



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

DEAN HELLER
Secretary of State

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I'm here today to declare that Nevada has become the first state in the nation to complete state certification and federal qualification of the voter-verified paper audit trail printer that will be used on touch-screen voting machines in the State.

The VeriVote® printers will be attached to all new Direct Recording Electronic voting machines ordered from Sequoia Voting Systems, and will be used during the upcoming 2004 Election throughout the state of Nevada.

As you may be aware, as Secretary of State and Nevada's Chief Elections Officer, I announced in December 2003 my decision to decertify all punch-card voting machines in Nevada; to purchase touch-screen voting machines for each county in Nevada; and to require that a voter-verifiable paper audit trail printer be included on each of those machines in time for the 2004 Election.

By doing so, I feel confident in the knowledge that Nevada will produce the most accurate, most secure and most valid election results in the nation in 2004.

Voting is the most fundamental freedom Americans enjoy; it is the backbone of a free and democratic society.

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As the state's Chief Elections Officer, my duty is clear: to provide voters with the highest level of confidence that elections in my state are fair, unbiased and secure.

Further, it is a right of every citizen to feel secure that the voting choices they have made are recorded accurately.

Before announcing our purchase of Sequoia Voting System machines, I had an open mind about the necessity of requiring voter verifiable paper records. But based on the comments I heard from our citizens via phone calls, emails, letters and town meetings, it was clearly the right thing to do.

Similarly, many citizens from across the nation, along with computer and security experts, have come to the same conclusion: that voter confidence in the process is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of voter-verified paper records.

***Common Cause* recently released a "Statement on Voting Machines," that concluded, "...we believe that no one's right to vote has meaning if the voter cannot be reasonably assured that their vote was counted as cast."**

As election officials, our responsibility is to provide voters with the highest level of accountability possible that their votes are recorded accurately. It seems apparent that the inclusion of a voter verifiable paper trail assists in adding to the public's trust in voting equipment.

Congress is now looking more closely at the issue of requiring voter-verifiable paper records on all electronic voting machines. Several members of the Senate and

House of Representatives have authored bills on this subject, including Nevada's junior Senator, John Ensign.

Two of the fundamental purposes behind the passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 were to create a level playing field for all voters and to restore voter confidence in the voting process after the 2000 Election debacle.

If we are to succeed, a paper trail is an intrinsic component of voter confidence.

I'd like to personally thank Sequoia Voting Systems for their support on this issue, and for going the extra mile to produce the VeriVote® printer that has passed federal certification with flying colors, thus allowing Nevada voters to be confident their votes are being recorded accurately and securely.