

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION



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FEC APPROVES VOLUNTARY COMPUTER VOTING SYSTEM STANDARDS -SEVEN STATES ALREADY ADOPT PORTIONS OF GUIDELINES-

WASHINGTON -- New voluntary federal guidelines to help states ensure the accuracy and reliability of computer voting systems have been unanimously approved by the Federal Election Commission.

The FEC's Voting Systems Standards establish minimum performance, testing and security requirements that can be voluntarily adopted by state and local governments for voting systems in their jurisdictions. The recommendations cover punchcard, marksense and direct recording electronic systems. They do not cover paper ballot or mechanical lever systems.

"These voluntary minimum standards address an issue of great significance in a democracy - the accuracy of voting results. The Commission's Voting Systems Standards takes key steps to ensure this," said FEC Chairman Lee Ann Elliott, who noted that more than half of all votes cast during the 1988 elections were counted by computers.

The standards are the culmination of 11 public meetings conducted nationwide and are based on the input of more than 130 state and local election officials, independent technical experts, vendors, congressional staff, citizens, other federal agencies, and members of the Commission and its National Clearinghouse on Election Administration.

Even in draft form, the standards received favorable support from many state and local election officials as well as the National Association of Secretaries of State. The states of New York, California, Florida, Washington, Georgia, New Mexico and Minnesota have already adopted portions of the standard's program.

Congress, following calls for assistance from the states, authorized the project and approved funding beginning in 1984, mandating the guidelines be voluntary. State and local governments are responsible for the conduct and administration of elections.

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