

Working Together for New Jersey - Election Integrity -

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Policy Statement

Bringing Election Integrity to New Jersey

PARSIPPANY – This Policy Statement outlines how we can restore public confidence to New Jersey’s election system. The *Working Together for New Jersey Election Integrity* coalition has developed this 15-point policy statement after several years of research and study. WTNJ Election Integrity urges immediate reconsideration of existing policies, procedures and law related to the conduct of elections in New Jersey. No one verifies Citizenship. There is an overall absence of reconciliation procedures. Audit provisions are casual, inconsistent and inadequate. There is increasing reliance on vendors to test their own equipment, manage procedures and generate reports because local election officials do not understand the equipment or software. Vendors are increasingly alleging that public information needs to be kept secret, which prevents any external and independent verification of the election procedures and numbers. If citizens cannot understand and trust the process and rules and if the “electronics” are not audited and publicly examined regularly and in a transparent fashion, which they are not, then our process is too complex, subject to manipulation and few aspects of the conduct of our elections can be validated independently.

Overview - WTNJ - Election Integrity is a nonpartisan coalition of citizens. We are concerned about the integrity of the election process, voter rolls, systems, laws, procedures, and administrative structures which work together to conduct and tabulate elections in New Jersey. Our election system should be as simple, transparent and independently audit-able as possible while providing equal protection to every legally qualified voter.

1. Verification of Citizenship

We believe that every legally qualified citizen should have the right to vote. The Constitutions of the United States and New Jersey authorize only citizens of the United States to vote. The ability to choose your elected representatives is one of the foremost privileges of citizenship. But for many decades, New Jersey and many other states have *not* verified the Citizenship of persons registering or casting a vote. Each person seeking to vote should be required to demonstrate Citizenship at the polls or in advance of any election, so their voter registration can be updated to document Citizenship - and so that the vote of those who are legally qualified is not diluted by those who are not legally eligible. **Why do we not verify citizenship?**

2. Voter ID

To protect the value of the vote for every legally qualified voter, especially with the current open borders, we have an obligation to verify the legal qualification of each voter. Citizenship verification is the most basic element, but verification that the voter is qualified to vote is also necessary. The historic signature verification process is not workable, especially using touch screens, and is widely disregarded. We do **not** advocate for bio-metrics. Arguments that voter ID is discriminatory are false, as we require photo ID to buy cigarettes, airplane tickets, antihistamines, prescription drugs and to drive a car or boat. The only reason to oppose voter identification is to open opportunity for fraud. Present e-poll-books used to check in voters can scan driver licenses (but do not verify citizenship). **Why don't we require photo ID?**

3. Paper Ballots & Local Tabulation of Votes

In NJ and elsewhere, there is strong evidence of systemic problems, excessive secrecy in electronic voting systems and no public inspection or independent audit of the equipment or software is allowed. Our county, state and federal governments have enabled vendor contracts with manufacturers and systems which prevent access to any full, independent, forensic audit. Simply put, NO ONE can testify to what goes on within these systems, and more importantly, what is done with the voting results "upstream". "Fixing" the hundreds of issues and concerns is nearly impossible. The solution is to return to a simple, manual, verifiable paper ballot process to save money, regain public trust, and enable audits of the process... as many other nations are now choosing to do.

We believe the initial counting of votes should be done manually, under public and video observation, at the voting district level, immediately following the close of the polls, and that those unofficial tabulations should then immediately be publicly posted. Again - the problem is that the electronic components and connections of "machines" such as tabulators cannot be examined by auditors to prove that no manipulation of counts takes place. (Think of the car maker which programmed their auto electronics, during testing, to "report" satisfactory emissions, but programmed the computer to bypass controls under normal driving situations -- fraud. The same can be done with any machine, tabulator, voting machine or other system - and the public can NOT audit any of it. Neither can elections officials, given current contract standards.)

Conducting an immediate, decentralized, district-by-district reconciliation and manual count of paper ballots and then immediately posting results would make subsequent manipulation of votes obvious and much more difficult. It would also provide results more quickly and provide greater assurance to voters that their vote was counted as they intended. New Jersey's structure is perfect for this: each voting district, by law, is to represent between 250 and 750 voters. It doesn't take long to tabulate 750 votes. This change would eliminate the different rules (and systems) that can be in operation in different counties. This change would save millions of dollars in equipment and "upgrades."

4. A Fresh Start

Our state and federal legislatures have made what should be a straight-forward and understandable process overwhelmingly complex and convoluted. Our elections officials and staff are overwhelmed by conflicting, confusing rules that often change. Current federal laws require keeping names on the voter

rolls for up to 5 years *after evidence exists that a voter has moved*. Governors have abused emergency powers to completely change election systems to vote-by-mail. All of this decays public confidence in the most basic civic activity of the people: their vote. A very strong argument can be made that we should delete and replace the entire voter registration system, and start fresh with everyone being required to prove their eligibility to vote.

5. Absentee & “Mail-in Ballots”

The use of absentee and mail-in ballots should be restricted to *Specific Requests* by voters, *unique to each election*, bearing an original ink signature, and should not be widespread or automatic. Vote-by-mail is the least secure method of voting. There are legitimate needs for military members stationed away from home, the disabled, those on work assignments out of town, etc., to have the ability to “absentee” vote. We should revert to the old system where voters must specifically request and sign for each such a mail-in ballot. This should not be widespread or routine for the vast majority of voters. The opportunities for coercion, fraud, misuse and external influence are too great.

6. End Acceptance of Ballots After the Polls Close

Many legislatures, and New Jersey, have changed the rules **to allow receipt of ballots days AFTER the close of the polls**. New Jersey recently changed the law to accept ballots passing through the (insecure) post office up to 48 hours AFTER the close of polls – **with NO POSTMARK required!** To prevent election manipulation from “ballots received after election day,” rules should be changed to count only those ballots *received* by the close of polls on Election Day (before anyone knows vote counts), with no exceptions.

