

ARIZONA CITIZENS FOR ELECTION REFORM (ACER)



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****
March 13, 2006

Initiative Application Amended: Voter Confidence in Elections Act

On March 13, 2006, the Arizona Citizens for Election Reform filed an amended application for ballot status for the initiative: Voter Confidence in Elections Act. The amended initiative changes the funding source, strengthens the recount provisions and increases the number of precincts checked for accuracy.

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 a manual verification of vote tabulations in a randomly selected set of precincts (approximately five percent) that would be expanded to a full manual recount of that county if there is a difference of more than one-half of one percent votes between the electronic tabulation and the manual count
- Requires that the voter can verify the choices made and correct any error before the ballot is cast
- Increases one of the recount triggers from one-tenth of one percent to one-half of one percent.
- Requires recounts that are court-ordered to be manual

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.

A.R.S. 16-446 currently states: the electronic voting system “provides a paper document or ballot that visually indicates the voter's selections.” The initiative clarifies that the voter can correct their choices before the ballot is cast so it is more truly verified by the voter.

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.