

Task Force on Election Integrity **Community Church of New York**

Teresa Hommel, Chairwoman

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For immediate release:

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Grassroots Citizens and Organizations applaud Council Member Helen Diane Foster for Resolution to Keep Lever Voting Machines

Supporters of keeping New York's mechanical lever voting machines packed the steps of City Hall today, carrying hand-made signs and banners saying "Keep the Levers -- No Invisible Electronic Vote-Counting!" They cheered New York City Councilwoman Helen Diane Foster who has just introduced a new Resolution urging the New York State Legislature, Governor, Board of Elections, Congressional delegation and U.S. Senators to take whatever actions are necessary to keep the state's current reliable and affordable lever voting machines.

New York State plans to replace all lever voting machines in 2010 with voter-marked paper ballots and precinct-based optical scanners (vote-counting computers). To date, 20 upstate counties have passed resolutions objecting to the change due to the high cost of the scanners, paper ballots, and audits necessary to ensure that the scanners properly counted the votes.

"I commend Councilwoman Foster," said Howard Stanislevic, an election audit expert from Queens who co-authored New Jersey's law for auditing electronic voting systems. "New York's law is not sufficient to protect the vote, and we shouldn't replace our current, easily-verified lever machines until our law requires something at least as good as what we have now." Stanislevic is the founder of the E-Voter Education Project -- a group dedicated to the demystification of electronic voting.

"New York can't afford to handle the new technology properly -- we can't even afford to handle it improperly, which is all our state law requires," said Teresa Hommel, Chairwoman of the Task Force on Election Integrity of Community Church of New York. "Meanwhile we can handle our lever voting machines securely, and we can afford them."

"Other states are closing poll sites, canceling elections, and suffering cutbacks in other election services because of the nation's economic downturn and the spiraling costs of electronic elections. So why are we blundering ahead?" asked Marjorie Gersten of the Brooklyn chapter of WheresThePaper.org. "To my knowledge Councilwoman Foster is the first elected official in New York City to show good common sense and say, 'Don't do it.'"