

Advantages of Paper Ballot and Optical Scan (PBOS) Systems

1. All voters **use an identical ballot** and the same system. Absentee, disabled, military, and provisional voters use the same ballot; and the voter can immediately verify that the right ballot has been issued.
2. Paper ballots are **easily understood** by voters and are **inherently voter verified**. All of us have had experience with pencils & paper; most of us have taken tests or filled out lottery tickets to be read by an optical scanner.
3. Paper ballots allow each voter to **vote only once**. Each voter is given a single ballot when signing in at the polling place. Some DREs require “smart cards” to be inserted in the computer to allow voting. These could be compromised and used to vote several times.
4. Precinct-based optical scanners allow voters to **correct mistakes and detect over-votes and under-votes**. Incorrectly completed ballots (e.g., over-voted ballots, smudged ballots, etc.) will be rejected by the scanner. Voters can then exchange the spoiled ballot for a new blank ballot and correct their mistakes. In the case of under-votes, they have the option of completing the same ballot or having the scanner accept it as is.
5. The **paper ballot is the official record** of the vote. Since the vote is recorded by the voter on the paper rather than electronically, the scanner only counts the votes into memory and then deposits the ballot into a locked ballot box. The paper ballot marked by each voter is the official record of the vote and is used in recounts.
6. Paper ballots for optical scanners are **easy to recount** by hand. Lay-out is clear and on quality paper, whereas DRE paper records are light, quickly-fading print on thermal, ATM-type paper; recounts are difficult.
7. Paper ballot systems easily **accommodate additional voters at low cost**. If a precinct has an unexpectedly large turn-out, only additional privacy booths must be provided, since a single scanner can handle voters from multiple privacy booths and election districts.
8. Voters can **continue to vote on paper ballots in the event of equipment failure**. Both DREs and optical scanners have back-up batteries; but in the event of a prolonged power failure or other type of equipment failure, voting can continue on paper ballots that later are either fed into the scanner or hand-counted.
9. **Voting will take less time** and lines will move fast with paper ballots. Some people, particularly the elderly, find computers unfamiliar and will find the marking of a paper ballot more comfortable than using DREs. Separate ballot marking devices will enable other voters to continue voting even when it takes longer for a disabled person, an elderly person, or someone needing to use the multi-lingual features of the marking device to vote. Optical scanners take just seconds to read and verify a ballot, and no problems with lines are experienced in states using precinct based scanners.
10. Only one optical scanner and one small marking-device per precinct will require storage between elections. Optical scanners and ballot markers are **much smaller** than DREs and can be stacked in storage, requiring far less storage space and cost during the year than DRE systems. They are also small, and easy to transport to and from polling places during elections and do not require professional movers to handle them.
11. The scanner only counts votes; therefore, it is **much less complex and will require much less maintenance** and upgrading over the years than DREs which are a newer, unproven technology.
12. Optical scanners are a **reliable, mature technology** that has been used successfully in U.S. elections for 20 years. About 30% of precincts in the United States use paper ballots and precinct based optical scan systems. Many states are now adopting PBOS systems to meet HAVA compliance. Arizona, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma and West Virginia are some examples of states that have decided to use this reliable, auditable, cost effective voting technology.