

**Testimony of Stan Boyd,
SAVE Our Votes, to
House Ways and Means Committee
February 1, 2007**

Madame Chair and Delegates,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of HB18.

Informed voters have great reason to distrust a paperless touch-screen voting system. We have already heard the testimony of two nationally renowned computer experts. I would like to now quickly review some of the conclusions of recent major studies of voting systems by highly respected groups.

In September 2005, former Secretary of State James Baker and former President Jimmy Carter, who were chairs of a bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform, warned in their final report that electoral fraud could happen. "Software can be modified maliciously before being installed into individual voting machines. There is no reason to trust insiders in the election industry any more than in other industries."

In August, 2006, Open Voting Foundation president, Alan Dechert, after examining the inner workings of the touch-screen voting machine used in Maryland's elections, determined that with the flip of a switch inside, the machine can behave in a completely different manner compared to the tested and certified version. He called this the "worst ever security flaw found with the Diebold TS Voting Machine."

But simply having paper records alone, is not sufficient. In June, 2006, the Brennan Center Task Force on Voting System Security released a report stating that "automatic random audits are necessary if paper records are to enhance security." It said that having voter-verified paper records without requiring automatic audits are of "questionable security value."

Just last November, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which makes recommendations to the Elections Assistance Commission, stated that software dependent systems are not acceptable; that all software is buggy (with 4 to 5 bugs per 1000 lines of code); that it is impossible to write bug-free code for a large system; and that a voting system is software dependent if an undetected bug in the software can cause an undetectable change in an election outcome. It stated that paperless touch screens are software dependent and should not be permitted for future election systems. Voter-verified paper record systems, where paper ballots can be counted, are software independent and allowed, but MUST include a hand-count of paper ballots for audit purposes. It is essential to verify the election, not the system. Auditability is the key issue in verifying an election.

Finally, this is not a partisan issue. Last year this Committee unanimously voted in favor of a bill nearly identical to HB18. In the Senate all the Republicans supported it. And the Democratic National Committee stated "Jurisdictions should be encouraged to use precinct-tabulated optical scan systems in preference to touch-screen machines. In the event of a recount, the paper or other auditable record should be considered the official record."

So I urge this Committee to pass HB18, restoring the language of immediate implementation that was in last year's bill, and making minor improvements in the disability language.

Thank you.

Stan Boyd, member of Save Our Votes (www.saveourvotes.org)