

Understanding the Pennsylvania Recount

As with any action under Pennsylvania Election law, recount requests are quite complicated here, and a logistical quagmire. In order to assure a statewide recount citizens need to file at least three affidavits in each voting ward. In Pennsylvania that means over 27,000 citizens need to act within a very small window of time. It is also possible to contest an election at the state level, but that, too, is a process that is intimidating, and the final decision is left up to a state judge. Still, there is a certain amount of sense in making sure that requests for recounts are serious, not frivolous, so a difficult process is not, on its own, unreasonable. However, it is quite unnerving to learn that our votes here really cannot be counted at all.

Since Pennsylvania has virtually no paper ballots, recounts have become impossible and meaningless. Over a decade of research has exposed the vulnerability of Direct Recording voting machines (DRE), and the tendency to malfunction. There is really only one way to properly count votes in Pennsylvania and that is through a forensic examination of the computer coding. Failure to do so results a mere reiteration of potentially flawed data. This is the issue at the heart of the struggle in Pennsylvania for a validated counting of the vote. The Stein campaign has, therefore, decided to seek relief in Federal Court. The campaign is trusting that the constitutional guarantee of a fair and verifiable election will ultimately lead to a proper examination of our state's voting equipment.

In addition to seeking a reaffirmation of our rights at the Federal level, we also continue to go through the process of recounting in the select counties where certain precincts are being "recounted." This is where matters get complicated, because different counties canvass and certify the election at different times. In some counties the timing allowed for recounts to move forward, while in others the requests must be decided by Common Pleas Court at the county level. In some counties the counting of any paper ballots is standard, while in others all that is done is a repeating of previously reported results. It is important that the public understand that we must persist and follow through, because this stand is larger than any single election. It is legitimate for the people to know the results of every election are accurate, and that those results can be proven when re-checked. It is essential that every vote is counted, and that elections are administered properly and openly. It really seems like a minimal expectation.

It is disconcerting to know that Pennsylvania's elections do not meet the international standard for a free election, due to the lack of a verifiable paper ballot and vulnerable machines. The only way a true recount can even happen is through a forensic examination of the computer coding, and other technical applications. This demand is at the heart of the recount movement currently underway. The Stein campaign, and the citizen movement it inspired, is taking a stand to expose the farcical management of American elections. We are going to court to assert that the data in our voting machines belong to the people of the Commonwealth, not to any corporations. Nor will we accept that public information as basic as transparent verification of elections is somehow a state secret to be kept away from public view. Jill Stein has shown she is a leader who put the needs of our people above her own comfort. May we remain united and see this case succeed, because, it's *still* in our hands.