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ELECTION INTEGRITY GROUP TRYING TO HALT THE RUSH TO PURCHASE ANOTHER VOTING SYSTEM AND MORE MACHINES FOR WILLIAMSON COUNTY WITHOUT STUDYING ALL OPTIONS

FRANKLIN, Tenn., (December 22, 2022) -- While the Williamson County Election Commission (WCEC) is rushing to sign a contract to purchase new election voting equipment for county elections, a citizen-driven group is trying to slow down the process so that greater due diligence, fiduciary cost studies and a comprehensive appraisal of current voting machine-heavy systems and other voting systems involving hand-marked paper ballots and people can be studied.

The group, [Tennessee Voters for Election Integrity \(TVEI\)](#), has been examining Williamson County's – and Tennessee's – voting machines and voting process for several years, while presenting to county and state officials, legislators and community leaders its findings that demonstrate the untrustworthiness and vulnerabilities of voting machines.

Before it even signs a new contract, the WCEC has promised to immediately purchase even more machines than it already has. Their current contract with election machine vendor ES&S is up at the end of February 2023.

“Computer, cyber computer and IT experts across the nation, as well as legislators from all sides of the spectrum, have condemned these voting machines that have been [proven to be vulnerable to sabotage and cyberattacks that could change votes](#),” said Frank Limpus, founder of TVEI. “And the propensity for election commissions to continue using these machines despite these facts has contributed to the further decline in the confidence citizens have in elections today.”

A Rasmussen Reports [survey from late September found that 84% of likely voters were concerned about election integrity in this year's congressional elections](#). It was a belief shared by every category of voters, including liberals and Democrats.

“These [machines are vulnerable](#), machine vendors refuse to be transparent, [machine certification processes are weak at best](#), government entities assigned the responsibility of protecting citizens from machine issues aren't doing their jobs, and in some cases, the Tennessee Constitution is being ignored,” Limpus said.

Limpus confirmed that Tennessee has implemented a number of smart safeguards such as Photo IDs for voting, no election day registration, no mass mail-in ballots, no private funding of elections, watermarked absentee ballots and no ballot drop boxes, to name a few. But he said given the empirical evidence, continued dependence on machines can completely undo these safeguards.

“The likely chosen vendor -- ES&S -- is especially bad,” he said. “They have never given the county a complete list of all materials in the machines, their [CEO affirmed to NBC News that the company gets a number of parts from Asia, Telit/Qualcomm/iDRAC chips that facilitate wireless communications can be found on the motherboards of their machines](#), ES&S has a complete monopoly over every step of our voting process in Williamson County and they have refused to allow unfettered inspections of their machines. So much for transparency. But, then, all of these machine vendors are like that.”

Limpus went on to explain that government entities like the [Election Assistance Commission \(EAC\) and the Tennessee State Election Commission \(SEC\), whose job it is to protect citizens from vulnerable machines, are weak in their testing and certification processes](#). Similarly, for the most part, all that the Tennessee State Election Commission (SEC) does when it approves new machines to enter

the state is depend upon EAC's word that the machines are certified. There is no double checking the EAC's work, despite the EAC's recommendation to do so in its [scope and certification](#) documents.

"No one in Tennessee is allowed an unrestrained look into the machines," Limpus continued. "We must trust the vendor. But trust went out the SEC window when in January of this year Hart InterCivic presented to the SEC an [upgrade to it Verity Voting machine from Windows 7 to Windows 10](#). Normally, such an upgrade wouldn't be an issue, except that Microsoft had [stopped supporting Windows 7 in January of 2020](#), meaning that every Hart voting machine in the state of Tennessee for the 2020 and 2021 elections were completely unprotected as their security had not been patched by Microsoft. Where was the SEC protecting citizens against unsecured machines?"

Limpus said the SEC also promised Williamson County [in their April 5, 2021 meeting](#) that the SEC would recertify Dominion machines – as well as the other four brands of machines in Tennessee. But, to this day, they and their three-member subcommittee have done nothing on this. Leaving Williamson County – and the other Tennessee counties -- high and dry with questionable voting machinery.

"Also, keep in mind that seven of the 19 Dominion voting machines that stopped tracking votes on the scanner tapes in Franklin's October 2021 election had all been certified/approved by the EAC, their testing laboratory, the SEC and the WCEC," Limpus said. "The WCEC's technicians had performed logic and accuracy testing while setting up the machines and no issue emerged at that time. But it sure did during the election. Despite that, and Tennessee Election Coordinator Mark Goins' affirmation that all of these machine companies are under the "penalty of perjury" if something goes wrong, nothing has been done to Dominion Voting Systems for [what has now become known as the "Tennessee Error."](#) [Dominion remains one of Tennessee's approved voting machine companies.](#)"

Despite this, the WCEC desires more machines, especially the ballot marking devices used to print our ballots, [playing down the fact that 69% of voters across the country use hand-marked paper](#)

[ballots](#). And one small detail these machine companies won't tell you is that the highest level of EAC certification any of these computers meet are 2005 standards... standards in place two years before the first iPhone was launched. No one is pushing these vendors to pursue and adopt higher criteria.

Finally, several aspects of the current voting system do not follow the Tennessee Constitution or Tennessee Code Annotated laws. Among them include [voting in voting centers when we should be voting in neighborhood precincts](#), not allowing technicians [to fully inspect the machines and their parts](#) and not providing voters a true voter-verifiable-paper-audit-trail instead of using bar codes or QR codes on our ballots that actually prevent voter verification at the ballot box.

"We believe a safer, more secure, transparent, cheaper, de-complicated system for the county involves [using no machines, hand-marked paper ballots voted and counted by hand in precincts \(versus internet-heavy voting centers\) the day of the election](#)," Limpus said.

"But, right now, we strongly want the county to continue renting another six- or 12-months (versus purchasing equipment) so a robust, due diligence appraisal of a future system for the fiduciary wisdom of citizens can be pursued. Something we don't believe the WCEC plans on doing at this point. Plus, they should include technology and purchasing experts in that study to ensure the county gets the best deal and not just take the word of vendors."

"The key question: Do we want to fully secure our elections or just continue to follow the vulnerable status quo," Limpus questioned.

To that end, the group has put many of its reported findings into a [podcast that can be found here](#). In addition to the depth of information on the [group's website](#), they have pulled out [key information backing up their presentation here](#) and even responded to Williamson County's request for proposals (RFP) with its own [Citizens' recommended new voting system here](#). Their recommendation

includes more details and simple cost projections of the county's current election system expenditures and how they could save money with a different, research-based approach.

About Tennessee Voters for Election Integrity.

The Tennessee Voters for Election Integrity seeks to share with state legislators, election commissions and government officials opportunities that we have uncovered in our research to plug holes we've found in Tennessee's election systems. And for these leaders to make (and lead) necessary changes in machinery and methods that will strengthen Tennessee's leadership in election integrity while improving citizen trust and support of our election processes. www.tennesseeelectionintegrity.com