



WILLIAMSON HERALD OP-ED:

**SO, WHAT DID THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION
IGNORE GIVEN THEIR DECISION TO PURCHASE MORE VOTING MACHINES?**

Online version – 626 words

To the Editor:

Last week, the Williamson County Election Commission (WCEC) approved the purchase of a voting machine system and additional election equipment. Apparently, paying \$2.2 million in taxpayer money over the last 40 months on two different election systems isn't enough. They want to spend more.

Unfortunately, the WCEC has refused to consider any recommendations our group and others have offered to continue renting a system while doing a deep dive into other voting options that are safer, more secure, definitely more transparent and far less expensive.

Despite our invitations, they took no steps to sit down with us, other citizens, or regional/national technology experts to discuss systems that might better protect Williamson County voters while achieving a safe, professional election process.

So, what have they just ignored with their narrow purchase decision?

They've forgotten machine failures in Franklin and the nation over the last five years that have caused citizens to [lose confidence in voting](#), including:

- The 2023 Monmouth County, NJ election where [ES&S machines double counted votes](#) that gave a losing school board candidate the win. Upon others discovering the error two months later, ES&S had to admit their employee had mis-programmed the machines, and one of the election's losers now leads the race.
- The 2022 Midterm election in Maricopa County, AZ where more than 40% of their voting machines, which had passed tests the night before, suddenly [experienced election day-long tabulation and printer problems](#) that disenfranchised thousands.
- The October 2021 election in Franklin, where [Dominion machines miscounted vote totals because of a software conflict between the ballot marking devices and tabulators](#). Bad programming by Dominion employees was the cause despite set-up and testing procedures by the county. It cost Dominion their contract here and the incident is now known in the industry as the "Tennessee Error."

The common denominator? Machines.

The WCEC has disregarded machine vulnerabilities ([here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#)), operator errors ([here](#)), foreign internal machine parts hidden from county customers ([here](#)), vendor programming errors ([here](#)) and facts about election vulnerabilities ([here](#)) to give citizens any comfort in these machines or processes.

The WCEC is discounting that... whether by accident... by hackers... or by programming mistakes... these vulnerabilities are affecting results and diminishing voters' trust. Along with vendors' refusal to allow independent experts unfettered inspection of these machines, issues like these are why more citizens are losing confidence in elections.

They're even snubbing Tennessee's Constitution. Check out Article IV, Section 1 ([here](#)) where we should be voting in precincts, versus susceptible, internet-heavy voting centers. Or where we should be voting on ballots with the highest standard in ballot and voter authentication and not be dependent upon opaque bar codes that hide our vote selections. Or Article II, Section 7 ([here](#)) where "elections shall terminate the same day" means we should be voting on election day instead of during election season.

We had asked the WCEC not to purchase but, instead, to do a due diligence study on additional voting options for the County while renting the current system. Such as a full, five-to-ten-year cost/lifecycle/benefit analysis of a machine-based system versus a paper-based system. Show us your studies that support your claims about machine safety. Ours have been [here](#) for more than a year. And include in your deliberations cybersecurity/technology/purchasing experts who have strong voting machine knowledge and understand that machines are not the perfect answer to running elections.

Offering up a questionable, completely opaque machine vendor as their solution to ensuring safe elections is not a sound answer for what is needed. Because in doing so, the WCEC is ignoring the proven risk these systems place on the people of Williamson County and the preciousness of our vote.

Frank Limpus
[Tennessee Voters for Election Integrity](#)

Print version – 623 words

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