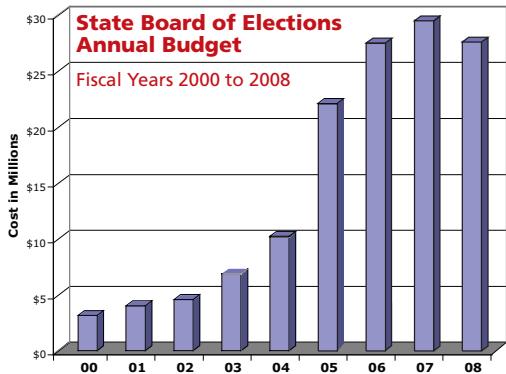
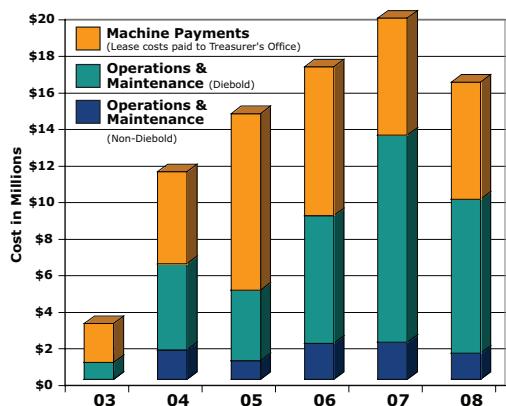


# Restoring Common Sense to our Elections



Voting System Costs, Fiscal Years 2003 to 2008



Above: One optical scanner and one ballot marking machine to assist voters with disabilities or language barriers replaces about 10 touch-screen voting machines (below).



## 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 voting 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.

Our current service contract with Premier Election Solutions (formerly Diebold Election Systems, Inc.) expires next December. The cost of continuing our service contract beyond 2008 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 one-fifth 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. This 80% reduction in equipment would probably reduce our operating costs by 50% or more, **saving about \$5 to \$6 million per year.**

## The fiscally responsible choice

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 federal 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 by countless authoritative studies and election day disasters. 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.

Sixty-four percent of Maryland's voters say they want the state to use an optical scan system starting in 2010. Keeping the Governor's allowance in the budget will accomplish what the voters want.