



New York City  
Chapter

**Coalition of Black Trade Unionists**

Organizing to Empower Working People

**Resolution Supporting Voter-Marked Paper Ballot Voting Systems  
Passed on May 19, 2007**

WHEREAS, The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) required the states to provide voting devices in each poll site to enable voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently, and authorized the use of federal monies for states to purchase new equipment; and

WHEREAS, HAVA money has been used to purchase two kinds of new systems,

- Paper ballot voting systems, consisting of paper ballots, optical scanners, and accessible ballot marking devices, or
- Electronic voting machines, known as touchscreens or DREs (Direct Recording Electronic machines); and

WHEREAS, With or without a voter-verified paper trail, DREs prevent voters from knowing whether their votes have been correctly recorded and counted, and this is because the touchscreen display and the paper trail, both of which voters can verify, can be different from the invisible, unverifiable votes electronically-recorded inside the computer, which are used to determine election tallies; and

WHEREAS, Paper ballots enable voters to know that their votes have been recorded as intended because paper ballots are marked directly by each voter, whether by hand or by using an accessible ballot marking device that enables voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently; and

WHEREAS, Many accessibility advocates now say that voter-marked paper ballots are superior to DREs because voter-marked paper ballots offer greater accessibility and increased security; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 38 percent of American voters now vote on DREs, while 49 percent use paper ballots; and

WHEREAS, Increasing evidence shows that DREs are capable of ethnic profiling when voters select a non-English language for the display of their ballot on the touchscreen, and DREs may lose the votes intended to be cast on such ballots; and

WHEREAS, DREs have disenfranchised many voters due to malfunctions, failures, and long waiting lines due to insufficient equipment; and

WHEREAS, When New Mexico switched from DREs to paper ballots in 2006, minority undervote rates plummeted as much as 85%; and

WHEREAS, DREs have proven to be unmanageable for many poll workers, voters, and elections staff, and intimidating for those who are not computer users; and

WHEREAS, DREs prevent election observers from witnessing, understanding, and attesting to the honest handling and counting of votes; and

WHEREAS, With paper ballots, only the counting of votes is concealed, but tallies can easily be confirmed by recounting the voter-marked paper ballots; and

WHEREAS, Paper ballot systems are simple and understandable, and enable the community to participate fully as voters, poll workers, and election observers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, New York City Chapter, urges all states and counties to adopt paper ballot systems, and opposes adoption and continued use of DREs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, New York City Chapter, urges all regions and chapters to educate their members and the public on this issue; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, New York City Chapter, urges all regions and chapters to join in alliance with other organizations to work for election integrity and the use of equipment that is accessible to voters with disabilities and non-English languages and that enables citizens to fully understand and observe election procedures.

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