



January 30, 2005

One thing is undeniable: in order to have *even the opportunity* for an auditable election, you must have something meaningful to audit. A permanent paper record of the vote, **verified by the voter**, is essential. Paperless electronic voting machines fail to provide this very basic and essential capability, because they deny voters the opportunity to verify that their votes have been accurately **recorded**.

In May 2004, Sen. John Ensign (R-NV) introduced the Voting Integrity and Verification Act (VIVA) of 2004 (S.2437 in the 108th Session). Its minimal language, though limited in scope, addresses the heart of the issue, ensuring that any newly-purchased electronic voting machine produces a voter-verifiable paper record, *and* that the paper record takes precedence in case of any discrepancy, recount, or audit. *During the last session, it was the only Senate bill dealing with this issue that achieved bipartisan support.*

In the coming weeks and months, states and jurisdictions will be using nearly \$1 billion in HAVA funds to acquire new voting systems in order to meet the January 1, 2006 deadline for compliance with the standards mandated by HAVA. It is essential that any new voting systems acquired with these funds provide a voter-verifiable paper record to enable all voters to verify that their votes have been accurately recorded and to enable elections officials to conduct meaningful manual recounts and audits of election results. Accessible voting technologies, including ballot marking devices, now enable voters with disabilities (including voters who are blind) to mark their ballots and to verify the paper record with privacy and independence.

Sen. Ensign will soon be introducing the Voting Integrity and Verification Act of 2005, which has identical language to VIVA 2004 / S.2437. Swift passage of this legislation will ensure that states and jurisdictions make appropriate purchasing decisions with regard to new voting systems and that those systems produce results that are verifiable by all voters and auditable by election officials.

We call in the strongest possible terms for every Senator, Republican, Democrat, and Independent, to support this bill with cosponsorship.