

Representative Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-14)
“Ensuring Fairness and Accuracy in Elections Involving Electronic Voting Systems”
April 18, 2007

I want to thank Chairman Clay and Ranking Member Turner for holding today’s hearing about an issue that deeply concerns me, the accuracy of the nation’s voting systems.

Our representative democracy depends upon the integrity of the voting system, and it is imperative that the voting machines are secure and reliable.

However, questions have been raised about the security and reliability of electronic voting systems including weak security controls and design flaws, among other concerns.

In the 2004 election, millions of voters used electronic voting machines that lacked a voter-verified paper audit trail.

Nationwide the problems included broken voting machines and inaccurately recorded votes where in a few jurisdictions the votes were switched from John Kerry to George Bush and vice-versa.

Maryland experienced so many problems with its electronic voting machines in its September 2006 primary that its governor urged residents to vote with absentee ballots to ensure that their votes were counted.

I support requiring voting machines to have voter-verifiable paper audit trail, and I have cosponsored H.R. 811, the “Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act,” which would require a voter-verified permanent paper record or hard copy.

The American people also deserve

to know who is manufacturing the voting machines that they are using, and if those machines are at risk for outside manipulation.

Last year I raised the possibility of a Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) review of Smartmatic's purchase in 2005 of Sequoia Voting Systems because of my concerns that a foreign government was investing in or owning a company that supplies voting machines for U.S. elections.

For a few years, questions had surrounded Smartmatic about its ownership and its possible ties to the Venezuelan government.

In December, Smartmatic announced that it would sell Sequoia Voting Systems.

There clearly were doubts about this company, and as long as those doubts lingered, many people would have legitimate questions about the integrity of those voting machines.

It is time to institute procedures that ensure that election results can be audited to ensure accuracy.

If the American public does not have faith that their votes will be recorded accurately, they may decide to stay home on Election Day.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses.

Thank you.