

Statement at the Hearing on Proposed Election Systems before the Board of Elections on Tuesday, November 21, 2006.

Good Afternoon.

My name is Carolyn De Paolo. I work as Coordinator for the United Hebrew Trades, the New York State Division of the Jewish Labor Committee which serves as a liaison between Labor and the Jewish Community. United Hebrew Trades is composed of affiliates and representatives of more than two dozen labor unions in New York City.

We know that the Election Reform and Modernization Act requires that the lever-type voting machines must be replaced with different equipment in 2007. We are aware that different types of equipment are being considered by the Board of Elections, including electronic computer-like touch screens and also ballot marking devices or paper ballots which would be used in conjunction with optical scan systems.

We urge you to select the paper ballot marking devices which are accessible for voters with special needs along with the optical scanning equipment for recording the votes and retaining them for future validation.

As union people who are very much aware of the importance of voting, we want to be assured that every vote will be counted and counted the way each voter intended.

We strongly feel that computerized ballot casting and vote-recording machines are an invitation to trouble. Both innocent errors and malicious tampering can be easily concealed inside a computer, and hard to identify.

We believe that electronic voting machines -- such as touchscreens -- will also lower participation in elections due to voter's skepticism about the equipment's honesty and the fact that many voters are unfamiliar with computer-type screens.

It is imperative that whatever equipment is chosen will have a "verifiable paper trail" which can be accurately checked if a recount is required.

As an inspector at the polls in Brooklyn I hear many of the voters voice concern over how they will learn or understand new methods of voting next year, and also how long it will take to vote. It is therefore important that the new equipment chosen for future elections must be "voter friendly" so that the average voter will be able to vote easily and quickly and be guaranteed that his or her vote will be secure and accurately counted.

Again, I urge the Board of Elections to select one of the Ballot Marking Devices that will be used in conjunction with the Optical Scan Recording Equipment.

Thank you.