



## ACLU and Disability Law Center Applaud Secretary Galvin's Decision on New Voting Technology

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2007

**BOSTON** – The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts and the Disability Law Center today again joined forces to applaud Secretary of State William F. Galvin's decision to approve the use in Massachusetts elections of a ballot marking voting machine that is both accessible and secure.

"Voting equipment that is both accessible and secure is essential to ensuring the integrity of the entire elections system in the Commonwealth," said Carol Rose, Executive Director of the ACLU of Massachusetts. "The Secretary's decision to fund an automatic ballot marking system best ensures that Massachusetts voters with disabilities – and thus all voters – are guaranteed equal access to a secure ballot."

Stanley J. Eichner, Executive Director of the Disability Law Center, also welcomed the Secretary's decision. "The automatic ballot marking device has consistently received the highest overall ratings from the disability community," he said. "Providing secure voting machines for voters with disabilities is part and parcel of protecting their rights to equal access to the ballot and to having their votes reliably counted."

In January, the ACLU of Massachusetts and the Disability Law Center urged the Secretary to fund the ballot marking machines and to avoid purchasing direct electronic recording (DRE) systems. Although both types of voting technology had been certified for use in Massachusetts, only one technology is to receive state funding under the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002.

From an accessibility perspective, the automatic ballot marking device permits disabled voters to use Braille, jelly buttons, a puff-sip interface and audio technology to mark a paper ballot, which can be counted by optical scan or by hand. In contrast, the direct-recording electronic (DRE) voting machines both mark and count votes, and are considered by many voting security experts to be prone to error and vulnerable to tampering.

"DREs are susceptible to both intentional system-wide tampering and accidental 'bugs,' since a single programmer at a DRE manufacturer could conceivably change the code in many or all of the DRE products without detection," said Rose. "DREs also carry the danger of statistical tampering—changing the software to miscount an undetectable, but significant, number of votes in favor of, or against, one party or candidate or issue."

"The decision by the Secretary shows that it is both possible and essential to build common ground between the disability rights community and the growing number of citizens who are concerned that many of the proposed new technologies are subject to tampering and error," said Eichner. "We must debunk the myth that we have to choose between accessible voting and verifiable voting. Democracy requires that we have both."

To read the letter to Sec. Galvin, go to [www.aclum.org/news/ACLUM\\_DLC-Galvin.pdf](http://www.aclum.org/news/ACLUM_DLC-Galvin.pdf) and [www.dlc.org](http://www.dlc.org).

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