

August 31, 2021

Voting System Commission  
State of Louisiana  
900 N 3rd Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
*Via email*

## **Verified Voting Recommends Hand-Marked Paper Ballot (HMPB) Voting System with Voter-Verifiable Ballot Marking Devices (BMD) for Accessible Use**

Dear Commission Members,

On behalf of Verified Voting, I write to recommend a hand-marked paper ballot voting system, with voter-verifiable ballot marking devices for accessible use, for the state of Louisiana. Verified Voting is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization with a mission to strengthen democracy for all voters by promoting the responsible use of technology in elections. Since our founding in 2004 by computer scientists, we have acted on the belief that the integrity and strength of our democracy rely on citizens' trust that each vote is counted as cast.

Louisiana's new voting system will be required to produce an auditable voter-verified paper record. Hand-marked paper ballots are the best solution for most voters, as they provide the easiest way for most voters to verify their votes. Voter-verifiable ballot marking devices can supplement hand-marked paper ballots by providing assistive technology for voters who desire or need this method to mark their ballot.

Why do we need paper records, and primarily hand-marked paper ballots, in this high-tech world? Because we need a way to make sure that the computers counted our votes correctly. Paper ballots that voters have verified can be used in post-election audits and recounts to provide high assurance of election outcomes, even if voting systems break down or are misconfigured or hacked. Hand-marked paper ballots are preferable for most voters because voters can verify each selection as it is marked, then review the entire ballot before casting the ballot.

This Commission will likely have a discussion about recommending ballot marking devices that print the voters' selection(s) for all in-person voters. We urge you to reject this approach. When BMDs are used for all, they raise voter verification concerns because voters who use them cannot verify the selections on their ballots until *after* entering all the selections and printing the ballot. Reliance on BMDs for all also increases costs and can disrupt voting if some or all BMDs fail for any reason. Conversely, providing voter-verifiable BMDs alongside hand-marked

paper ballots as an alternative for voters who desire or need assistive technology provides greater convenience and resilience, at lower cost, than relying on BMDs alone.<sup>1</sup>

We urge the Commission to recommend a hand-marked paper ballot system with voter-verifiable ballot marking devices for accessible use to help reinforce Louisiana voters' confidence in the state's elections for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Lindeman, Ph.D.  
Acting Co-Director

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<sup>1</sup> Verified Voting Policy on Direct Recording Electronic Voting Machines and Ballot Marking Devices.  
<https://verifiedvoting.org/publication/policy-on-direct-recording-electronic-voting-machines-and-ballot-marking-devices/>.