Compiled by Black Box Voting

A national nonprofit, nonpartisan citizen elections watchdog group

www.blackboxvoting.org

Citizen's Tool Kit:

www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit.pdf

Take Back Your Elections

You own your government, it's not the other way around. When you own something, it's up to you to manage it. This Tool Kit was created through combined expertise with many of our nation's most effective and experienced citizens, to help you learn the management skills that work.

Just do one thing. Choose one action – any action. When you take *any* action in this Citizen's Tool Kit, you will master skills to enact truly meaningful oversight over your government.

Your children and grandchildren will inherit the government you give to them.

If *you* don't manage your own government, who will?

This Tool Kit is a Declaration of Independence for Citizens

It's time for you to recognize your own power.

You don't need us.

You don't have to find someone to follow.

You can use these tools and make things happen.

Pick any module. Pick a single action in it. See it to its completion.

You've just opened the door to an unexpected evolution of citizenship, the likes of which have not been seen since 1776.

> *Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*
> – Declaration of Independence

MOBILIZATION MODULES
Module 1: Have a House Party
Module 2: Organize a Town Meeting
Module 3: Give a Speech to a Group

CREATIVE & SPECIALTY MODULES
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Module 5: Adopt a Public Official
Module 6: Check Out the Money Trail: Who's Getting Paid?
Module 7: Find Out If Officials Following the Rules

HARD CORE EVIDENCE MODULES
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Module 9: Adopt Part of an Election: Watch the System Testing
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Module 12: Adopt Part of an Election: Monitor the Voting
Module 13: Adopt Part of an Election: Monitor the Counting
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Module 15: Adopt Part of an Election: Audit for Accuracy
Module 16: Legal Actions

'PLAN B' MODULE
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MODULES FOR CANDIDATES, CELEBRITIES, AND WEALTHY CITIZENS
Module 18: Candidates: How to Protect Your Election
Module 19: For Famous Voices (Action ideas for Celebrities)
Module 20: Actions for High Net Worth Individuals

Why start with elections?

Local, state and national, your ultimate ownership in your government is enacted through your vote. If your vote doesn't count, you are simply a slave to your government. The United States of America was founded with the idea that We, the People have sovereign power over our government.

You will quickly see that the citizenry's ability to authenticate the fairness and accuracy of elections – any election – has largely been stripped away.

But don't take our word for it. Select any action from the Citizen's Tool Kit. Try it. See what you discover for yourself. We encourage you to think for yourself and have confidence in your own common sense.

Overview of the Citizen's Tool Kit

This Citizen's Tool Kit has 20 stand-alone modules. Each one is quite brief. Your first action will be to skim over the modules and <u>select one</u> you'd like to try.

Even if you choose only one action from a single module, you'll be amazed at what you learn about managing your government. Taking a single action – any action – will have more impact than you think.

How do I use the Citizen's Tool Kit?

Pick an action, any action, and just do it. Fight the temptation to spend your time trying to organize everyone else. Make a commitment to personally complete a meaningful action, even if just in one area, and even if no one else will join you. Spend your time actually doing something rather than on office politics, e-mail lists, or turf wars. Step away from the Internet. Get out in the field where the action is!

If you choose to work alone, you'll quickly learn that there are many others like you, and they are achieving amazing results. You can locate individuals who are having an impact in the **Forums** at http://www.blackboxvoting.org .

Of course, it is especially enjoyable to work with a small local group. One of the first actions you can take is to get a small group together, and there are modules in this Citizen's Tool Kit to help you do that.

One citizen who began working alone but then evolved into the founder of a group is John Brakey of Tucson Arizona. He has very good advice:

"I'd rather see 10 groups, each with 10 people, than one group with 100 people. You find out that in any group regardless of size, one, two or three people seem to do all the work. At least with 10 groups, you know you'll have 10 people taking action.

You can start with an even smaller group – just five people, and you can draw them from your neighborhood, your family, your workplace or your circle of acquaintances. Whatever you do, take action.

How do I get help?

You can get personalized, one-on-one help with your questions here:
http://www.blackboxvoting.org

In the left column, look for **One-on-One Consulting**. Click that.

