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January 22, 2007

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
United States Senate  
Regional Enterprise Tower  
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1450  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

Re: **Voting Accessibility and Integrity**

Dear Senator Specter:

Thank you for your support for the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act and for a lifetime of public service safeguarding the interests of Pennsylvanians.

As you doubtless know, unforeseen side effects leave the work of the 2004 Help America Vote Act ("HAVA") unfinished. The integrity and credibility of our nation's voting system is at risk without verifiable and accountable elections. In addition, a key promise of HAVA, the accessibility of the voting process to people with disabilities, has largely failed to materialize. We are therefore seeking your leadership in ensuring that the 2008 presidential election will be accessible, verifiable, and audited. Given the state of today's technology, this will require voter-verifiable paper records and routine post-election audits.

### **Accessibility**

Despite HAVA's focus on making the voting process fully accessible to Americans with disabilities, voting machines deployed in most jurisdictions in Pennsylvania and across the nation are not genuinely accessible. For example, voters who lack the use of their hands require a "binary switch" interface (such as a "sip and puff" connector or "gel pad" technology). However, that enabling technology is missing in Allegheny, Westmoreland and more than 50 other counties in Pennsylvania.

Delivering accessibility for Pennsylvanians will require further funding. Most counties will need to add additional interfaces to existing voting machines or replace non-accessible touchscreen machines with devices that help a blind or disabled voter mark and verify a paper ballot.

### **Verifiability**

As you know, paperless touchscreen voting machines provide voters with no assurance that their vote is recorded as cast and leave candidates without recourse to meaningful recounts. Therefore, the National Institute of Standards and Technology has advised the Election Assistance Commission of the need to implement "software independent" voting systems. For the foreseeable future, this means voter-verified paper records.

### **Auditability**

Paper ballots alone will not safeguard elections. After an election, vote totals produced by touchscreen voting machines or optical scanners must be cross-checked against a hand count of a sample of the paper records which voters had the opportunity to verify as recording their intent. The paper record should have the legal standing of a ballot and, therefore, priority over the electronic record unless compelling circumstances direct otherwise.

In sum, we are urging your support for legislation that regulates and adequately funds:

- 1)Voter-verified paper ballots or records;
- 2)Fully accessible facilities for voting and ballot verification;
- 3)Routine audits of election results.

Because accessible, verifiable, and auditable elections are vitally important to our republic, implementing accessibility and voter verification with routine audits for the May 2008 presidential primary is in the nation's best interest. With your advocacy, guidance and oversight, we can achieve accessible, verifiable, and accountable elections.

Respectfully,

**VoteAllegheny**

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By: Suzanne Broughton, President

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**Constitution Party of Pennsylvania**

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**Republican Committee of Pitts-  
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By: Joe Weinroth, Vice-Chairman

**Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania**

By: Michael J. Robertson, Chair

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