

# ELECTION AUDITS

## Why does Montana need them?

Montana requires that approved voting machines be "auditable," but no audits are required. Audits could include a post-election comparison of a minimum of 5% of randomly chosen electronic machine totals with a hand count of their paper ballots.

### Isn't the current testing of voting machines adequate?

The Independent Testing Authority, which federally certifies machines, are paid by the vendors, tests only what vendors ask them to test, to standards that are voluntary. Testing in Montana requires that "approved voting machines or devices be constructed so that they cannot be tampered with for a fraudulent purpose," (44.3.1703ARM), but no one has attempted to "hack" into Montana's Election Systems & Software (ES&S) machines to prove they can not be fraudulently tampered with. Scanners made by Diebold have been successfully hacked. In addition, no tests examine the source code that tells machines how to count votes. It is secret, known only to ES&S.

Pre-election tests in counties using sample ballots are conducted in "testing" not "election" mode and look for programming errors and machine malfunction. Election day tests (if done during an election) look also for evidence of inserted malicious code that could change vote totals.

### Errors have been discovered with ES&S optical scan machines which had already been tested:

- \* Programming errors on ES&S automatic tabulation equipment caused a manual count of ballots in Harrison County, IN, in May, and Pottawattamie County, Iowa, in June of 2006. An audit uncovered the errors.
- \* Berkeley County, WV, had to hand count ballots because incorrect software had been installed on ES&S optical scanners—5/06
- \* Votes were counted twice in Jefferson County, TX, after an ES&S technician committed an error. Only the hand recount during a routine audit revealed the error.—March, 2006.
- \* Yellowstone County, MT election officials recounted ballots after they discovered that they had failed to reset a vote counter to "zero."—Nov. 7, 2006

### Aren't recounts adequate audits?

Every election has one or two close elections that require a recount, but these are races where candidates are within ¼ or ½ of 1% and the recount usually is done in one county. Hackers can program races not to end closely. Who is watching the other races?

### Montana needs random, post-election audits of a minimum of 5% of machines to:

- \* put elections—the bedrock of U.S. democracy—on the same efficient footing as corporations and financial institutions that routinely audit their books;
- \* boost voter confidence that their vote was counted accurately; (an AP exit poll on 11/07/06 found a drop from 50% in 2004 to 46% for voters that felt "very confident" that their votes would be counted accurately.)
- \* dissuade hackers from inserting malicious code;
- \* de-politicize the election process. The losing candidate is more likely to accept the outcome of an audit.
- \* check for human and machine errors in every county.

Of the 27 states that require voter-verified records (paper ballots/records), 14 require random audits. Montana can join these other election reform minded states by also mandating them.