

Hello, I am Mary Vollero, as Chair of Concerned Voters of Centre County I would like to thank the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak here this evening. I would also like to thank the other speakers and people who came out tonight concerned about this issue.

Since 2006 Concerned Voters has done all we could to make sure that our county had a paper record of the vote.
We attended meetings, placed ads, showed films, submitted reports and circulated petitions.

Yet, Commissioners Chris Exarchos and Steve Dershem choose the paperless voting system, anyway.
They blamed State for not allowing printers on these machines, even though they could've chosen the optical scans voting systems which provide a paper ballot.

Last year we voted for Commissioners who said they would replace our voting machines. Now we call upon them to keep their promise.
We have been disappointed to hear from some of the Commissioners that the County may not replace these machines.

One argument has been that the county cannot afford new machines
To that argument I ask,
“What is our democracy worth?”
Is \$20 per person too much to ensure
that our elections are secure, accurate
and that our votes are counted in a transparent manner?
Given the costs and risks of a failed elected, we cannot afford NOT to
replace these machines.

It is my understanding that the building we are in today cost the county about one million dollars to restore. While I believe that was money well spent, is our election system not at least as important?

We understand there is no perfect voting system but the paperless touchscreen system we are currently using is completely unacceptable.
These machines do not provide a voter approved paper record that can be saved and used for audits or recounts if there is a problem.

Concerned Voters is NOT worried that our local officials might not be trustworthy, but the opposite, we are worried because our local officials no longer count our votes!

-- instead the counting is done by software that is considered proprietary and only the manufacturers have access to the code.

We have no way to know if the selection we press on the screen is actually counted as we intend.

Voters are expected to trust the large corporations that make the machines and count our votes in secret, without a paper record.

Some have suggested attaching printers to these machines to provide a paper record.

That is not a viable solution for many reasons.

-- Adding the scroll printers to these machines is illegal in PA and the PA constitution cannot be changed in time for the November elections.

-- Many other states have tried attaching the printers and have had even more problems because of paper jams.

-- Finally, it would be a waste of money to equip these machines with \$500 printers if they might be decertified in a few years, as pending legislation in Congress would decertify touchscreen DREs by 2012.

Which leads me to another concern expressed by some Commissioners – that they do not want to get new machines if they may have to be replaced in year or two.

That is understandable, but Optical Scans are NOT in danger of being decertified.

The bills in congress, if passed, would decertify the touchscreen DRE voting machines we are currently using, with or without printers

– NOT optical scans,

– in fact pending bills may provide retroactive funds for Counties that purchase optical scan systems.

Another common argument I have heard from past and current Commissioners as a reason to keep these voting machines is that they protect against over-voting.

Over-voting is what happens when a voter chooses 3 instead of 2 candidates, as in a commissioner's race

Touchscreens do prevent over-voting but so do optical scans, by beeping.

I think the over-voting issue may explain why 51 other counties in PA chose the touchscreen.

You will hear more about security problems from computer experts, but one story I wanted to share happened when a poll watcher who was NOT A POLL WORKER FOR THE COUNTY, called ES&S, the manufacturer, and ask them a question and without even asking for it, the ES&S representative told this poll watcher the supervisor's password.

This is not a secure system!

We do not expect too much or demand anything that is unreasonable. It is simply un-American to have our votes counted in secret with no proof and nothing to check.

We have seen the catastrophic results of inadequate elections in the past. We all know that the future of our country depends on the leaders we elect, and who we elect depends on our election process. If we cannot trust our elections process we cannot survive as a democracy.

We implore the Election Board to help restore the peoples' confidence in our election system, one county at a time, starting with our own county. We can do this. We must do this! PLEASE put optical scan voting machines in place by November's Election.

And by the way, if the Elections office is in need of more poll workers on Election Day, Concerned Voters has many members who would be happy to volunteer.

Thank you, Mary Vollero
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