

**Comments urging fellow Commissioners to vote against
Williamson County Resolution 6-23-28 approving funds for purchasing
ES&S voting machines.**

**Christopher Richards, County Commissioner, District 7
Monday, June 12, 2023**

My fellow county commissioners.... we can do better than this current proposal. Much better!

Over the last 4 or 5 months I have been working with Chairman Duda and our Election Commission to come up with a compromise. We are back here tonight reviewing the same proposal we rejected last month because the Williamson County Election Commission does not want a compromise. They and the State Election Commission are trying to convince us all that purchasing a machine-marked, machine-counted solution is the only option available to us.

67% of the country votes by a hand-marked, machine-counted voting process. Hamilton County and Knox County here in Tennessee also vote using this process.

This resolution, listed as Option 1 of Chairman Duda's worksheet is a machine-marked, machine-counted voting option.

I know that Chairman Duda added discounts to net out the difference between Option 1 and Option 2, but I've confirmed with Chairman Duda that these discounts from ES&S and financial assistance from the State of TN are just estimates for all options except for scenario 1. There has been no confirmation of the discounts or financial assistance. Rather than work through unknowns, I prefer to compare the concrete numbers that make up the Gross Total.

Because if you look at the discounts, ES&S will give the county a 33% hardware discount on Option 1, but only a 13% discount on Option 2. That's just bad business. I have asked for a written quote for Option 2 but have not received it. That tells me that the Election Commission doesn't want to actually entertain any Option but Option 1. The one they presented us last month which we rejected, and the one they are re-hashing again tonight. I guess they think we won't remember that this is the exact same option.

Now, we already rejected the machine-marked, machine-counted proposal last month. Why do we not have a resolution for hand-marked, machine-counted? It's the more cost-effective option.

Let me repeat - Option 2 is a hand-marked, machine-counted voting process. It is legal - TN state law requires us to machine-count the ballots. Hand-marked, machine-counted.

But wait there is more.... Option 2 includes TWO Ballot Marking Devices for EVERY voting location. - provided just for ADA compliance. It is safe to assume not even 1 BMD will be used at every vote center, never mind 2 BMD's per vote center per election. If we really think we have a high failure rate for these machine-marked ballots as a back-up to the voting process, then I think we've really underestimated what we would need if BMD's remain our primary process, as in this resolution today.

Looking back to 2019, the original contract with Dominion had the county purchasing over 300 BMDs for 23 vote centers, but this current proposal is only for 200 BMD's for 23 vote centers.

And yes, there are even more cost-friendly options than the two presented here.

Hand-marked, machine-counted options that could be half the cost of Option 2- about \$800K before discounts. There are additional options that don't require the expensive Ballot on Demand printers in Option 2.

I think the Election Commission needs to do more research on these other options, or even present us with a resolution for Option 2 before re-hashing the same resolution we rejected last month.

A proposal for a Hand-marked, Machined-counted voting process is what I want to see, that is what many citizens have been asking for. I will remain consistent and vote No today on this proposal just like I did last month on this same proposal.