

JUNE 22, 2004

**SCHAKOWSKY: TIME IS RUNNING  
OUT ON 2004 ELECTION**

**CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PASS H.R. 2239  
REQUIRING ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES  
TO PRODUCE VOTER-VERIFIED PAPER RECEIPTS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined Congressional leaders and activists in calling on Congress to pass H.R. 2239, legislation by U.S. Representative Rush Holt that requires paper audit receipts on electronic voting machines prior to the November election.

"At a time when the eyes of the world are upon us, what could be more important to our democracy than to ensure that every vote is counted? How can President Bush and Republicans leaders speak about exporting democracy and freedom to nations across the world if we can't guarantee that our own citizens' votes are counted and counted accurately?" Schakowsky asked.

She added, "It is common sense that every electronic voting machine must produce a voter-verified paper trail, a receipt. We get a receipt for buying groceries, filling our cars with gas or taking money out of the ATM. And like the *New York Times* editorialized on June 13, we want our voting machines to operate as '*honestly and accurately*' as Las Vegas slot machines.

*' [T]he truth is, the editorial continues, 'gamblers are getting the best technology, and voters are being given systems that are cheap and untrustworthy by comparison. There are many questions yet to be resolved about electronic voting, but one thing is clear: a vote for president should be at least as secure as a 25-cent bet in Las Vegas.'*

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"Let's not gamble on our election or bluff when it comes to our democracy. It's time to pass H.R. 2239," Schakowsky concluded.

**H.R. 2239, Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2003**

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was an important piece of legislation that took many important steps towards electoral reform. However, in helping states replace notoriously problematic and antiquated machines, HAVA appears to be creating a headlong rush to purchase computer voting systems that suffer different flaws.

Unfortunately, because computer voting machines are not currently required to produce a voter-verified paper trail, any errors and irregularities they cause are difficult or even impossible to discover. A growing host of nationally and internationally-renowned computer scientists consider a voter-verified paper trail to be a critical safeguard for the accuracy, integrity and security of computer-assisted elections.

The Voter Verification Bill seeks to incorporate the voter-verified paper trail by amending HAVA immediately. If passed, funds expended under HAVA will be utilized in a manner that ensures that this minimum standard of protection will be built into computer voting systems now, without the necessity of replacing or upgrading such voting systems later. Key provisions of the bill include:

1. Requires all voting systems to produce a voter-verified paper record for use in manual audits. For those using the increasingly popular ATM-like "DRE" machines, this requirement means the DRE would print a receipt that each voter would verify as accurate and deposit into a lockbox for later use in a recount. States would have until November 2003 to request additional funds to meet this requirement.
2. Bans the use of undisclosed software and wireless communications devices in voting systems, and limits electronic communication to outgoing reports of vote totals only.
3. Requires all voting systems to meet these requirements in time for the general election in November 2004. Jurisdictions that feel their new computer systems may not be able to do meet this deadline may use a paper system as an interim measure (at federal expense) in the November 2004 election.
4. Requires that electronic voting system be provided for persons with disabilities by January 1, 2006 -- one year earlier than currently required by HAVA. Like the voting machines for non-disabled voters, those used by disabled voters must also provide a mechanism for voter-verification, though not necessarily a paper trail. Jurisdictions unable to meet this requirement by the deadline must give disabled voters the option to use the interim paper system with the assistance of an aide of their choosing.
5. Requires mandatory surprise recounts in .5% of domestic jurisdictions and .5% of overseas jurisdictions.