



### **Miami-Dade Activists Urge Legislators to Amend Proposed Voting Bill to Ensure Compliance with New Federal Elections Law**

**MIAMI** – April 10, 2003 - Saying a proposed state bill regarding election procedures fails to comply with a new federal law that calls for improved voter tracking and auditing methods, the Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition today urged state officials to amend the proposal to have in place a system for voters to check their ballots in paper form before leaving the polling place.

"It's no surprise voters are inherently suspicious of computers, especially considering the long history of problems we've encountered in the past when dealing with new voting equipment," said Sandy Wayland, Legislative Co-Chair of the Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition. "One of the ways to ensure confidence in future elections is to create a uniform system that produces a paper trail that allows voters to confirm whether their votes were accurately recorded."

The proposed state bill, PCB PC 03-07, outlines the procedures for the State of Florida to begin meeting certain requirements of the new federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), including a centralized voter registration system, procedures for canvassing provisional ballots and accessibility for disabled persons. But, the state bill does not address the issue of paper records - one of the more significant changes that were mandated by HAVA.

HAVA dictates that a voting system must produce a so-called "paper record" that can be easily read and understood so that a "manual audit" can be performed if need be. This printed record is available for the voter to review and approve after he or she finishes electronic voting and for conducting recounts. Every voting unit, according to the

new law, "shall produce a record with an audit capacity for such system," giving election officials a paper trail to perform manual recounts. The law also outlines procedures for "second chance voting" where voters can change the ballot or correct an error before the permanent paper record is produced.

**The Procedures Committee will consider the proposed bill (PCB PC 03-07) at a meeting at 10 a.m. April 10 in Room 212 of the Knott Building, 404 S. Monroe St., in Tallahassee. The proposed bill is on-line at [www.myfloridahouse.com](http://www.myfloridahouse.com) under PCB03-07.**

The coalition is urging legislative members to amend the bill so that it mandates the creation of paper records in the form of a printout of the ballot image that can then be reviewed and approved by each individual voter after ballots are cast using the electronic voting machines.

"While we commend the state for taking steps to comply with these new federal requirements, we're urging state lawmakers to act carefully when drafting their bill so that it conforms to HAVA explicitly," said Cheryl Roberts, Communications Director, Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition. "By not doing so, the state risks losing millions in federal funds that are earmarked for these voting system changes."

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