VOTING MACHINES MYTH VS. FACT

Clear information builds trust in our elections. As agencies and officials consider new policies, this sheet provides straightforward answers to common myths about voting machines so voters can make their selections with confidence.

MYTH: Voting machines are inaccurate and we should only rely on paper ballots.

FACT: Voting machines provide accurate results fast. Today's voting machines are rigorously tested, certified, and audited to ensure accuracy. Voting technologies provide election officials with auditable paper trails to verify accurate elections.

- Machines must pass certification to ensure that they meet the EAC security and accuracy standards.
- A 2007 Rice University study estimated that hand counting was time-consuming and got the results right just 58% of the time.
- An MIT study in New Hampshire found that poll workers who counted ballots by hand were off by 8%. The error rate for machine counting was about 0.5%.
- EAC labs test equipment to ensure a minimum accuracy rate of 1 error in 1.5 million ballot positions (99.99993%) under the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG).
- Today, voters in 98% of jurisdictions end their voting experience with paper ballots. They can visually ensure the accuracy of their vote before casting their ballot.
- Post-election results are auditable, permanent paper records.
- Voting systems generate audit logs at every step. Audit logs are secure records that show when each ballot was scanned, when totals were printed, when data was transferred, etc. These logs can be reviewed to ensure nothing occurred out of the ordinary.

MYTH: Voting machines are inaccurate and we should only rely on paper ballots.

FACT: Voting machines are reliable and save taxpayers money. Today's voting systems save money over time by streamlining inefficiencies, reducing labor and printing costs, while protecting election integrity.

- Technology costs are lower than hand-counting paper ballots in all but the smallest jurisdictions.
- Well-maintained equipment is used for a decade or more, spreading costs over many election cycles.
- Investments in reliable systems prevent costly errors, recounts, and litigation.

MYTH: Voting machines are not secure.

FACT: Voting machines are secure, and voters should cast their vote in confidence.

- Voting machines are not connected to the internet during voting, which means that by the machines' very nature, they are not penetrable to hacking interference. Moreover, they're standalone systems with no interconnectivity amongst voting machines.
- Each state and local jurisdiction includes rigorous physical security processes and chain-of-custody procedures.
- Logic and accuracy testing is done before every election to verify correct functioning.
- States use post-election audits to verify outcomes.
- Reports of so-called "vote flipping" in 2024 were each demonstrably calibration issues, spoiled ballots, or user error. There is no evidence that any of those voting machines were compromised. Furthermore, in each of those instances, the voter confirmed that their choices were correct on the final printed ballot before casting.
- ACET members are committed to open security practices to enhance trust. Our members spearheaded an Election Security Research Forum in 2023 to allow independent security researchers to bombard their machines during live election simulations with non-fielded equipment.

ACET members share President Trump's commitment to secure, accurate, transparent, and accessible elections. Our members are working toward updating systems to meet new federal guidelines to include voter-verifiable paper records and removing barcodes and QR codes unless used to accommodate individuals with disabilities.

About ACET: The American Council for Election Technology (ACET) is a national, nonpartisan trade association founded in 2022. Our mission is to advance policies and programs that support the use of election technology to ensure secure, accurate, and transparent elections. ACET provides a collaborative platform for industry leaders to address challenges and develop solutions for election security and accessibility. Our members include major voting system manufacturers, election technology providers, and innovators in ADA compliance. Together, we are a unified voice to advocate for policies that build public trust and advance security.

For more information about ACET, please visit us at www.TechForElections.VOTE, email us at info@techforelections.vote, or follow us on LinkedIn and X/Twitter.