



All About Florida

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SUPPORT HB 7107 / SB 900

Attached is a Position Paper concerning Section 101.56075, Florida Statutes, which requires all counties in Florida to provide a voting system, which is compliant with the Help America Vote Act by 2012 for persons with disabilities.

The Position Paper to extend the implementation date of this requirement until 2016 has been endorsed by the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections, the Florida Association of Counties, and various representatives of the disability community.

Sixty-six Boards of County Commissioners in the state have approved this Position Paper by resolution or otherwise, requesting an extension of the purchase of this equipment.

The estimated cost of \$45 million dollars statewide is significant and presently there is only one vendor and system available for purchase.

80
YEARS
1929-2009

In 2007 the Florida Legislature, at the request of Governor Charlie Crist and Secretary of State Kurt Browning, voted to make Florida a “paper ballot” state. For thirteen counties in Florida, this 2007 legislation resulted in the second voting system purchase since 2001 (punch cards to touch screens and then to optical scan). Part of the legislation (F.S. 101.56075) required the conversion of the ADA voting equipment to a “paper ballot” based system by 2012. The hope was that by 2012 additional ADA voting systems would be developed and certified in the state.

The Federal 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) required all counties to purchase a voting system for each voting location that would be accessible to persons with any disability. The majority of the counties purchased touch screens with audio ballots. At the time, touch screens were the only certified accessible voting system in the state. Currently, there is only one certified optical scan (paper) system that meets this requirement - the AutoMark. Today sixty-three (63) counties use touch screens and four (4) counties use the AutoMark.

The Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections has conducted a survey of the counties required to make the voting system change by 2012. The estimated cost will be approximately \$45 million dollars. This does not include existing debt that many counties have incurred from the 2001 and 2007 voting equipment changes. The Association has been working with the disability community on accessible voting equipment since the enactment of HAVA, voter education on the accessible voting systems used on Election Day, and with concerns associated with the 2012 requirement. The disability community is disappointed that development of new technology, especially to encompass all types of disabilities, has not occurred since this legislation passed and that the AutoMark is currently the only “paper based” option available to election officials. Given the choice between continuing to use the touch screens or convert statewide to the AutoMark, the preference is to stay with the current systems in the counties and focus on encouraging voting system vendors and the Department of State to focus on development of a system that would serve persons with any type of disability during the voting process, especially with absentee ballots.

The following believe that due to the economic pressures on Boards of County Commissioners around the state; the operational impact to Supervisors of Elections budgets; the fact that new technology has not developed to allow any person with any disability to vote independently; that an extension of this requirement be delayed from 2012 until 2016.

Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections
Association Legislative position since 2008

Florida Association of Counties

AAPD - American Association of People with Disabilities
Jim Dickson, Vice President of Organizing & Civic Engagement
Chair, Election Assistance Commissions Board of Advisors

Family Network on Disabilities of Florida
Richard La Belle, Executive Director and member of the State HAVA Plan Committee

disAbility Solutions for Independent Living, Inc.
Julie Shaw, Executive Director