

ARIZONA CITIZENS FOR ELECTION REFORM (ACER)



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February 2, 2006

Initiative Application Filed: Voter Confidence in Elections Act

On January 30, 2006, the Arizona Citizens for Election Reform filed an application for ballot status for the initiative: Voter Confidence in Elections Act, I-18-2006.

This initiative does the following:

- Requires electronic voting systems to produce a durable paper ballot that is preserved for 24 months for all elections
- Requires that the voter can verify the choices made and correct any error before the ballot is cast
- Requires a manual verification of vote tabulations in a randomly selected set of precincts (2%) that would be expanded to a full recount of that county if there is a difference of more than 4 votes.
- Permits a vote for "no vote" to make it clear that an "undervote" reflects the voter's intent reducing the chances for error
- Requires recounts that are court-ordered to be manual

A voter-verified durable paper ballot is not the current law. A.R.S. 16-446 states: the electronic voting system "provides a paper document or ballot that visually indicates the voter's selections." Currently, there is no opportunity specified for the voter to change the ballot or document if it is not what the voter intended. Further, a document that is like a cash register receipt that stays on a paper roll in the voting machine does not have the durability of a ballot that must be preserved for up to 24 months and may not be useful in a recount.

The use of manual recounting is the only clear and reliable way to verify or correct the original electronic vote. Using the optical scan machine to count the vote again causes greater confusion because there is no way to determine for sure which count is correct. In the 2004 Legislative District 20 Republican Primary—machine calibration and the sensitivity of marking devices became an issue. Questions of ballot tampering also arose. When manual recounts are undertaken carefully and in the presence of objective observers, there is a greater chance of accurately recording the voter's intentions without the effects of machine error resulting in greater transparency in the elections process.

The full text of the initiative and the initiative petition can be downloaded in pdf format on www.aceronline.org. Arizona Citizens for Election Reform is a nonpartisan organization supporting efforts to ensure every vote is counted accurately and encourage transparency in the elections process. We do not support or oppose candidates for public office.