



September 8, 2017

Virginia State Board of Elections
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Members of the Board,

Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. We work to create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest, and empower all people to make their voices heard in our democracy.

In keeping with our mission, we have studied available information on voting machine technology, worked with distinguished computer scientists and local election administrators across the country, and advocated for best practices concerning election administration, including the best systems associated with vote casting and counting.

On behalf of our more than 18,000 members and supporters in Virginia, we write today to urge the Board to decertify Virginia's Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting machines.

Put simply, the Commonwealth's DRE voting machines have multiple security flaws that should render them obsolete. DRE voting machines do not produce a voter verifiable paper record. This deprives voters of an opportunity to verify that their ballot will be counted as cast. The lack of a paper trail makes it impossible to conduct a post-election audit that will confirm that an election outcome is correct. This has always been unacceptable, but is even more untenable given recent national security threats to our elections infrastructure, as confirmed by the United States Intelligence Community.¹

To improve the resiliency of Virginia's election infrastructure, the board must decertify the DRE machines. The Commonwealth should adopt resilient and secure voting systems. New voting systems should use a paper ballot or provide a voter verifiable paper record that renders the systems auditable.

We urge your immediate action to this critical matter of election integrity.

Sincerely,

Susannah Goodman
Director of Voting Integrity

¹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "Assessing Russian Activities in Recent U.S. Elections," Jan. 6, 2017, https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf.