



NEW JERSEY NEEDS PAPER BALLOTS NOW. Congress just gave New Jersey \$9.7 million in federal HAVA grant money “to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, including to enhance election technology and make election security improvements.” While states have some flexibility in how they use this money, there is widespread agreement that this money should be used to replace antiquated paperless voting machines, called DREs. Recently Assemblyman Mazzeo and Senator Beach proposed bills, A.3991 and S.2633 respectively, requiring the transition to paper-based voting systems on a phased-in basis, starting with 3 counties, one from each of the three regions, to be selected by the Secretary of State. **The cost estimated by the Brennan Center for Justice to transition 3 counties is \$5.8-\$9.1 million.** Thanks to the federal grant, no state money is required to pay for the transition costs of these three counties. New Jersey can pay for Phase 1 of the transition completely with federal funds. To start the transition to paper-based voting, the **New Jersey legislature simply needs to designate these federal funds for voting equipment transition costs in the upcoming budget.**

The legislatures in some other states, including Illinois and North Carolina, have recently designated these HAVA grants for specific expenditures. The New Jersey Legislature could do so as well. Especially as New Jersey is one of only five states (Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and New Jersey) using paperless DRE machines statewide, it should strongly consider a designation that requires these grants to be used for the purpose of replacing the DREs in three counties prior to the 2018 November General Election, as contemplated in the phased-in transition described in A.3991 and S.2633.

This designation may be included as part of the budget for FYE 6/30/2019. The HAVA funds can fully pay for Year 1 of a phased-in transition to paper-based voting equipment in a manner supported by NJ election officials and in compliance with Congress’s express intent. Further, in addition to immediately increasing the security of New Jersey elections, a legislative designation and implementation of paper-based voting systems in three counties, would enable New Jersey to implement its post-election audit law, and other election administration reforms, while legislation to enhance election security is considered. Draft budget language appears below:

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Funds will be used to replace all paperless Direct Recording Electronic voting equipment in three counties, one in each the Northern, Central and Southern parts, which shall be selected by the Secretary of State, with new voting equipment that uses paper ballots for use in the 2018 November General Election and other election security improvements. Any contract or contracts for the purchase of such voting equipment, or related licenses or support services, requires the approval of the Director of the Division of Purchase and Property.

The need to act now is underscored by recent news that Congress may mandate post-election audits starting in 2020. Audits aren't possible without paper ballots. If no funds are attached to this federal mandate, this would require either the state or the counties to find the money to upgrade all of the voting equipment in New Jersey before the next presidential election. Designating the recently received NJ HAVA Security Grant funds of \$9.7 to be used for the transition cost could go a long way towards the transition costs for the entire State, which the Brennan Center has estimated to be \$40.4-63.5 million.