

Hand Count Talking Points

“Hand counting” is short for several requirements that would make elections transparent the way they used to be: voting should be on one day, in person (limited exceptions for military), paper ballots cast at the precinct level, by eligible voters who are ID-checked, and hand counted where cast at close of polls.

Hand counting is:

Fast

- Far faster than our current system
 - We aren't going to take 9 days to count.
- We have a plan to finish on Election Night
 - With results that are
 - Final
 - Double-checked
 - Public
 - Include an auditable physical record
 - Current system can't produce anything near that, especially not on Election Night.

Accurate

- Everyone makes mistakes. For your elections, would you rather have:
 - Deep, complex mistakes hidden in software
 - By unknown coders
 - Possibly in another country
 - Simple mistakes recorded on paper
 - Made publicly
 - In front of watchful neighbors
 - Highlighted until they are fixed
- Machines hide mistakes. Hand counting fixes mistakes.
- No machine is unhackable, especially because most hacking is via social engineering¹. Simple, decentralized elections where everybody watches everybody is the best defense against fraud.

Legal

- Hand counting always was Colorado's legal standard of accuracy that machines had to match in recounts.
 - It was Jena Griswold who changed that²

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https://www.reddit.com/r/AskEngineers/comments/184vns1/will_computers_ever_become_completely_unhackable/?solution=c4d7c61acd68b81cc4d7c61acd68b81c&js_challenge=1&token=7afd7253fec22262ff1c52b1703fe9ec64169ddffb06c3113707d861e522dbe6&jsc_orig_r=

- Without any man vs. machine test
 - Or proof other than vendors' claims about their machines
 - Without bringing this foundational question to the voters
 - Most people didn't even know it changed
- The change happened shortly after Griswold denied Tina Peters her legally required hand count³.
- The Constitution requires self-governance by the people. The people govern by voting. How can we know we have self-governance unless we can see for ourselves our votes counted?
 - Election "security" that locks the counting away from public view violates our right to self-government.
 - Officials who demand public trust but refuse public scrutiny violate our right to self-government.
- We don't even need to change laws; we need to start following them. Our current system violates federal and state law as well as the Constitution. A few out of many examples:
 - According to the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Colorado's voter rolls cannot support a legally valid election.
 - Unite4Freedom showed in 2024 Colorado was allowed 26 errors statewide but actually had over 50,000⁴.
 - In 2022 Colorado was allowed 21 errors but actually had over 100,000⁵.
 - We do not know how many years it's been since our voter rolls were good enough to support a valid election.
 - State statute says a valid ballot has to be cast by an eligible elector⁶, but with mail-in ballots we can't possibly know whether the voter even exists. No one can know whether the person who signed the envelope is the one who filled out the ballot. Without knowing which ballots are valid, accurate vote totals are impossible to know.
- Since Colorado laws are now contradictory, and election officials fight transparency rather than help sort out laws, it's probably impossible for any election system to follow Colorado laws now.
 - Start with following the highest law – the Constitution.
 - The laws probably won't be untangled by the time of the first hand count, but hand counting makes it possible to elect legitimate lawmakers to fix the problems.
 - No need to apologize to the media or officials, or anyone else who says "but hand counting is illegal in Colorado!" since they currently tolerate **massive** illegality.

² <https://coloradosun.com/2023/04/12/jena-griswold-steve-fenberg-election-bill-clash/>

³ "If there are unresolvable discrepancies in the test, the recount must be conducted as a hand count under Rule 10.13.5" according to C.R.S. 1-10.5-102(3)(b) see lawsuit at https://www.scribd.com/document/585580583/Tina-Peters-Sues-Jena-Griswold-and-Colorado-County-Clerks-over-Recount-Procedures#from_embed

⁴ https://unite4freedom.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Unite4Freedom_CO_Scorecard_2024_2025-12-15.pdf

⁵ https://unite4freedom.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Unite4Freedom_CO_Scorecard_2022_2025-11-09-scaled.jpg

⁶ C.R.S. 1-1-104(1.7)

Cheap

- When volunteers count ballots where cast, there are no additional facility, labor, or equipment costs.
 - Office supplies would cost money. Each precinct would need a few pens, markers, tally sheets, clear plastic bags, and other office supplies. Could the county manage that?
 - In Arapahoe County, if office supplies per precinct cost less than \$37, the entire county hand count effort would fit into the \$15,000 currently spent to rebrand and clean ballot drop boxes⁷.
- If we did pay for facilities and labor: for basic office space at \$30/hour for each precinct, plus paying people \$15/hour to count and add, plus \$100 per precinct for office supplies, that would come out to \$160,000 for Arapahoe County, less than 1/10 of the current \$1,878,005 budgeted for Election Contingency expenditures⁸.
- Hand counting saves many millions of dollars spent mailing ballots to millions of Colorado voters, many of whom just throw their ballot away.

Community-building and fun

- Neighborhood event! Neighbors connect, talk, and work as a team with neighbors from the precinct to count ballots, while other neighbors watch.
- Reduces tensions between ideological enemies
 - Fair elections are the nonviolent way to settle conflict.
 - No false accusations – everyone can see what everyone did.
 - People are more polite face-to-face and when working as a team for a common goal.
- Informal competition between tally teams for best counters gamifies counting.
- For the disabled, voting in the precinct is more accessible than dropboxes
 - Precinct teams work together to help disabled vote.
- Fits well with community potluck or cookout
 - As long as food and drink are kept separate from ballots!

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<https://files.arapahoeco.gov/Finance/Budget/2026%20Arapahoe%20County%20Adopted%20Budget%2006042026.pdf?t=202606111351110>

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<https://files.arapahoeco.gov/Finance/Budget/2026%20Arapahoe%20County%20Adopted%20Budget%2006042026.pdf?t=202606111351110>