

# STATE OF COLORADO

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

136 State Capitol Building  
Denver, Colorado 80203  
(303) 866 - 2471  
(303) 866 - 2003 fax



Bill Ritter, Jr.  
Governor

January 23, 2008

Dear County Clerks:

The decertification of electronic voting machines for the 2008 elections creates a major, perhaps unprecedented, challenge for our state, and most particularly for each of you. My office and legislative leadership have spent many hours meeting with the leadership of the Colorado County Clerks Association, and with individual clerks. We recognize that you have been put in a very difficult situation by the late decertification.

One of the most basic roles of government is to provide for elections that are fair, reliable, transparent and convenient for voters. I know that county clerks fully appreciate that our democracy depends not only on the people's ability to vote, but also on their confidence that every vote counts. This afternoon my office and the leadership of both houses announced a bi-partisan proposal that fixes the problems we face because of decertification of electronic voting machines for the 2008 elections.

Our plan to use paper ballots is the tried and true election method that has worked for decades. This approach accomplishes three goals. First, we preserve options for how people can cast their ballot, including by mail, during early voting, or on election day at the polls. This plan also ensures that there will be a verifiable paper trail. Most important, this plan minimizes the risk of technology failures that have caused election day chaos in past elections, as clerks will be able to use paper poll books on election day.

Previously introduced legislation should enable the Secretary of State to recertify electronic voting machines for the limited purpose of providing access to disabled voters, as required by federal law, and to recertify optical scan equipment that our county clerks must have to quickly and accurately count ballots on election night. In addition, we are working to ensure that counties which have previously conducted successful elections using vote centers will still be able to offer voters that convenience.

While we understand that some clerks may have preferred a different outcome, we will continue to work with you to ensure a successful election process. Our door is open, and we look forward to meeting with any and each of you who have concerns about this plan.

Sincerely,

Bill Ritter, Jr.  
Governor