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Was the Ohio Election Honest and Fair?

News Release: Institute for Public Accuracy

3 November 2004

- TERESA FEDOR, [via Greg Lestini, glestini@maild.sen.state.oh.us]
  Ohio State Senator Teresa Fedor said today: "There was trouble with our elections in Ohio at every stage. It's been a battle getting people registered to vote, getting to the ballot on voting day and getting that vote to count. There is a pattern of voter suppression; that's why I called for [Ohio Secretary of State] Blackwell's resignation more than a month ago. Blackwell, while claiming to run an unbiased elections process, was also the co-chair of the Bush-Cheney campaign in Ohio. Additionally, he was the spokesperson for the anti-business, anti-family constitutional amendment 'Issue 1,' and a failed initiative to repeal a crucial sales-tax revenue source for the state. Blackwell learned his moves from the Katherine Harris playbook of Florida 2000, and we won't stand for it."

- BILL MOSS, bmoss@hbcuconnect.com
  Executive vice president of HBCU Connect, which works to connect historically black colleges and universities, Moss said today: "I stayed in line two and a half hours. I've never seen anything like this in my life. There were fewer voting machines in the highly concentrated black areas, creating the long lines so as to frustrate the voters. But we knew the Republicans -- many of whom became Republicans because they opposed equal rights for blacks -- would try to drive down black turnout. ... [Ohio Secretary of State] Blackwell was confusing things by raising issues like the paper weight of cards."

- SUSAN TRUITT, susan.truitt@lexisnexis.com,
  http://www.caseohio.org/
  Co-founder of the Citizens Alliance for Secure Elections, Truitt said today: "Seven counties in Ohio have electronic voting machines and none of them have paper trails. That alone raises issues of accuracy and integrity as to how we can verify the count. A recount without a paper trail is meaningless; you just get a regurgitation of the data.

Last year, Blackwell tried to get the entire state to buy new machines without a paper trail. The exit polls, virtually the only check we have against tampering with a vote without a paper trail, had shown Kerry with a lead. ... A poll worker told me this morning that there were no tapes of the results posted on some machines; on other machines the posted count was zero, which obviously shouldn't be the case."

- DAN WALLACH, dwallach@cs.rice.edu,
  http://www.cs.rice.edu/~dwallach/
  http://www.accuracy.org/press_releases/PR062104.htm
  Wallach is an assistant professor of Computer Science at Rice University in Houston specializing in building secure and robust software systems for the Internet. Along with colleagues at Johns Hopkins, Wallach co-authored a groundbreaking study that revealed significant flaws in electronic voting systems. He appeared on an Institute for Public Accuracy news release in June entitled "Electronic Voting -- Danger for Democracy."

- BOB FITRAKIS, rfitraki@cscc.edu
  An attorney who monitored the election with the Election Protection Coalition, Fitrakis said today: "There were far fewer machines in the inner-city districts than in the suburbs. I documented at least a dozen people leaving because the lines were so long in African-American areas. Blackwell did a great deal of suppressing before the election -- like attempting to refuse to process voter registration forms. The absentee ballots were misleading in Franklin County. Kerry was the third line down, but you had to punch number four to vote for him. Bush was getting both his votes as well as Kerry's."

- HARVEY WASSERMAN, windhw@aol.com,
  http://www.freepress.org/departments/display/19/2004/810
  Senior editor of FreePress.org, an Ohio-based web site, and co-author with Fitrakis of the recent article "Twelve Ways Bush is Now Stealing the Ohio Vote," Wasserman said today: "There was a huge fight around ensuring that the electronic voting machines had paper trails and there was resistance by the secretary of state, so there is no paper trail. There were some victories to ensure a paper trial -- by 2006. There were limited numbers of voting machines in African-American districts. Some people had to wait up to eight hours, far more than in predominantly white areas."

