DO THE MATH
The Real Costs of Maryland's Voting System

The most expensive way to vote. Maryland currently uses the most expensive type of voting system available — touch-screen Direct-Recording Electronic (DRE) machines.

In Fiscal Year 2000, when most of Maryland's counties used optical scan voting systems, the State Board of Elections' annual budget was about $3.1 million.

By FY2007, with the touch-screen voting system in place statewide, the SBE's annual budget had skyrocketed to $29.5 million — **nearly 10 times the cost of the previous system!**

Of that, the operating costs of the voting system — maintenance, repair, replacement, storage, transportation, programming, testing, training, technical support, etc. for the state's 19,000 voting machines — have averaged $10.7 million per year for the past 3 years.

And the cost is still rising. Our current service contract with Diebold Election Systems, Inc. expires right after the 2008 General Election, and would have to be rebid at that time.

Diebold Election Systems, Inc. no longer exists. After 18 months of failed attempts to sell its election division, Diebold spun it off into a separate company, Premier Election Solutions, Inc.

Because of its proprietary secret source code, Diebold/Premier has a monopoly on all services directly related to our voting machines. How much would Premier charge us to continue its service contract on our equipment beyond 2008? The cost is not yet known, but would be likely to rise, since our aging equipment will be more prone to break down and malfunction with each passing year.

Less equipment means lower costs. Optical scan voting systems are far less expensive to operate because they require only 1/5 as many machines. Our 19,000 touch-screen machines could be replaced by just 4,000 machines. Each polling place would need only one optical scanner and one ballot-marking station to enable voters with disabilities or language barriers to mark a paper ballot. Switching to an optical-scan voting system would probably reduce our operating costs by as much as 25% to 50%, **saving about $2.7 to $5.4 million per year.**

The cost of switching to a new system would pay for itself in just a few years in reduced operating costs. And the state would have a more reliable, recountable election system that would meet future equipment standards for years to come. The move to optical scan voting is a growing national trend as the unacceptable risks of DRE voting are confirmed in election day disasters and numerous reputable studies. Each year Maryland delays in replacing our voting equipment, we are squandering millions of tax dollars and running the risk of a major, unrecoverable election failure.

Let's make the fiscally responsible choice. Listen to the 64% of Maryland's voters who support funding the switch to optical scan by 2010. Let's restore common sense to our elections.

SAVEOurVotes
SECURE•ACCESSIBLE•VERIFIABLE ELECTIONS FOR MARYLAND

www.SaveOurVotes.org

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