

Texas Election Security: Key Points

As Texans and Americans, voting is both a right and a responsibility—and the security and fairness of our election system is important to all of us. By making common-sense changes to state law and policy, like safeguarding our elections with mandatory audits and updated voting systems, Texas can ensure that all eligible voters have their voices heard.

Texas can honor the sacred right to vote by taking common-sense steps to make our elections systems secure, accurate, reliable, and transparent. By modernizing and adopting more secure systems, Texas can safeguard our elections and restore voter confidence.

- Texas is one of the last remaining states to continue to use paperless electronic voting machines. In counties using paperless electronic machines, meaningful audits are not possible.
- Texas does not require audits to safeguard each and every election.
- Texas does not require cybersecurity training for elections officials.
- Current Texas law does not require best cybersecurity practices around voting or voter registration.

Texans expect their votes to be accurately counted.

Texas should immediately adopt voting systems standards that require a paper record of every vote cast in every election in Texas, and replace paperless electronic voting machines with machines that produce a voter-verified paper record.

- Many Texas counties, including some of the largest like Harris County, use electronic voting machines that produce no auditable paper trail. Elections in these counties could be hacked or subject to malfunction, and we wouldn't even know it.
- [Texas computer security experts](#) have been clear: "Paper records (collected in a secure, private way) are indispensable to a secure elections system."
- The only way to make sure every Texan's vote is counted--and counted accurately--is to have a record of every vote that cannot be altered by machine failure or hacking.
- A voter-verified paper trail allows for meaningful post-elections audits, and also ensures that the voter's ballot is cast as intended.

Texans deserve voting systems that produce accurate, trustworthy results.

The state legislature must implement a mandatory post-election audit system that provides a high level of confidence in the accuracy of the final vote tally.

- Clear and rigorous audit procedures safeguard against hacks. They create a statistically-sound method for detecting anomalies and a policy for overriding electronic tabulations if they become unreliable.
- To be at all meaningful, audits should be binding on election outcomes, and the discovery of an error should have a meaningful impact.
- Texas cannot have meaningful audit procedures without also ensuring that all Texas jurisdictions have a paper record of every vote. Without a paper record, meaningful audits are impossible.

Texans deserve a voting system that works for them and protects their vote, using the best expertise Texas has to offer.

Texas must update elections law and regulations to reflect best practices, and require cybersecurity training for all election officials on an ongoing basis.

- As a state with an immense wealth of technical expertise, Texas's elections should be designed and run with the best available cybersecurity practices at the forefront, with the aim of maintaining a free, fair, and trustworthy election system.

Texans deserve a voter registration system that is certified as secure, accurate, and redundant.

Texas must make a few common-sense changes that will make a big difference in voter registration database security and reliability.

- Voter registration databases are necessarily online. This allows voters to verify their registration and allows state agencies to efficiently share data. Online voter registration (OVR) would not meaningfully affect the security of these online databases.
- Nevertheless, because they are online, voter registration databases are some of the weakest links in Texas's election security chain.
- Jurisdictions that use electronic poll books should be required to have paper backups at each poll site on election day (this practice is currently voluntary).
- Locally-run voter registration and management systems should be certified by the Secretary of State's office as secure, using baseline computer security standards for network firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and other "good hygiene" practices.
- Texas, and the counties, should implement and require state-of-the-art security protections, including intrusion detection and prevention systems, backups, regular security audits, and mandatory disaster recovery drills.