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

On November 9, 2003, the *New York Times* reported: "In mid-August, Walden W. O'Dell, the chief executive of Diebold Inc., sat down at his computer to compose a letter inviting 100 wealthy and politically inclined friends to a Republican Party fund-raiser, to be held at his home in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio. 'I am committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year,' wrote Mr. O'Dell, whose company is based in Canton, Ohio. That is hardly unusual for Mr. O'Dell. A longtime Republican, he is a member of President Bush's 'Rangers and Pioneers,' an elite group of loyalists who have raised at least $100,000 each for the 2004 race. But it is not the only way that Mr. O'Dell is involved in the election process. Through Diebold Election Systems, a subsidiary in McKinney, Tex., his company is among the country's biggest suppliers of paperless,

touch-screen voting machines. Judging from Federal Election Commission data, at least 8 million people will cast their ballots using Diebold machines next November. ... Some people find Mr. O'Dell's pairing of interests -- as voting-machine magnate and devoted Republican fund-raiser -- troubling."

Machine Politics in the Digital Age
by Melanie Warner, *New York Times*, 9 Nov 2003
http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/09/business/yourmoney/09vote.html

On November 3, 2004, *Reuters* reported: "Voters across the United States reported problems with electronic touch-screen systems on Tuesday in what critics said could be a sign that the machines used by one-third of the population were prone to error.... "

Voters Report Problems with Computer Systems
by *Reuters*, 3 Nov 2004
http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/1103-03.htm

On October 24, 2004, the *Palm Beach Post* reported: "A federal judge on Monday rejected U.S. Rep. Robert Wexler's claim that paperless electronic voting violates the constitutional rights of Floridians...."

Judge rules against voting paper trail
by George Bennett, *Palm Beach Post* Staff Writer, 26 Oct 2004
http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/content/news/epaper/2004/10/26/c1a_wexler_1026.html

On November 3, 2004, Thomas Crampton wrote in the *International Herald Tribune*: "The global implications of the U.S. election are undeniable, but international monitors at a polling station in southern Florida said Tuesday that voting procedures being used in the extremely close contest fell short in many ways of the best global practices...."

Global monitors find faults
by Thomas Crampton, *International Herald Tribune*, 3 Nov 2004
http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/11/02/news/observe.html

For more information, contact at the Institute for Public Accuracy:
Sam Husseini, (202) 347-0020, (202) 421-6858; or David Zupan, (541) 484-9167

Subject: [natural_persons] Basic report from Columbus (fwd)
Date: Thu, 4 Nov 2004 14:31:18 -0500 (EST)
From: Eli Beckerman <ebeckerman [at] wesleyan [dot] edu>
Reply-To: natural_persons@yahoogroups.com
To: natural_persons@yahoogroups.com

This from my father:

---------- Forwarded message ----------
Date: Thu, 4 Nov 2004 10:36:39 -0500
From: Ray Beckerman <RBeckerman [at] BLHNY [dot] com>
Subject: Basic report from Columbus

I worked for 3 days, including Election Day, on the statewide voter protection hotline run by the Ohio Democratic Party in Columbus, Ohio.

I am writing this because the media is inexplicably whitewashing what happened in Ohio, and Kerry's concession was likewise inexplicable.

Hundreds of thousands of people were disenfranchised in Ohio. People waited on line for as long as 10 hours. It appears to have only happened in Democratic-leaning precincts, principally (a) precincts where many African Americans lived, and (b) precincts near colleges.

I spoke to a young man who got on line at 11:30 am and voted at 7 pm. When he left at 7 pm, the line was about 150 voters longer than when he'd arrived, which meant those people were going to wait even longer. In fact they waited for as much as 10 hours, and their voting was concluded at about 3 am. The reason this occurred was that they had 1 voting station per 1000 voters, while the adjacent precinct had 1 voting station per 184. Both precincts were within the same county, and managed by the same county board of elections. The difference between them is that the privileged polling place was in a rural, solidly republican, area, while the one with long lines was in the college town of Gambier, OH.

Lines of 4 and 5 hours were the order of the day in many African-American neighborhoods.