Direct link: http://www.bbvforums.org/forums/messages/73/73.html)

If you haven't signed up before (it's free), in the left column at the One-on-One you'll find a link that says **Register**. Click that, fill out the boxes, and you can post your questions. Allow a day or two and you'll receive personalized assistance.

Using the One-on-One on the Internet is an important strategy, because other people probably have the same question you have. This way everyone gets to read the answer to your questions, even those too shy to post their question on the Internet. Internet-based consulting helps nonprofit organizations keep costs low and make good use of time.

If your question requires privacy
E-mail crew@blackboxvoting.org and allow a couple days for response.

If you don't have access to the Internet at all
If you don't have Internet at all, call 425-793-1030. Be judicious about using the phone, since using the telephone takes time away from others who may have a time sensitive emergency. It will help greatly if you have your questions organized ahead of time point by point. Focus your questions to handle them in 5-10 minutes.

Where can I find a primer on elections problems?

The book, *Black Box Voting: Ballot-Tampering in the 21st Century* can be found online for free at http://www.blackboxvoting.org. Go to right column, middle and download any chapter you like.

New books come out frequently, and we'll be happy to point you to the best ones. Here's one: Look for a brand new book we like, coming out in September 2006 titled: *Hacked*

Your Own Additions to the

Citizen's Tool Kit

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

New Modules Needed?

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Module 1

Mobilization: Have a House Party

Gather a group of five to 30 people, make them aware of the need, and start some of them taking action.

Your house party will be a way to bring together like-minded individuals, raise awareness, and build your own army of citizens working together to reclaim our elections. The synergy, hope and support created in such a group will be inspiring. Create your own epicenter where real progress in election reform will be achieved!

Guide for House Party Hosts/Facilitators

Goals for the Meeting:

The purpose of your house party will be to assemble a handful of people and mobilize them. This involves education/motivation tools and a commitment to action.

Before the Meeting:

• Invite guests. Try and invite people with different party affiliations.

• Print a Citizen's Tool Kit for each guest: http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit.pdf

   (TIP: The Citizen's Tool Kit has a section at the end of each module where you can add your own actions if you need to customize for your group.)

• Select educational/motivational tool (see below) and set up any audio visual aids or equipment

• Set up enough chairs for every attendee to be able to sit. Arrange the chairs in a semi-circle, if possible, so that everyone can see the speaker and each other.

• Prepare refreshments for attendees.

• Have name tags, pens, and materials packets available as attendees arrive.

• Optional: Have available a basket or bowl for donations (seeded with a $5 bill and a few $1 bills) to help cover the costs for refreshments and copying of the Citizen's Tool Kit to be handed out.

• Optional: Have books or documentary DVDs available for sale, as gifts, or door prizes. New ones are coming out all the time. If you need recommendations, just ask.

• As attendees arrive, welcome them, offer them refreshments (if they arrive on time), seat them, and introduce them to the meeting facilitator (if that is not the host). If possible, have one person assigned to admit late-comers: give them name tags and a copy of the Citizen's Tool Kit, and assure they have a place to sit.

• Steer clear of discussions about stolen elections, candidates and/or political parties. The key is to keep the tone of the meeting "non-partisan" and open to all views and ideas regarding election reform.

Part I of House Party – Education/Motivation component

Do a slide presentation, make a short speech, or show a film. Following this, discuss the kinds of actions your guests can get involved in to oversee your next election.

Education/Motivation tools:

• **Slide presentation**: All you need is a digital projector, the presentation file that goes with this Citizen's Tool Kit (http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit-presentation.pdf), and a blank white wall. You can also capture ideas from this presentation and make your own. Use the text in the presentation slides or make up your own speech.

• **Short Speech**: See Citizen's Tool Kit **Module 3** for speechmaking tips. Remember that the mind can only absorb what the rear end can endure. Keep it short, include humor, bring visual aids if possible. While developing the speech, stay focused on its purpose: Educate, motivate, activate.

• **Films**: There are several outstanding films you can use to motivate your guests. All that's required is a DVD of the film, a television screen and comfortable places to sit. New ones are coming out all the time. If you need recommendations, just ask.

Part II of House Party – Mobilization component

Introduction actions to oversee next election:

• Give each of your guests a copy of the Citizen's Tool Kit to Take Back Elections. Tell you guests that the object is for each to choose an action – any action – and commit to doing it, either individually or as a group project.

