EIRFeature

Election or Coup?
Will HAVA Bring In
A U.S. Dictatorship?

by Edward Spannaus

Following the District of Columbia primary election on Jan. 13, in which Lyndon LaRouche's votes were apparently given to Republican party shill Al Sharpton, Democratic candidate LaRouche issued a statement of support for the calls by local D.C. officials for an investigation of the malfunctioning of new touch-screen and optical-scanning voting machines (see *EIR,* Jan. 23).

In *EIR*'s Jan. 30 issue, we ran a major article entitled "Electronic Voting Is a Threat to the Constitution," in which we noted the threat to the right to vote and to fair elections, which is posed by the widespread introduction of DRE (Direct Recording Electronic) touch-screen voting systems, which are being subsidized under the provisions of the **Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA).** We noted studies which have exposed the security vulnerabilities, including the study issued by the Congressional Research Service last November, and the study of Diebold DRE machines by computer scientists from Johns Hopkins and Rice Universities.

Continuing our exposure of the dangers of DRE systems, in this issue we report on a number of additional aspects of this threat to the Republic—including the background of the HAVA legislation and its current status; profiles of the companies involved; and a listing of some of the hundreds of "horror stories," instances in which computerized voting systems have lost, added, or switched votes in local elections.

But, as Lyndon LaRouche warns in the following statement issued on Feb. 9, the danger this time is much greater than ever before: we are faced with the potential for the rigging and theft of the entire Presidential election this November—a *coup d'état*—unless we act *now* to repeal HAVA and ban electronic voting.

LaRouche Calls for Ban of Computer Voting

"Is this an election or a coup?" This is what Democratic Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche is asking about this Fall's elections. With estimates that as many

"Bring back the men, and throw out the machines!" Ready for a virtual election run by black boxes, with a totally manipulable vote and no checking recount allowed.

as 56% of the votes cast in November will be cast on computerized voting machines, LaRouche warns that Cheney, Bush, and their friends are planning to steal the November elections—and if you wait until then, there won't be anything you can do about it.

Computer voting must be stopped now, or we won't have any elections, because the results will be meaningless. "Bring back the men, and throw out the machines," LaRouche said.

There are at least three fatal defects of electronic voting:

• With touch-screen voting—otherwise known as DRE (Direct Electronic Recording)—there is no ability to conduct a recount or to verify the results, because there is no ballot card, and no paper trail.

• The computerized tabulation of votes, in either touch-screen or optical-scanning systems, is easily rigged, as recent tests conducted by the State of Maryland demonstrated.

• The major companies that produce electronic voting equipment, and which run the elections, are tied into Republican circles. The most egregious case is that of Diebold Corp., whose chief executive, Wally O'Dell, is a frequent visitor to the Bush ranch in Crawford, Texas, and hosted a $600,000 fundraiser for Dick Cheney last June.

Remember the farce of the punch-cards and "hanging chads" in the Florida recount, after the 2000 elections? This will be a thousand times worse—because with touch-screen voting, there is no paper ballots or punch-cards to re-count. It's all inside the "black box"—and your local election officials have no idea what's in there, and can't even look. The software that counts the votes is privately owned by a handful of voting machine companies—and it can be a felony for your local election officials to even try and examine it!

This time, it's not clear the United States will survive the election. Remember, an estimated 56% of the votes this fall are anticipated to be on electronic voting machines. That's why it has to be stopped now!

Congress Must Repeal It

How did this happen? In 2002, many of your representatives in Congress got suckered into supporting the Help American Vote Act (HAVA), which resulted in the Federal government subsidizing and encouraging the use of these fraud-prone electronic voting systems by the states. Under the pretext of assisting persons with disabilities, by 2006 every polling place used in a Federal election is required to have at least one DRE (direct recording electronic) device, or another device "equipped for individuals with disabilities."

The pretext for HAVA, was to "modernize" the nation's voting system, but in fact, it set up the nation for fascism. Maybe your Congressman is too stupid to realize what he or she was voting for, but there's no excuse.

Under the conditions of global financial collapse that will be hitting full force by this fall, don't underestimate the desperation of Cheney & Company and their financial backers, to take whatever measures they deem necessary to install a fascist dictatorship, rather than giving up power. If they have fraud-prone electronic voting, they'll use it. You might as well give up your right to vote.

Congress must repeal HAVA, and ban computerized voting *now*. Or else, kiss your Constitutional right to fair elections goodbye.