



Statement of Neal Rosenstein
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On the New York City Council's Expected Passage of
Resolution 131 in Support of Optical Scan Voting Systems
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Thank you. My name is Neal Rosenstein. I'm the Government Reform Coordinator for NYPIRG.

It is now clear that the city won't be replacing our lever machines in 2007. But what remains unclear is exactly what we'll be replacing our lever machines with in 2008 or 2009. That's why NYPIRG is commending the Council's action today urging that the city move to an optical scan voting system.

Computerized touch screen voting systems have caused trouble across the country and increase public cynicism about election results. That's why NYPIRG believes the best choice for the city is optical scan with a dedicated ballot marking device available to all voters at their Election District table. Two of the most important advantages of optical scan are:

1. **Optical scan helps ensure fewer lost votes.** The proof is clear. More people cast their votes using optical scan systems than the computerized touch-screen machines being marketed in New York. Why would anyone want to choose a voting machine that less people cast ballots on?
2. **Optical scan systems also enjoy greater public confidence because they're safer from tampering or shoddy programming.** It's unlikely that computerized touch-screen machines will ever enjoy the same level of public confidence, and their use could lead to less participation and a less healthy democracy.

We hope the City Board of Elections will take heed of the Council's action today, and we urge the Mayor to finally acknowledge that computers aren't the best voting technology, and to use his influence in support of safe, reliable and accessible paper ballot systems for all voters.

It's interesting that the Council is also expected to pass a ban on the use of metal bats in High Schools today. Their reasoning is that the newest technology, in this case metal bats, isn't the safest way to play ball. Good old-fashioned wood works best.

That's what we're saying about computerized touch-screen voting machines. The newest technology, isn't the safest or best way to hold elections. For elections, good old-fashioned paper works best.