• One of the best ways to exercise oversight is to go get more evidence. If you have an election coming up, you may want to focus on the "Hard Core Evidence" modules

(Modules 4-11). Each involves adopting a portion of the election. Don't try to take them all on. Just select what you can reasonably achieve.

• It's up to you to make the case for election reform. Get the kinds of evidence that can't be explained away or spun: Video, audio recordings, photographs, (see Module 12, Be the Media); Public records (See Module 11, Public Records and Freedom of Information Documents) and Laws/Regulations (See Module 15, Accountability checkup, Laws & Regulations).

• Encourage your guests to sign up for the National Hand Count Registry (See Module 17: Count the Votes Yourself.) You can sign up for the National Hand Count Registry on the home page at BlackBoxVoting.org or at this direct link: http://www.bbvforums.org/cgi-bin/forums/board-profile.cgi?action=register

Goals for Attendees:

• Review the Citizen's Tool Kit and commit to one of the actions.

• Consider hosting a house party to expand the pool of citizens.

• Circulate the Citizen's Tool Kit to friends, neighbors, and work colleagues

• Sign up for the National Hand Count Registry

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (by the host)

• Call the meeting to order, welcome everyone, thank them for coming, and do your best to set an upbeat tone.

• Introduce yourself and briefly describe why you called this meeting.

• Mention the refreshments.

• Ask each person to say their name (if people don't know each other).

• Introduce the facilitator (if other than you).

2. Welcome and Agenda Review (by the facilitator):

• The facilitator should thank the host, introduce herself a bit more (particularly any connections to the host or to the group).

• Quickly describe the 2 areas you plan to talk about so attendees know what to expect: (1) Overview of elections problems (2) What attendees can do.

• Set the tone for people to *act*: "Instead of complaining that nothing can be done (which we all sometimes do), the Citizen's Tool Kit is a way for us to do something by mobilizing our friends and having a real impact on taking back our elections. Working together we can frame the discussion and hold voting machine vendors and public officials accountable."

3. Education about the issue

• Slide show, brief speech or film

4. Mobilization

• Distribute Citizen's Tool Kits.

• Discuss actions

• Have people choose whether they'd prefer to take action as individuals or as a group

• Ask if anyone in the group tends to lead, mentor or organize

• Those who like to work individually can meet and discuss action areas and each choose their own.

• Those who like to work as a group can decide whether to form their own small group or collaborate with other guests to form an action group.

5. Questions/Comments:

• Briefly answer questions. For any question you cannot easily answer, refer the questioners to the One-on-One section at www.BlackBoxVoting.org or to a local election reform group if possible.

• Avoid getting into a long debate about the issues — instead focus on what we can do by mobilizing into action. Postpone questions/issues that need long discussion until after you complete the "what-you-can-do" part of the program.

• If attendees say they don't believe the Citizen's Tool Kit materials and presentation are appropriate for the people they know, ask what modules interest them most. See if there are any actions that they feel would appeal to their circle of influence.

6. Final Discussion:

• Set the next meeting date for any citizens who want to take action as a group

• If it seems like people are willing to stay longer and if they seem to want to talk more about election reform issues, address any unanswered questions or open the floor for discussion.

7. Wrap-Up

• Thank everyone for coming and for their help. Say that you will stay and discuss issues with people individually afterwards if they want.

Your Own Additions to the
House Party Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 2

Mobilization: Organize a Town Meeting

This project requires someone with organizational skills, an eye for detail, and a considerable amount of free time during the day. This project will also require a group of at least 2 or 3 like-minded citizens to assist.

Gather a group of 50 to 300 people, make them aware of the need, and start some of them taking action. Your town meeting will be a way to raise awareness and build an own army of citizens working together to reclaim elections.

Guide for Town Meeting Organizers

Goals for the Town Meeting:

The purpose of your town meeting will be to create an assembly of people and mobilize them. This involves education/motivation and a commitment to action.

Before the Town Meeting:

• Allow yourself 2-3 months to organize, locate and schedule speakers and obtain sufficient media coverage for the town hall meeting.

