

Introductory Speech

Our problem is NOT the electronic machines, the mail-in ballots, the filthy voter rolls. The problem is hiding things, behind a wall, behind locked doors, behind a distance, behind a weird computer algorithm, behind complex laws. Elections are simple math, first-grade math at most. Counting and addition. That's all. There is no subtraction in a real election. Why do we need million-dollar machines to add?

What really matters is not paper ballots and hand counting. We already use paper ballots – but the voter puts the ballot in an opaque box and never sees it again. What matters is transparency and simplicity. Everybody must be allowed to see everything and understand the system. That doesn't mean you HAVE to watch everything. But it does mean anyone who hides things is suspicious.

Ballots are incredibly valuable. If your ballot is your per capita share of the GDP, it's worth tens of thousands of dollars. Think of this pile of ballots as a pile of gold ore we all just mined. Shall I take it and lock it up for all of us? I promise I will hold on to the key myself. Nobody else will get the key. I will keep it very secure from all of you!

No? Well then, I'll just save us all a lot of work and use my gold extracting machine to get the gold from this ore. But I'm an expert and you're not, so you stay away from my machine.

Yeah, right! If this were a pile of ore, we would all demand to watch the gold extraction, and maybe do it ourselves. We'd want the gold measured before we move the ore. Because as soon as we all know exactly how much gold is in the ore, it is much harder for any one of us to steal any.

So this pile of ballots is our election ore, ballots which need votes extracted from them. It's the number of votes that matter, not so much the number of ballots. After we extract the vote totals, the ballots will only matter for auditing. Numbers are much easier to move securely than ballots, and we can tell right away if numbers change. That's why we count the ballots where cast.

Your bank teller has all kinds of counting machines. Maybe your teller is bad at counting. And slow. You're busy. But you still want him to count your cash in front of you, and you'll probably count it too. Because he should never just hand you a wad of cash and ask you to trust him.

The best way to count ballots is together with someone you don't trust at all. Then you do it REALLY carefully.