



# New Yorkers for Verified Voting

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## **Who is R. Doug Lewis?**

He is the Executive Director of the Election Center in Houston, a private, “non-profit organization that serves the elections and voter-registration profession”<sup>1</sup> by sponsoring training and certification programs for election administrators and vendors. The Election Center has about 1,000 dues-paying members, including state and county election officials and “suppliers of election products and services.”<sup>2</sup> Prior to taking over the Election Center in 1994, Lewis was president and director of Micro Trade Mart, a company that traded in used computer parts. He claims political experience as a presidential assistant, aide to Texas governor John Connolly, and chairman of state Democratic parties. Lewis has developed a continuing education program for election officials and the first Code of Ethics for voter registrars and elections administrators. He has organized committees, associations, and task forces that bring election workers together around shared concerns, notably the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED). He “serves as the director of the Voting Systems Program for NASSED, where he is responsible for managing the qualification, testing, and approval of voting equipment in America through independent authorities and sits as a member of the national Voting Systems Board to develop and update the Federal Voting Systems Standards.”<sup>3</sup> Independent Testing Authorities (ITAs) do not answer questions about testing procedures but refer all questions about the certification of voting machines to R. Doug Lewis at the Election Center.<sup>4</sup>

## **Why worry about Lewis’ influence?**

Computer professionals, citizens’ groups and independent media committed to the goal of secure, reliable, verifiable and cost-effective elections worry about his control over certification of voting machines and his influence on election administrators and workers, with good reason:

## **Under Lewis’ leadership the Election Center accepts substantial donations from manufacturers of voting machines and sees no conflict of interest in doing so:**

- Lewis set up and participated in a meeting for vendors to raise money for a massive campaign to influence public opinion. <http://www.onlinejournal.com/evoting/082604Harris/082604harris.html>
- The Election Center admits to taking large donations from manufacturers of electronic voting machines. See <http://www.ncvoter.net/ElectionCenter.html>
- The Election Center presents itself as an impartial organization for election officials, but its conferences (e.g., Washington D.C., August 2004) feature expensive events sponsored by voting machine companies.
- While Lewis is proud of developing the first Code of Ethics for election workers, he sees “no conflict of interest or breach of ethics”<sup>5</sup> in accepting donations from manufacturers at the same time as he plays a crucial role in training election workers and certifying voting equipment.

## **Lewis regularly promotes the interests of the electronic voting machine industry:**

- Soon after the 2000 election, his “Failures of Law’ article placed 95% of the problems on weaknesses in the law rather than on failures of election technology or election administration. To this date, he has not publicly expressed concern about DREs that recurrently failed after certification under his oversight.
- In response to computer scientists and security experts who are nearly unanimous in warning of the security dangers of DREs that do not include a voter verification feature, Lewis issued an Election Center Letter that dismisses the concerns of “highly educated and respected [people] who scare voters and public officials with claims that the voting equipment and/or its software can be manipulated to change the outcome of an election.” David Dill, Stanford U. Professor of Computer Science, says this letter “demonstrates profound disturbing complacency and a serious lack of understanding of computer security” and directs our attention to a the point-by-point rebuttal by David Jefferson, a senior computer scientist and electronic voting expert at <http://verify.stanford.edu/EVOTE/NEWSLETTERS/v1n1.html>.
- The Election Center Letter only defends costly DREs and pays no attention to other current voting systems, such as the optically scanned paper ballots that many citizens advocate because they are more reliable.
- Lewis’s speeches and writings aim to encourage “faith in the process” of American elections<sup>6</sup> in a way that encourages blind trust in the voting machine industry. *Could that be because his organization includes as members and receives substantial funds from “suppliers of election products and services”?*

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the National Symposium on Presidential Selection, University of Virginia, 67

<sup>2</sup> [www.electioncenter.org](http://www.electioncenter.org)

<sup>3</sup> Report of the National Symposium on Presidential Selection, University of Virginia, 67

<sup>4</sup> Harris, Bev, *Black Box Voting*, (Renton, WA: Talion Publishing, 2004) 60. also at [www.blackboxvoting.com](http://www.blackboxvoting.com)

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in *Myth Breakers: Facts About Electronic Elections* by Ellen Thiesen, 60-61. [www.VotersUnite.org](http://www.VotersUnite.org).

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, R. Doug, “Will America Hold Fair Elections,” University of Virginia, Oct. 4, 2004.