

**Brennan Center for Justice * 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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Civic Groups Urge Spitzer and Cuomo to Support Optical Scan Voting Machines Call Comes After State Court Ruling in Favor of Touch-Screen Machines

New York, NY - As a state court overruled the New York Board of Elections and ordered that a discredited computerized touch screen voting machine be considered for use in this year's elections, a group of New York's leading voting rights organizations called for Governor Spitzer and Attorney General Cuomo to throw the state's weight behind optical scan voting systems.

"Governor Spitzer should make it clear the state won't waste any money on highly suspect computerized voting machines," said Neal Rosenstein of the New York Public Interest Research Group, (NYPIRG.) "Even if this bizarre court decision stands, he should state that counties won't receive any financial help from the state if they choose these computerized junk boxes, and do so at their own economic risk," he added.

The groups criticized the court decision to allow a computerized touch screen voting machine marketed by Liberty Election Systems to be used this year as a "ballot marking" device at poll sites. Ballot marking devices are intended to print out a voters' choice on paper. The groups noted that Liberty machine prints out voters' choices on a roll of paper, much like a cash register, and is inaccessible for many voters with disabilities who wish to verify how their votes were recorded.

"The Attorney General should be warning counties that the touch screen machine being marketed by Liberty violates state law mandates that voters with disabilities be able to independently verify their ballots," said Barbara Bartoletti of the League of Women Voters of New York State.

"Optical scan systems are more secure, enjoy greater public confidence and have lower rates of lost votes than computerized voting machines being marketed in New York," said Lawrence Norden of the Brennan Center. "We hope that the Governor and Attorney General will do whatever they can to ensure New York counties make the right choice when selecting their voting machines."

"Optical scan is a more reliable technology that enhances open and transparent elections, unlike computerized machines that count and store votes on some microchip," said Bo Lipari of New Yorkers for Verified Voting. "It's time for our statewide officials to weigh in and ensure that we don't end up with unreliable computerized touch screen clunkers," he added.

New York's decades old 20,000 lever machines are an endangered species. Federal law requires they be replaced and provides New York with at least \$180 million for that purpose. However, additional state funds may be required to buy new systems across the entire state. County boards of elections are expected to make purchase decisions for voting systems by the end of this week as a result of an earlier federal court order. A second state court suit over allowable voting systems is also expected to be resolved this week as well.