



# ELECTION DEFENSE ALLIANCE

*Voting Counts . . . IF Your Vote is Counted*

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## A QUICK COMPARISON OF PAPER BALLOTS v. PAPER RECEIPTS

| Basic Ballot Terminology          |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| "Paper Ballot"                    | A paper record of a voter's choices that is used for the original vote count.  |
| "Paper Receipt"<br>(Also a VVPAT) | <p>A paper record of a voter's choices that is used, if at all, only for voter verification and for audits or recounts (Actually not a recount as the paper record is not counted as part of the original vote tally.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primarily produced by a DRE (touch-screen) voting machine</li><li>• Often confused with "paper ballot" and thus misconstrued.</li><li>• Sometimes called "Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail" (VVPAT) or "paper record or receipt" in a generic manner.</li></ul> |
| "Paper Trail"                     | Refers to both "paper ballots" and "paper receipts" as well as other paper records, such as printouts of vote totals, that may be used to determine the accuracy of election results.  |

Both "paper ballots" and "paper receipts" are voter-verifiable documents. However, in the case of a DRE (touch-screen) voting machine, the modules that print the bar code, the human readable document (VVPAT) and submit the electronic ballot are different. Thus there's no way for the voter to determine if the VVPAT or the barcode match the electronically submitted ballot.

| Comparison and Advantages: Paper Ballot v. Paper Receipt   |  |
|--|--|
| Paper Ballot   | Paper Receipt  |
| The sole official and authoritative record of the voter's choices.   | Of uncertain authority: in one court case, the judge disqualified the paper receipts.  |
| A true ballot: Serves as the original source for the vote count and for any audits or recounts.                | Not a true ballot: Does not serve as the source for a vote count unless and until an audit or recount occurs. But recounts are unlikely:   |
| Constitutes a "permanent paper record" as specified by many state statutes.                                    | <p>Most elections are not deemed "close" enough to merit a recount.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recounts are troublesome and costly. Courts can deny a recount even when a recount is warranted.</li><li>• Recounts are likely to be stonewalled once the nominal winner takes office.</li></ul> |
| Printed on durable paper or card stock.  | Printed on a slip of thin paper - may not constitute a permanent paper record  |
| Reviewed carefully by the voter, who is aware it is the actual ballot and may be used for audit or recounting. | May be ignored or only skimmed, much like the cash-register receipt it resembles. (One study found 47% of voters ignored their receipts.)  |
| Easily examined and verified by the voter.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stored behind protective glass with small type – voter cannot handle.</li><li>• Audits may use a printed barcode which the voter cannot verify</li></ul>   |
| If the ballot gets damaged, the voter is savvy enough to ask for a replacement.                                | If damaged, may be ignored, because the voter believes the "real" vote is in the machine.  |
| When deposited, is tangible proof that the vote has been properly cast.  | When printed, is not proof that the votes have been properly cast by the machine.  |
| Easy to handle original permanent paper record is intact for purposes of an audit or recount                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fragile, difficult to handle during recounts.</li><li>• Printers which produce VVPAT records often jam losing the paper record of votes</li></ul>  |

## Popular Misconceptions about Paper Receipts (VVPAT)

**Question:** Aren't paper receipts called for in federal legislation like the Holt Bill (HR 550) a solution to paperless electronic voting?

**Answer:** Unfortunately no. The VVPAT is produced by a separate software module that is different from the one that stores the invisible electronic vote – so there's no way to tell if the human readable VVPAT paper receipt matches the electronic vote – or even the barcode that's read for audits and recounts.

**Question:** Why shouldn't a voter-verified paper receipt (VVPAT) employ barcodes to speed the counting?

**Answer:** This type of paper receipt does not qualify as "voter verifiable." The voter cannot verify that the barcodes are correct.

**Question:** Isn't the 1% audit of paper receipts called for in HR 550 a deterrent to ballot tampering?

**Answer:** A sample audit of precincts can't guarantee the accuracy of any unaudited precincts. Even if ballot tampering is detected, uncovering the perpetrator is sure to be difficult or impossible. This further weakens any possible deterrent effect. Also, in many jurisdictions you can't be confident that a 1% audit is sufficient to detect a corrupt precinct.

## Some Possible Solutions

**Question:** How can technology like touch-screens enhance the voting process?

**Answer:** Paper ballots and computer-assisted voting are compatible - even synergistic. However, some people want to eliminate paper ballots and rely completely on invisible electronic ballots that can't be audited or recounted. Here are some ways electronic devices like touch-screens can be used:

- ▶ Touch-screen devices should be "stand-alone" and not be used to cast ballots or count votes. They should not be connected to any other devices, either physically or by wireless communications.
- ▶ A touch-screen system can help the voter prepare a ballot that is free of overvotes, undervotes, indefinite markings, stray marks and illegible write-ins.
- ▶ When satisfied with the on-screen image of the ballot, the voter can trigger the printing of the ballot, verify it, and deposit it by hand into the ballot box or ballot scanner.
- ▶ The official vote count will be tallied from the printed paper ballots.
- ▶ Sampling, audits and recounts are accomplished by using only the official permanent paper ballot
- ▶ All voters use the same paper ballot. Voters who choose a touch-screen ballot marking device use the same official ballot as voters who choose to mark by hand.
- ▶ Touch-screen devices with audio enhancement can be used to assist voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently.



Our mission is to build and coordinate a comprehensive, cohesive national strategy for the election integrity movement in order to regain public control of the voting process and to ensure that elections are honest, transparent, secure, verifiable, and worthy of public trust.

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