

## How long does it take to change voting systems?

This frequently asked question arises as Congress considers whether states and counties using paperless voting systems can make a switch to an auditable voting system compliant with the requirements of a bill such as the “Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act” (HR811). States considering such legislation have similar concerns.

Most jurisdictions could accomplish this shift by replacing complex systems (direct recording electronic or DRE voting systems) with a simpler voting system, such as paper optical scan ballots with ballot-marking devices. Such systems are federally qualified and in widespread use today.

Based on a review of historical information about voting system changes in recent years, the amount of time it may take to deploy a new voting system varies, and is dependent on several factors. States can help individual counties by carrying out pricing negotiations with the vendors<sup>1</sup> and providing boilerplate paperwork for purchase orders or contracts.

The following chart shows actual time frames for some states or counties from the date of the requirement (e.g. a bill requiring a new voting system is signed into law or other starting point) to the date of deployment (first election in which the equipment was used).

The chart also indicates the type of system in place previous to the change (“Old”) and the system to which the state or county switched (“New”). The chart is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to provide a snapshot of actual implementation accomplished by those states and counties.

North Carolina provides a complete example, as it shows the time frame from signing of a law requiring voter-verified paper records, to the first deployment of the new equipment in the next federal election. In the intervening 8 months, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed, commented on by public interest groups and then issued, bids sought and received, testing and certification accomplished, purchases made, voting systems delivered and acceptance-tested, and pollworkers trained. The roll-out of the new voting technology was considered successful statewide.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Texas’ Purchasing Division provided the counties with pricing information from several vendors for equipment they would need to purchase to meet requirements of the Help America Vote Act. Note the purchasing document indicates that delivery of voting systems would happen within 30 days of the order being placed.

<b>State (County); Timing</b>	<b>Requirement/ Process Start Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>New System Deployed</b>	<b>Old System<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>New System</b>
CA (San Diego) – 6 mos	04/30/2004	Voting system decertified <sup>3</sup>	November 2004	DRE	OS
NM – 8 mos	03/02/2006	Bill signed requiring OS <sup>4</sup>	11/07/2006	DRE, paper, OS	OS + BMD
NV – 7 mos	12/2003	Vvpat req. <sup>5</sup>	August 2004	PC / OS	DRE+vvpat
NC – 8 mos	08/26/2005	Vvpr law signed	May 2, 2006	Various	DRE+vvpat, OS + BMD
WV - 1 yr	5/4/2005	Vvpr law signed	May 9, 2006	Various	DRE+vvpat

<sup>2</sup> KEY: “PC” = punch-card; “OS” = optical scan; “DRE” = direct recording electronic; “VVPAT” = voter-verified paper audit trail printer, “BMD” = ballot-marking device

<sup>3</sup> San Diego County used Diebold TSx DREs (paperless) in March 2004; the system was decertified some six months prior to the next election, as California statute requires this amount of lead time for voting system decertification to allow counties time to deploy a new system. Paper optical scan ballots were successfully deployed in the subsequent November 2004 election.

<sup>4</sup> New Mexico’s Governor Richardson signed a statewide paper ballot requirement into law on March 2, 2006. The state deployed the new systems in time for the November 2006 general election. NM has 1,093,256 registered voters in 33 counties.

<sup>5</sup> Nevada’s Secretary of State Dean Heller ordered new Sequoia Edge machines for the state as of December 2003. At that same time, he mandated that all counties getting new DREs (16 of 17) would also have VVPAT by 2004’s September 7 primary. Clark County, which already had existing older-model DREs, would get some DREs with VVPAT and replace the rest by 2006.