

**DEVOTE AN HOUR TO DEMOCRACY PROJECT**  
**NOVEMBER 7, 2006 ELECTION**

**A. THE QUESTION:**

**WILL THE VOTE TOTALS FROM THE VOTING MACHINES AT THE POLLING PLACES MATCH THOSE VOTE TOTALS COMING FROM THE CENTRAL TABULATOR ON ELECTION NIGHT?**

**B. THE ANSWER: YES, IN MOST CASES.**

**Results of Comparison of 42 Set of Tapes to Central Tabulator:**

- 1. Of the 42 precincts examined, the numbers for 26 polling places and central tabulators were identical, good.**
- 2. Two of the precincts featured differing numbers between the polling place and central tabulator.**
- 3. In the 50<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, the central tabulator showed 3 more votes for Brian Bilbray than did the polling place figures.**
- 4. In the 53 Congressional District, the tabulator figure for candidate Lippi was one vote less than the central tabulator.**
- 5. Unfortunately, in 14 of the precincts, polling place tapes were missing and it was impossible to make a comparison between polling place and central tabulator results.**

**C. OTHER FINDINGS OF INTEREST**

**Gathering Information From The San Diego County Registrar of Voters (ROV) Takes Much Time And Is Costly:**

1. ROVs Informed SAE that no precinct results would be made available to the public until the election was certified.
2. First PRR (Public Records Request) was received by the ROV's office on November 21, 2006. After several PRR exchanges with County Counsel's Office, the requested information was received over the internet on January 30, 2007.
3. We were informed that a staff person had to run the report at a rate of \$75 per hour. The cost per precinct was \$1.96 and we requested 42 precincts for a total of \$82.50. Had we requested all the documents the cost would cost an approximate \$800.

### **Costly Way To Vote:**

1. Most TSx machines had an average of 40 to 50 votes cast per machine. Some had under 10 votes and one had only 2 votes. One machine at each precinct is designated to program the voting cards and therefore records no votes.
2. According to Voters Unite a TSx machine costs between \$3,000 and \$4,000.
3. **Think about it. Does this mean an average vote costs between \$75 and \$100 a vote? Add maintenance and technical support to this cost plus replacement costs as machines age or become obsolete. A machine may be used in another election or two, thus reducing the cost to \$50 or less a vote, or the machine may need to be replaced after one election cycle. No matter how you figure it, TSx computers represent a Costly Way To Vote.**

### **Tapes:**

#### **Gathering The Tapes Posted Outside the Polling Places Is A Hit Or Miss Activity:**

1. Tapes were found on the ground, in trash cans, not posted or sometimes in the possession of a resident or employee of the polling site.
2. Not all tapes were obtainable. At a number of polling places machines had run out of tape or had mechanical problems where no tape was produced.
3. Some paper jams made tapes unreadable.

### **Observations Reported on Election Day**

1. Poll workers reported set up time took more time than anticipated.
2. A few cases were reported of employees at polling sites not being there to open buildings early.
3. At a number of precincts, poll workers mistakenly removed the set of seals covering the memory ports. Voting continued on these machines which is illegal.
4. **Voting on paper took less time than voting on machines. Sometimes machines would go through the timed automatic shut off before a voter finished and the voter would have to ask the poll worker to restart the voting process.**

### **Poll Closing**

#### **In a number of instances attempts were made to prevent polling site observers from viewing the closing of the polls.**

1. Some poll workers asked observers who wished to stay and watch

the poll closing procedures to leave. Some observers left while others challenged this and were permitted to stay.

- 2. Some observers were not allowed to take pictures of the tapes inside the polling place. There is no law that states that pictures of public documents can not be taken inside the polling place.**

## **D. CONCLUSIONS**

1. Precinct reports should be released on election night. Information is fed into the Central Tabulator one precinct at a time and we see no reason why this information can not be released in a timelier manor. This information is essential to follow the flow of the votes.
2. There should not be a fee to obtain precinct by precinct results. If this information were routinely retrieved on election night, there would be no need to pay a technical person to retrieve this information at a later date.
3. By the time information was received from the Registrar of Voters, the election was months behind and any discrepancies would be rendered irrelevant.
4. Full sets of tape information was difficult to obtain for a number of reasons including, machines breaking down or running out of tape, tapes not posted or disappearing from the site, tape jams and unreadable tapes.

## **CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT:**

San Diego County citizens were asked to collect and send data from TSx touch screen machine tally tapes that were posted outside precincts after the polls closed on election night to Secure Accurate Elections. The information collected from precinct postings was then compared with precinct tallies produced by the Central Tabulator located at the Registrar of Voters Office.

Observers were also asked to observe the closing of the polling places, if possible and obtain information for our study.

## **RESULTS:**

Secure Accurate Elections received data from over 200 polling places. This data was in the form of pictures of tapes, forms filled out with tape information, or actual tapes that had been posted for 42 hours. SAE received 42 sets of tapes, some incomplete.