7. End “Early Counting”

Present laws allow mailed-in ballots and ballots deposited in drop-boxes to be counted BEFORE election day. These early counts get wide distribution - and by showing trends, can lead to questionable or illegal actions to boost votes for candidates whose count is low. Out of fairness and to avoid ballot manipulation, *no results should be counted or posted* before ALL votes are counted and posted.

8. Voter Registration

Persons not currently registered but who wish to vote in any election should be required to document their qualification and citizenship and register at least 30 days in advance of that election, to allow time for accurate processing and verification of their voter registration data.

“Same day registration” and other forms of last-minute registration make it impossible for election officials to verify voter eligibility or to accurately process registration information. This significantly increases the potential for fraud. Our research shows there is no need for such a change.

9. The States and Counties Should Control All Voter Registration Systems & Data

At present, the State Voter Registration database is maintained, programmed, stored and manipulated out of state by a commercial vendor. It is subject - out of view - to all sorts of external access and influence. The law should require the State to operate and maintain its voter registration database locally, and

officials should be assigned, by name and title, and made legally and criminally liable for any manipulation of the system - we need to hold people accountable. It should be illegal to allow an offsite software company to manage and retain control over voter registration information. It should be illegal for local election officials to not understand every aspect of the systems they use, or to defer to vendors to answer public requests for information. Similarly, no funding should be accepted from outsiders who can influence the State's systems.

10. Observation & Transparency

The right-to-vote, and the need for the public to be able to independently validate that election procedures are properly followed, require that registered voters have the right at all times to observe all election procedures. Presently, New Jersey severely restricts observation of election procedures. We believe ANY registered voter should have the right to observe (and this should not be restricted to candidate or political party appointees). This absolute right to observe should extend to the right to audit (below), and laws should be changed to prohibit any contract which prohibits, prevents or obscures analysis and audit of the schema, firmware, software, data instructions and storage systems, and interconnections and external access to, elections databases, voting machines, tabulation machines, optical scanners and any and all other equipment or mechanisms used in the collection, storage, maintenance or operation of elections data. But our preference, noted above, is for paper ballots and local manual tabulation at the close of polls. If a system cannot be independently audited, it cannot be trusted.

11. Reconciliation

At each point where a physical or electronic "record" is created in the voting process, there should be a corresponding, publicly-observable, reconciliation procedure to identify errors, gaps, or malfunctions. Examples would be to reconcile voter sign-ins to sign-in reports; to printed or cast ballots; to cast vote records; to machine memory cards, to votes recorded at the county central election management system (EMS). No results should be transmitted to any higher authority if the reconciliations show flaws, and no election should be Certified until discrepancies are disclosed and explained.

Election tabulation reports transmitted by the counties to the Secretary of State or other official agencies should be reconciled to the counts reported as received at the Secretary of State's office, and should be reconciled to any tabulations received at higher levels of responsibility (such as for federal office holder positions).

12. Ability to Forensically Audit, using "bank standards" of review

Only those contracts, procedures and voting methods which allow observation and full independent forensic audit examination should be allowed. Use of electronic voting and tabulation machines should be immediately stopped, in part because government contracts with manufacturers preclude inspection of most of the mechanics, firmware, software, programming, and monitoring of the use of any equipment interconnections (wired, wireless, optical or by any other means). Every activity and computer action related to voter registration, qualification, voter rolls, the conduct of voting, vote tabulation, conveyance of results and all other aspects of voting should have the means, approved by Certified Public Accountants and Auditors, for each action to be audited and verified before and after use. Every procedure and action should be subject to public audit. Every document, transmission and

recorded/memory item should be securely retained for audit for at least 22 months following any election, and specific individuals should be assigned by name with responsibility to assure this security, and be subject to personal criminal charges for failure to protect the security of these items.

13. Drop Boxes

We believe drop boxes should be strictly limited to the internal lobbies of public government buildings, in well lit areas with nearby parking, and allowed only when under operational 24-hour video and audio surveillance which the public can view in real time. Surveillance equipment should be monitored and recorded, available as open public records upon request, and any interruption of surveillance should result in immediate (within 15 minutes of interruption) closure of the lobby and drop box involved.

14. Duration of “an Election”; Early Voting

The purpose of conducting elections on a single “election day” was and is to reduce opportunities for abuse of the election process. We favor eliminating early or “advance” voting, except for absentee ballots as described above, or in person only at the office of each county clerk.

15. Ballot Harvesting

“Ballot Harvesting” is a term used to describe various election policies, rules and laws which allow political parties to go person-to-person to voters, especially AFTER the close of polls, to solicit or collect votes. Often, such policies invite intimidation tactics or manipulation of the elderly and infirm, as well as voters who are not well informed. Ballot Harvesting should not be allowed.

16. The Issue of “Phantom Voters”

Various federal laws, court opinions, and state policies currently require that the name of a registered voter remain on the voter rolls for up to 5 years after indications exist that the person has moved. Such rules only exist to invite mischief in voting. Every election official in New Jersey fully knows about these rules; most object to them, but must follow the law. The laws should be changed to allow for immediate removal of a voter’s name from the registration books once a formal verification process provides evidence of a move or death. There is NO reason for the name to remain on the voter rolls after a move or death is verified. Notice of the removal should be sent to the last known address.

As above, provision should be made so that any legally qualified citizen voter can re-register easily and quickly, at least 30 days in advance of the election, by providing evidence of Citizenship and current residency. This change would end the issue of “Phantom Votes” - a vote cast in the name of a “voter” who has not voted recently and likely no longer lives at the listed residence.

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