



miami-dade election reform coalition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 15, 2006

Contact: Sandy Wayland, President Miami Dade Election Reform Coalition
(305) 297-9921
swayland@mindspring.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Citing the immediate need for the State of Florida to develop detailed specifications for the creation of one or more new voting systems that are "secure, accurate, accessible and verifiable to the voter," the Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition has launched its 2007 Florida Legislative campaign for what coalition President Alexandra Wayland calls an aggressive push to force the state to engage in real voting system reform.

"It is clear to us that right now, events across the state have placed the issue of voting system reform on the front burner of the state and local legislative agendas," said Wayland. "As a result, we are proposing solutions and strategies that are serious and intelligent and that are not necessarily what people expect or what they want to hear."

Chief among the coalition's proposals: do not attempt to retro-fit existing DRE touch screen with printers. "Our research has shown us that the existing technology is so deficient that attempting to add printers to machines that already have countless problems, would reduce, not add, to voter confidence," stated University of Miami Law Professor Martha Mahoney, a member of the coalition and its lead technology investigator.

The coalition also opposes merely replacing DRE touchscreens with optical scan systems. According to Lida Rodriguez-Taseff, the coalition's former chair, "optical scan systems pose serious barriers for language minorities and voters with disabilities. Those who blindly push for optical scans without addressing these barriers run the risk of neglecting large numbers of voters in Florida."

Nor is the coalition simply pushing for a voter-verified paper record. According to Wayland, "while we applaud legislative efforts to require voter-verified paper records, to be effective in the long term, voting system legislation must create a framework for promptly innovating and producing new or improved systems that all Floridians can use to vote secretly and securely. A voter verified paper record is one, but by no means the only, system requirement worthy of legislative attention."

According to Barbara Brandon, a former regulatory lawyer and member of the coalition, "the only solution to Florida's voting problems is the tried and true concept of technology enforcement: the Florida Legislature sets the standards and vendors wishing to do business in Florida are then required to provide equipment that meets or exceeds those standards." Wayland concluded, "the recent media coverage demonstrates that Florida's voters are tired of the vendors telling Floridians how to vote and they are tired of a process that is driven by the business interests of vendors, instead of the needs of voters. We are proposing a solution that will return the power where it belongs - with the voters."