

06-1-5-2018

**Resolution for Voting System Modernization and Voter-Verified Paper Ballots**

**Whereas** free and equal elections are a guaranteed right of our citizens under Article 1, Section 5 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and are in accordance with the values of the Democratic Party, and,

**Whereas** free, equal, and fair elections require secure, accessible, and accurate methods to cast and count votes, and,

**Whereas** secure and accurate voting methods today require ongoing attention to cybersecurity and regular replacement of outdated systems because, unlike lever machines and other voting methods of the past, recent voting equipment primarily consists of electronic devices with a limited lifespan, and,

**Whereas** all electronic voting systems currently used in Pennsylvania were placed into service in 2006 or earlier and are considered by many computer experts to be near or at the end of their useful service life, and,

**Whereas** electronic voting systems in 50 Pennsylvania counties currently have no paper ballot or paper record to preserve voters' choices outside of the original software and hardware used to collect the votes, creating the risk that votes could be lost or changed in the event of malfunction, hacking, or other problem with this aging equipment, and,

**Whereas** national computer experts and other election experts recommend voting systems that use voter-verified paper ballots and modern scanners as the strongest method of protecting votes available for the foreseeable future, and,

**Whereas** approximately 80% of the United States currently uses a paper ballot voting system with scanners, making Pennsylvania one of the last remaining states with a majority of its votes unprotected by paper ballot backup, and,

**Whereas** in December 2017 the Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission released its report on voting technology, recommending replacement of Pennsylvania's aging voting machines with modern voting systems utilizing voter-verified paper records, and,

**Whereas** many Pennsylvania counties report they are struggling to replace their aging voting equipment because no new federal or state funding assistance for election equipment modernization has been available to counties since their Help America Vote Act grants expired,

**Whereas** the most recent National Platform of the Democratic Party states: "We will support local, county, and state governments in their efforts to upgrade old voting equipment and machines with modern systems, including voter-verified paper ballots, to ensure that all voters are able to exercise this sacred right in the quickest, most convenient, secure and accurate manner possible,"

**Therefore, be it resolved that** the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania supports free, equal, and fair elections as central to our democracy, and holds that it should be an ongoing priority to secure and update the voting equipment we use to manage and count those elections, and,

**Be it further resolved that** the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania supports the replacement of Pennsylvania's paperless voting machines with modern election equipment using voter-verified paper ballots and scanners, and,

**Be it finally resolved that** the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania urges both the United States Congress and the General Assembly of Pennsylvania to secure and protect our elections by providing funding and assistance to counties for the replacement of their outdated voting equipment, and to support and pass legislation requiring that all new voting systems in Pennsylvania use a voter-verified paper ballot marked by the voter by hand and/or with the aid of an accessible ballot marker for voters who need them, and that the human-readable paper ballot shall be the ballot of record in the event of any discrepancy.

January 5, 2016

Respectfully submitted,



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