

Election Reform: The Urgent Need To Improve The Time is Now Our Election Infrastructure

Election Reform: The Time is Now warns that one year before the 2006 midterm elections, over 90 million registered voters are exposed to serious electoral deficiencies, including low-quality voter registration databases, inadequate safeguards for purging voters from the rolls, and insufficiently tested voting machines. Specifically, our survey of recent electoral research finds that:

13 STATES, representing more than **60 MILLION VOTERS**, have not constructed voter registration databases consistent with the highest standards necessary to protect voting rights and ensure efficient election administration.

At least **23 STATES**, representing more than **55 MILLION VOTERS**, continue to allow local authorities to purge voter rolls. Purging has led to the disenfranchisement of many voters, including those caught in the faulty felon purges in Florida in 2000 and voter challenges in Ohio in 2004.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission continues to outsource certification standards for voting machines to just **THREE PRIVATE FIRMS**—all of which **REFUSE** to make their testing standards public. **SEVEN STATES** employed voting systems without federal certification in the 2004 election.

Although our election system suffers from many additional problems, including struggles over voter identification requirements and provisional ballots, sustained attention to these three issues would dramatically improve our election infrastructure in time for the 2006 election and prevent the disenfranchisement of voters. If these problems are left unattended, our elections will become increasingly less reliable, causing more Americans to question our system's integrity and lose faith in the most basic and essential exercise of our democracy.

In light of these concerns, the Center recommends that policymakers take the following actions:

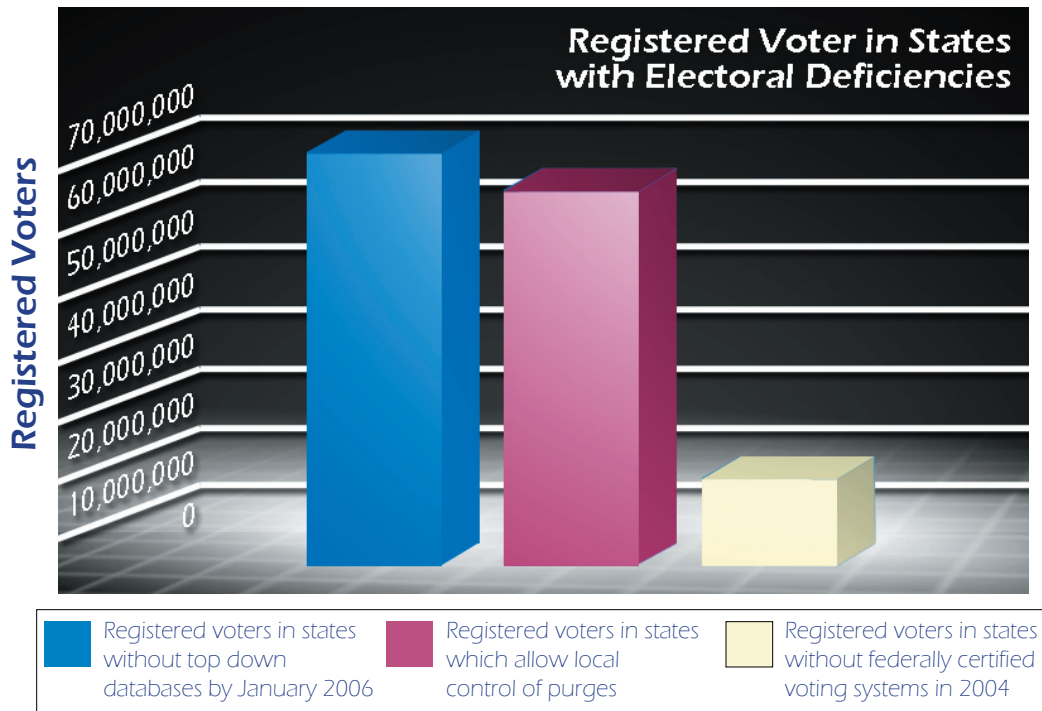
The EAC should **STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION** on voter registration databases and require states to adopt a **CENTRALIZED MODEL**. This would improve the reliability of the voter rolls for both voters and administrators.

The EAC should immediately design and implement **CLEAR STANDARDS** for purges of voter rolls, removing primary purging authority from local hands and establishing an effective **OVERSIGHT MECHANISM** at the state level. In addition, states should strongly consider permitting independent bodies to oversee elections, or at least prevent their election officials from playing active roles in political campaigns.

The EAC should immediately improve the federal voting system certification process by **ESTABLISHING** more than just three **TESTING AGENCIES**. These agencies should be transparent and independent of voting system manufacturers.



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States without Top down databases in place by Jan. 2006 deadline	Number of registered voters
Alabama	2,418,000
Arizona	2,485,000
California	14,193,000
Illinois	6,437,000
New York	8,624,000
Ohio	6,003,000
Oklahoma	1,781,000
South Dakota	425,000
Tennessee	2,739,000
Texas	9,681,000
Washington	3,133,000
Wisconsin	3,225,000
Wyoming	265,000
TOTALS	61,409,000

States that allow local purges of voter registration databases	Number of registered voters
Arizona	2,485,000
Connecticut	1,695,000
Delaware	415,000
Georgia	3,948,000
Idaho	663,000
Maryland	2,676,000
Massachusetts	3,483,000
Michigan	5,364,000
Missouri	3,336,000
Nebraska	918,000
New Hampshire	716,000
New Jersey	4,085,000
North Carolina	4,292,000
Oregon	2,049,000
Rhode Island	522,000
South Dakota	425,000
Tennessee	2,739,000
Texas	9,681,000
Utah	1,141,000
Vermont	354,000
Washington	3,133,000
West Virginia	935,000
Wyoming	265,000
TOTALS	55,320,000

States without federally certified voting systems in 2004	Number of registered voters
Mississippi	1,510,000
New Hampshire	716,000
New Jersey	4,085,000
North Carolina	4,292,000
Oklahoma	1,781,000
Pennsylvania	6,481,000
Vermont	354,000
TOTALS	19,219,000

Sources

electionline.org, *Statewide Voter Registration Database Status* (updated Oct. 4, 2005); electionline.org, *Assorted Rolls: Statewide Voter Registration Databases under HAVA, June 2005*; U.S. Election Assistance Commission, *Voluntary Guidance on Statewide Implementation of Voter Registration Lists, July 2005*; electionline.org, *Securing the Vote, Election Reform Briefing Number 7, Apr. 2004*. All voter registration data from the U.S. Census Bureau.