



6093 Pleasant Valley Road  
Irwin, PA 15642  
[www.VotePA.us](http://www.VotePA.us)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Contact: Mary Beth Kuznik**  
[pennsylvaniavoter@comcast.net](mailto:pennsylvaniavoter@comcast.net)  
**412-558-0252**

**VotePA JOINS CALL FOR IMPROVEMENT AS VOTING MACHINE PROBLEMS REPORTED STATEWIDE  
FOLLOWING PRIMARY ELECTION**

June 1, 2006. VotePA announced today that it is joining forces with other groups of concerned citizens, including People For the American Way Foundation, The Black Political Empowerment Project, and the League of Young Voters to urge Allegheny County to adopt an open and cooperative “culture of assurance” throughout the voting process so the integrity of the vote can become evident to all citizens.

Reports of problems with voting machines used in the May 16th primary elections have been flowing in to VotePA’s offices from across the Commonwealth. More than two weeks after the polls closed, VotePA volunteers continue to receive and compile reports from observers and voters in many counties.

In Allegheny County, approximately ten percent of ES&S iVotronic machines failed. In many cases the machines suffered battery failure, and poll workers had difficulty reaching the County’s assistance lines, which were tied up for hours with calls from poll workers. In at least one Pittsburgh precinct, the zero report made when the machines were turned on did not list several candidates. A floating technician arrived hours after the polls opened and citizens had voted on the machine, to inform the Judge of Elections that he would use a “secret code” to cause the machine to print out a tape showing the vote count at zero. Similar incidents were reported in other Allegheny County precincts, in Centre County, and other areas using the iVotronic system.

Additional problems discovered by members of VotePA and other groups included discrepancies between the number of voters signing the poll book and the number of ballots cast, and the operation of several versions of iVotronic machines and software when only one version of each was certified for legal use in Pennsylvania by Secretary of State Pedro Cortés.

"The incidents with improper zero tapes and other problems on the voting machines in Allegheny County mirror reports we have from other counties across the state," said Marybeth Kuznik, who is Executive Director of the statewide VotePA alliance. "Printing an honest zero tape before the polls open to show that each electronic ballot box is empty at the start of voting is one of the few safeguards these machines have. If 'secret codes' can be used to manipulate the voting machines to print out what appears to be fake records after the fact, how can voters trust that anything these machines print out is true and correct, including vote counts? The situation is very alarming."

Reports from other areas of the state concern the Diebold TSX which only days before the Pennsylvania primary was shown nationally to have a major security hole. A portal designed into the machine allows software to be quickly installed, and is addressable by off-the-shelf consumer equipment. This hole could allow anyone with a few minutes access to a voting machine to load undetectable software onto the machine that might jam it or skew the votes.

In Montgomery County, third largest in the state, officials had to run their primary with no central tabulating software when the Sequoia WinEDS system proved to be so unstable and prone to crashing and possible manipulation, that it failed the state certification in late March. And in Philadelphia, which has been using electronic voting since 2002, literally hundreds of their Danaher 1242 machines failed on election day despite extensive experience on the system by pollworkers and other officials.

VotePA and other organizations have banded together to express concerns that problems like these could disenfranchise thousands of Pennsylvania voters through lost or miscounted votes, even though public officials and voting system vendors have painted a rosy picture of the May 16 election and how the voting machines performed in their first statewide test since new systems were purchased by many counties in order to comply with the federal Help America Vote Act.

The general public has mixed opinions and has expressed concerns. Upon exiting the polls on May 16th, some Allegheny County voters were asked by observers about their experience with their new machines. Many voters declared that they had “fun” using new touch-screens, but when asked whether they felt they could trust them with their votes, the majority said no. One gentleman in the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward of Pittsburgh said, “I felt like I was tossing my vote down an empty well.” Many voters want a printout of their selections to verify – “just to prove” how they voted “should the issue arise.” “You get a printout at an ATM,” one voter declared. “What if you want a recount? They have nothing to count!”

As a statewide alliance, VotePA has long advocated that a voter-verified paper ballot is needed on all voting machines. Under this system a permanent paper, actually marked or verified by each voter to indicate his or her choices, would be preserved in a locked ballot box for audits or recounts. Working with numerous active county, regional, and national election integrity organizations, VotePA urges passage of HB 2000 / SB 977, the proposed Pennsylvania legislation to require a voter-verified paper record or ballot along with routine random audits of elections, and of HR 550 on the federal level which would require and fund similar safeguards to insure that every vote is counted accurately as cast.

###

VotePA is a statewide alliance of groups and individuals dedicated to election integrity with secure, accessible, and recountable voting for all.