

For Immediate Release

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Regional Voting Chapter Debuts

RED HOOK, NY — MidHudson Verified Voting has been formed in response to citizen's interest in the new voting machines.

"Voting activists in the mid-Hudson area will now have a coordinating organization that will respond to changes in elections. We're facing big changes. Now is the time to make sure we have confidence in our future elections." said Vicky Perry, founder of the group.

The scope of the organization includes citizens from Columbia, Greene, Dutchess, Putnam and Ulster counties. Active reformers created the group in response to dramatic changes on the horizon to elections. MidHudson Verified Voting wants to effectively participate as a unified citizen's voice.

MidHudson Verified Voting will function as a regional chapter of New Yorkers for Verified Voting. *"All over New York State, citizens are demanding accountability from our election officials, and a voice in shaping the profound changes taking place in our elections"* said Bo Lipari, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Verified Voting. *"The new MidHudson chapter of NYVV will provide citizens with a powerful way to have their voices heard."*

Already on the agenda for the group is:

1. Preparation for several Dutchess County public hearing on the implementation of HAVA;
2. Legislative Outreach;
3. Petition Drives in several counties;
4. meeting with the Election Commissioners to provide citizen's perspective on the upcoming changes;
5. develop events to raise awareness across the counties.

Margaret Yonco-Haines of Putnam County and a coordinator of the new group said, *"If we, as ordinary citizens, can't feel confidence that our votes will be accurately counted, then we have lost our democracy - this is not a matter of ideology; it is a basic matter of citizenship. This is why I have become involved."*

"In giving up our trusted lever machines, can we be sure our votes will be counted as cast?" asked Irene Miller of Greene County. Miller is active in MidHudson Verified Voting. She contin-

ued, “ *As with every issue, money clouds the answer. Electronic voting machine lobbyists have spent millions pressuring our election officials. Could that be why our state board of elections favors extremely expensive electronic machines that can be easily and secretly rigged, as computer scientists have clearly shown? And is it why no independent oversight committee exists to keep our commissioners honest? Democracy cannot survive without accurate and transparent vote counting. As our troops fight for democracy in Iraq, we cannot let them down here at home. I urge everyone to come to this public forum to learn what is happening and what we can do to make sure democracy prevails.*”

The group has a website (mhvv.org) for posting events, action alerts and information. Interested citizens who would like to be more involved are encouraged to contact the group.

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