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Comments concerning Draft Bills to Joint Select Committee on Electronic Voting Systems  
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This Committee's present recommendations go far beyond trying to solve the actual problems we had in North Carolina in the 2004 election in Carteret County or in any other county (all caused by human error), and I am afraid they create greater problems for future elections by rejecting the intelligent use of technology and going backwards to rely on paper ballots despite our actual historical knowledge of the problems and fraud we have had with paper ballots in North Carolina and elsewhere in the United States.

In addition, the draft bills hugely underestimate the time, accuracy, trouble, and expense of hand-eye counts and recounts of paper ballots. This committee appears to have rejected the advice and recommendations of the North Carolina professionals in this field—over 1000 years of combined knowledge. It appears to have assumed that it is better to follow a theoretical ivory tower approach that is against all of the real world experience.

I believe that some type of backup to our DRE machines may be a good idea, but it does not have to be paper, and it has to be practical. It can be electronic or some other way to protect the integrity of the voting process. If there is a real concern about the accuracy or integrity of the machines, one can take practical and inexpensive steps to better protect the machines from hackers and make sure the codes, source and execution, are properly written. Where technology is allowed under the present draft, it appears to lock in a voting technology that has no proven record, and provides no way to accept or use better technology as it is developed.

The Election Center, an educational association of voter registration and election officials, put out a paper some time ago on DRE voting systems. Since it has not been presented to this committee, a copy is attached to this statement.

I think we would all agree it takes a computer expert with some type of special access to effectively rig a computer used to record votes in the precincts and the computers used to tally the votes at county election headquarters.

However, this committee so far appears to have discounted the fact that every precinct worker and political hack knows how, or can figure out how, to cheat with paper ballots: by buying votes, by stuffing ballot boxes, or by copying ballots—each of which has happened in the history of North Carolina. Vote buying with paper ballots has usually been accomplished by requiring the first voter to bring back a blank ballot which would be filled out by the vote buyer and given to the next voter who would have to return with a blank ballot to be paid. It can also be accomplished if the voter has a receipt showing how he voted.

If this bill is passed, the public will see problems with the longer lines and longer time needed to vote, and then when there is a count or recount of the paper ballots, it will be very expensive, take an extraordinary amount of time, have questionable accuracy, and perhaps be full of accusations of fraud in the counting as the candidates and political parties try to win the election. It has only been a short time, but who can ever forget that look in Florida as the elections board

members tried to figure out on the paper ballot how the voter intended to vote. I hope we will not see that look and that problem in North Carolina.