

BRENNAN  
CENTER  
FOR JUSTICE

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September 29, 2008

Re: Reminder for Best Ballot Accounting Practices

Dear Election Official:

We realize that with Election Day just one month away, and early voting having already started in several states, this is an extremely busy time for you. In light of recent and highly publicized miscounts and loss of votes and ballots in Florida, Ohio and Washington, D.C., the Brennan Center, joined by Common Cause and Verified Voting, includes a checklist for best ballot accounting practices. This checklist was compiled with the assistance of other election officials, election administration experts and computer scientists. We hope it will make it easier for you to ensure that all votes are accurately counted, and that the public remains confident in the results you report.

*This checklist represents a floor, not a ceiling.* We urge you to integrate and add these steps to whatever you already do. And we hope that you will institute similar procedures for early and absentee ballots.

As you surely know, good post-election ballot accounting and reconciliation procedures are critical to ensuring that every vote is accurately counted. "Checking the math" is increasingly important as elections have become more complex and highly scrutinized. In particular, instituting policies that will allow you to account for all ballots and ensure that every vote is counted (and counted only once) is critical to ensure that your election runs smoothly.

As you put your ballot accounting practices into place, feel free to contact us with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Norden  
Director, Brennan Center Voting Technology Project