Touch screen voting machines in Youngstown OH were registering "George W. Bush" when people pressed "John F. Kerry" ALL DAY LONG. This was reported immediately after the polls opened, and reported over and over again throughout the day, and yet the bogus machines were inexplicably kept in use THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

Countless other frauds occurred, such as postcards advising people of incorrect polling places, registered Democrats not receiving absentee ballots, duly registered young voters

being forced to file provisional ballots even though their names and signatures appeared in the voting rolls, longtime active voting registered voters being told they weren't registered, bad faith challenges by Republican "challengers" in Democratic precincts, and on and on and on.

I was very proud of the way so many Ohioans fought so valiantly for their right to vote, and would not be turned away. Many, however, could not spend the entire day and were afraid of losing their jobs, due to the severe economic depression hitting Ohio.

I do not understand why Kerry conceded and did not fight to ensure that all Ohioans would have a chance to vote, and for their vote to be counted.

Ray

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Volunteers Needed for Ohio Election Audit

Victoria Lovegren

Case Western Reserve University

From: Victoria Lovegren <victoria.lovegren [at] case [dot] edu>
Subject: Volunteers Needed for Ohio Election Audit

We want an Audit of the Ohio Election. Help us prove that our recent election was fair and honest (or not). (See http://www.neohioact.org/electionaudit/)

We need your help as:

- **Data Coordinators** (at least one for each county)
  If you live in Ohio and are willing to be the data coordinator in one of 88 counties, please contact me immediately. You don't need to be an IT or technical person, just tenacious and willing to physically go to the county election board location perhaps multiple times.

We will tell you what kind of information we want you to ask for. Black Box Voting has already sent out a public-records request for central tabulator audit/summary reports but there is other data that we need, and we will have better luck obtaining the data if we have a "live body" to actually go there. Important data that we will need: 1) copies of poll books and other logs of people who voted provisionally 2) detailed voter-registration data (on CD) and 3) information related to the allocation of resources (voting equipment poll workers, polling-place inspectors, etc.) for each polling place and precinct. There may be other requirements as we get into it.

- **Data Analysts / Statisticians**
  We need folks who can search for election-related data from websites and other sources; download and import into databases and/or spreadsheets; conduct data and statistical analysis on the data; or present data in graphic, chart and other formats.

- **Website Developers**
  We need people to maintain a simple website to facilitate information flow.

- **Legal Help**
  We need a legal team of attorneys knowledgeable in Ohio Election Law.

- **Administrative Help**
  Help with communications, copying, PR, outreach, organizing.

- **Office Space/Equipment**
  Office space or equipment (computers, copiers, etc.)

- **Donations**
  If you can help financially, please go to www.blackboxvoting.org . We'll have administrative costs for securing information, copying, mailing/delivery fees, etc.

Please send this to everyone on your list who wants to ensure that Ohio's Election was fair and honest. Please contact me ASAP. Sorry for cross posts.

Victoria Lovegren, Ph.D.
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Cleveland, Ohio
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Computer error at voting machine gives Bush 3,893 extra votes

Associated Press / The Beacon Journal

5 November 2004

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COLUMBUS, Ohio - A computer error with a voting machine cartridge gave President Bush 3,893 extra votes in a Gahanna precinct.

Franklin County's unofficial results gave Bush 4,258 votes to Democratic challenger John Kerry's 260 votes in Precinct 1B. Records show only 638 voters cast ballots in that precinct.

Matthew Damschroder, director of the Franklin County Board of Elections, said Bush received 365 votes there. The other 13 voters who cast ballots either voted for other candidates or did not vote for president.

Damschroder said he received some calls Thursday from people who saw the error when reading the list of poll results on the election board's Web site.

He said the error would have been discovered when the official canvass for the election is performed later this month.

Damschroder said after Precinct 1B closed, a cartridge from one of three voting machines at the polling place generated a faulty number at a computerized reading station.

The reader also recorded zero votes in a county commissioner race.

Damschroder said the cartridge was retested Thursday and there were no problems. He couldn't explain why the computer reader malfunctioned.

Workers checked the cartridge against memory banks in the voting machine Thursday and each showed that 115 people voted for Bush on that machine. With the other machines, the total for Bush in the precinct added up to 365 votes.

Information from: *The Columbus Dispatch*