

LEGISLATIVE MEMO:

WE SUPPORT

DC 37

Keeping New York's Lever Voting Machines

District Council 37, AFSCME, supports keeping New York's lever voting machines, and opposes computerization of our elections.

We urge New York State to take all necessary actions to return the federal money our state accepted for lever machine replacement. This federal money will not cover the initial or continuing costs of computerized equipment, and those costs will drain our limited resources away from other essential services at every level of government.

Moreover, our state can hold more trustworthy, well-run elections with the lever voting machines. Computerization of our elections is unwise and unnecessary:

1. New York State is now in compliance with all federal requirements since our counties purchased and fielded accessible ballot marking devices in 2008 for use by voters with disabilities.
2. Lever machines are more secure than computers because they are single-purpose mechanical devices, and their proper setup can be confirmed simply and quickly by visual inspection and mechanical tests. In contrast, confirmation of proper setup of computer equipment is difficult and costly, and requires expensive, time-consuming post-election hand-count audits to confirm proper equipment function on Election Day.
3. Lever machines are easier to manage for voters, poll workers, election administrators, and maintenance technicians.
4. Replacement parts for lever machines are easily available, and the machines can be kept in nearly-new condition for another hundred years at minimal cost. In contrast, computerized vote-counting equipment imposes high continuing annual costs and requires expensive replacement of components as well as replacement of the entire computer after a comparatively brief time.

New York already owns our lever machines. We have the expertise and experience to maintain and use them. We have relied upon these machines for many years. We should not replace them.

Political Action and
Legislation Department
Wanda Williams
Director

Albany Address:

150 State Street, 5th floor
Albany, NY 12207-1682
Tel: (518) 436-0665
Fax: (518) 436-1066