

Disabled Organizations and Individuals Reactions to Accessible and Verifiable Voting Technology

Disabled voters and organizations using or evaluating accessible and verifiable voting technology have responded as follows:

American Council of the Blind: Resolution 2005-16 – Accessible Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails

“...WHEREAS, a VVPAT would increase voter confidence in the election process, and

WHEREAS, some states have and others may adopt a VVPAT for use in conjunction with their DRE election systems, and

WHEREAS, the American Council of the Blind supports the adoption of specific election systems and procedures only if they are accessible to voters who are blind, visually impaired or have other disabilities,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the American Council of the Blind in convention assembled this 8th day of July 2005 at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, that this organization authorize the Officers, Directors, and staff to take all necessary actions to ensure the accessibility of voting equipment and procedures including a VVPAT, wherever adopted, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the American Council of the Blind does not support any legislation that would delay the deadline set forth in the Help America Vote Act.”

Arizona Voter Casts Ballot Independently for the First Time

Following the election, a story in the Arizona Republic described an emotional moment when one Phoenix resident, a 39-year-old disabled man, was able to cast his ballot independently. This particular voter called it a proud first for both himself and the state and said through a letter board and head wand that it was an experience he would tell his grandchildren about many years from now. Reflecting on the experience, Secretary of State Jan Brewer said, “That is an awesome testimonial to the empowerment we can provide through new voting solutions, like the ES&S AutoMARK. I am very proud of the fact that Arizona is leading the nation in making the election process easier and more accessible for all of our voters.”

Press release, Arizona Secretary of State November 16, 2004 Contact: Kevin Tyne at 602-542-0681.

Christine Galindo Walsh, National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAPAS)

"There are a number of machines on the market, none of which fully meets the needs of all persons in the disability community. Some offer better accessibility features than others. NAPAS does not disagree with all of the criticism of the AutoMARK machine, but is concerned that a campaign has been waged against the AutoMARK machine in particular, even though most of the other machines on the market are significantly less accessible to voters with dexterity disabilities. Only three voting systems on the market—AccuPoll, AutoMARK, and eSlate machines—have a dual switch input option.

...It is difficult to understand why the AutoMARK machine in particular has become the focus of such intense criticism when other machines provide far less accessibility or no accessibility at all for individuals with dexterity impairments. Georgia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., for example, have been praised by some AutoMARK critics for the accessibility of their voting systems, even though their machines are inaccessible to voters with dexterity disabilities because they lack a dual switch input option... that AutoMARK and some other machines provide. On the other hand, jurisdictions that opt for AutoMARK, with the support of disability advocates in their states, have been threatened with suit."

July 12, 2005 <http://www.verifiedvotingfoundation.org/article.php?id=6119>

Curtis Chong, President, National Federation of the Blind in Computer Science:

"ES&S AutoMARK system provides nonvisual access to the voting process, and I would highly recommend its use in all elections: local, state, and national."

Letter dated March 12, 2005, <http://www.automarkts.com>

Gregg Vanderheiden, Director, TRACE Research and Development Center at the College of Engineering, University of Wisconsin:

"Voter verifiability does not need to be inaccessible. Accessibility does not need to reduce vote verifiability. Ballot marking devices present a good solution."

Accessible Voting Interactive Web Conference on May 12, 2005

AccuPoll System Scores High Marks for Accessibility

TUSTIN, Calif. May 3, 2005. -- AccuPoll, Inc. ... announced that their voting system received rave reviews during recent demonstrations at the New Jersey Library of the Blind and Handicapped. The event, which included competing vendors of electronic

voting systems, was held to provide the opportunity for people with disabilities to learn about and evaluate features allowing many to vote unassisted for the first time.

AccuPoll's system received overwhelmingly high ratings, with a vast majority of those who evaluated the electronic voting system providing either "very good" or "excellent" marks. Evaluators also responded favorably to AccuPoll's voter verified paper audit trial, which allows voters with visual impairments to audibly review the permanent paper audit trail as their ballot is cast.

Jim McCarthy, Director of Governmental Affairs, National Federation of the Blind:

At the demo, Jim pointed out that "the Holt bill clarifies that the entire process, including verification, must be accessible" and noted that the **NFB recently passed a resolution saying that accessibility and auditability are both important**. He then noted the number of vendors who were demonstrating accessible paper trail equipment at the event, and said "it IS possible to provide the certainty of a voter-verified paper trail AND access at the same time -- this is a huge advance."

NFB-NJ, New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped, and NJ Division of Elections, April 23, 2005, Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Panel Discussion & Accessible and Auditable Voting Systems Display

David Dixon, President of the Handicapped Adults of Volusia County (HAVOC) and a member of Florida Fair Elections Coalition, is blind and is also a passionate proponent of verified voting. At a recent HAVOC meeting, the 22 members in attendance voted unanimously to oppose the touch-screen machines, thereby muting the argument that such opposition goes against the rights of the disabled. "I want to know that my vote counts," Dixon said at the Council meeting.

Report from Florida Fair Elections' Executive Director, Susan Pynchon, June 6, 2005

National Federation of the Blind commentary, Voice of the Nation's Blind article

"...Paper audit trails will be with us for the foreseeable future. Laws requiring them are now on the books in California, Nevada, and Ohio, to name only a few, and there are strong sentiments for such laws in many other states.

The NFB does not oppose such paper trails in principle, but we insist that they must be just as accessible to the blind as they are to sighted voters. All reputable advocates of paper trails [groups like the [California Voter Foundation](#), the [League of Women Voters](#), the [Leadership Conference on Civil Rights](#), and [VerifiedVoting.org](#)] agree with our position, and have stated their agreement..."

<http://www.voiceofthenationsblind.org/articles/72/electronic-voting-in-the-2004-election>