

**Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law
League of Women Voters of New York State
New York Public Interest Research Group
New Yorkers for Verified Voting**

News Release

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For More Information Contact:
Neal Rosenstein (917) 575-4317
Bo Lipari (607) 351-2314

Groups Call on Governor Spitzer to Endorse Optical Scan Voting

Learn from Florida's Mistake say Groups

A coalition of the State's leading election reform groups called on Governor Spitzer to follow the lead of Florida's newly elected Governor Charlie Crist by ruling out the use of computerized Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting machines in New York State.

"Computerized ATM style voting machines have been nothing but trouble," said Neal Rosenstein, Government Reform Coordinator of the New York Public Interest Research Group, (NYPIRG). "Governor Spitzer should make it clear that New York won't be wasting huge sums of money on their purchase. Optical scan is a tested, reliable alternative that results in fewer lost votes," he added.

On Thursday, Governor Crist announced that Florida intends to replace all of the computerized DREs in the state at a cost of more than \$32 million dollars. Instead, the state will move to an optical scan voting system where voters complete their ballots by hand or with the assistance of a ballot marking device. Completed ballots would then be read and counted by optical scanners at each poll site.

"New York State has not yet made a choice of new voting systems - but that decision lies ahead. We have the opportunity to avoid the expensive mistakes made by other states who have invested millions in failed touch screen voting technology," said Bo Lipari, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Verified Voting. "Governor Spitzer should join the Governors from New Mexico, Maryland, and Florida in calling for adoption of paper ballots and optical scanners. It is the only choice that makes sense for New York," he added.

"The Brennan Center has spent over two years studying electronic voting machines and election results" said Lawrence Norden of the Brennan Center for Justice, "One thing is clear: the DREs New York is currently considering are confusing and poorly designed. If New York chooses one of these DREs instead of optical scans, we're likely to see hundreds of thousands fewer votes in every election."

"Optical scan offers a secure, auditable and accessible alternative to DREs," said Aimee Allaud, Election Specialist with the League of Women Voters of New York State. The inherently secretive nature of DREs means they will never enjoy the same level of public confidence in elections," she added.

The State Board of Elections is currently testing and certifying new voting systems. That process is scheduled to be completed in May, with each county choosing their own voting system shortly thereafter. The groups also pointed out that having a single unified system statewide would lead to efficiencies in training and expenses as well as lead to a more equitable voting experience across the state.