a law, thank God. We're about to replace aging machines. Has yours?) There's a graphic showing which states have laws or are at least considering them. Among the nine states that aren't even thinking about this issue: Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. I suppose they're still reeling from letting blacks vote.

Some election **experts fear that paper backup records will add a layer of complexity to an already delicate system.** That could lead to even worse problems in the 2006 elections, such as jammed printers and long voting lines, they say.

"The unintended consequence of a (paper trail) mandate could diminish, rather than enhance, voter confidence," says Conny McCormack, who runs elections in the nation's largest voting jurisdiction, Los Angeles County.

"When we start using paper trails in a live election, all of these problems are going to become apparent," says Linda Lamone, administrator of the Maryland Board of Elections. "Problems with paper ballots are going to cause a whole new cloud over the system."

One example already has cropped up. **In a California test July 20 of touch-screen voting machines with add-on printers, nearly 20% of the machines experienced problems, including paper jams and computer crashes.** The machines were made by Diebold, a leading manufacturer of touch-screen computer voting equipment.

That's right. The experts think attaching a printer to a voting machine is just too darn complicated. McCormack grouched that she didn't see a lot of voters double-checking the paper printout, forgetting the fact that because they CAN, there's less likelihood of fraud. Lamone of Maryland -- who thinks all-electronic voting is nifty -- worries about fights over which record is the "official" one, the electronic record or the paper record.

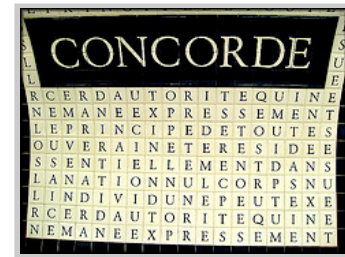
And paper could be lost! Recounts could take weeks! Yes, imagine taking ten days to do a manual recount when deciding who your Congressman or Senator or Governor or President will be. Does she have ADD or something?

I say throw out all the machines and use a paper ballot -- lots cheaper and dead-accurate. But for God's sake, people, make sure your check mark is legible. And how about passing laws that says election supervisors must be non-partisan and unaffiliated with ANY campaigning by either party? And not a nincompoop, either?



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