• Ascertain whether or not your local election officials and/or state representatives have a history of advocating real election integrity measures and are receptive to citizen concerns on this issue. If you are fortunate to have well informed local state representatives advocating meaningful election reform, extend them an invitation to speak and/or attend. This will guide you in deciding how to structure your town hall meeting.

• The meeting should be for about 2-1/2 hours on a Thursday evening beginning at 7 and ending around 9:30 p.m. This gives people time to get home, eat dinner, attend the meeting and get home early enough for work the next day.

• Locate an appropriate location that will be easily accessible and widely known by citizens in your city's greater metropolitan area.

• Assess the costs, if any, of reserving a space for the meeting and make certain you have the necessary funding available for covering any cost of the space and/or any expenses for the speakers, *i.e.,* travel, meals, and hotel (it is preferable to first seek local representatives and election officials in order to offset some such expenses, before going to officials from other cities in your state).

• If you don't have the necessary funding, approach local businesses and/or citizen action groups, election reform groups and organizations to sponsor the event.

• Prepare a 1-page flyer describing event, location, date and time, featured speakers.

Publicize the Town Meeting:

• Write a news release before contacting anyone in the media, because they will always ask you to send one to them. Always make sure that there is the name and phone number of at least one (preferably two or three) easily accessible contact person(s) who will be able to reply to media inquiries before, during and after the town hall meeting.

• Most print and broadcast media these days can be found with a "google" search on the web. If you prefer, there is a set of reference books in just about every public library called "Standard Rate & Data," which usually has a pretty up-to-date listing of every publication and broadcast outlet in every U.S. city -- along with the names and phone numbers of editors, news directors, etc.

• Some libraries have another good set of reference books called "Bacon's."

• After sending the news release (via email, snail-mail or fax), call the person to whom you sent the news release (or ask for the assignment editor or managing editor if you only were able to send the release to a generic news room number).

• Usually you can find out from a google search which radio stations in an area have local newscasts and locally produced talk and public affairs programs. Offer to be a guest on one of their shows and/or offer to schedule a local voting integrity activist, area politician, etc. Sometimes they will allow phone interviews, but usually they far prefer in-studio interviews.

• You might have to call a radio or TV station to find out who the public affairs director and talk show producers are. Quite often there will be at least one locally produced public affairs program on a National Public Radio outlet.

• No matter what type of broadcast outlet it is, always provide a concise fact sheet (about when and where the town hall meeting will be) to both the producer and the interviewer as much in advance as possible – and always bring a fresh fact sheet on the day of the interview just in case they claim to have never gotten or misplaced it (or whatever). Usually that information will be placed on a TV station's screen toward the end of the interview, but unless you can actually see the info on the screen (or unless the interview brings it up himself or herself), make sure you mention the event.

Interviews sometimes seem to be over in the blink of an eye, so make sure you mention the town hall meeting if the interviewer hasn't already mentioned the topic.

• If you know about the town hall meeting long enough in advance, you can write and send brief public service announcements (PSAs) and send them to local radio and cable TV stations. It doesn't matter whether they have a news/talk format.

• Make follow-up calls to the news media at least two days prior to the town hall meeting. Then call the day before and day of the event (unless the media outlet's editor, etc. tells you not to) and schedule on-site interviews with keynote speakers, panelists, etc.

• Bring extra news releases (along with any other important literature) to give to media folks who come to the event. Don't overwhelm them with too many items, though, because they will have news deadlines to meet.

• If possible, write post-event news releases and accompany them with digital photos

Set up the facility before the Town Meeting:

• Arrange for the necessary equipment, *i.e.,* microphones, podium (large enough to accommodate speakers), projector, a videographer (preferably someone local who might be willing to do it for free).

• Make enough copies of the Citizen's Tool Kit to place on each chair before the meeting. It will save time to have the Tool Kits on the chairs ahead of time, and will give attendees something to do if there are any slow points.

• Make copies of a Commitment to Action card and place it on each chair with the Citizen's Tool Kit. Use your creativity. The cards can ask for name, contact information, and which actions in the Tool Kit are of most interest to the individual. You might want to add a question as to whether the individual tends to mentor, lead or organize others, and a question about whether they would like to commit to form and lead a small group (5-12 people) to take action.

• Prepare large timer cards: "2 minutes" "1 minute" "10 seconds" "TIME UP!"

Part I of Town Meeting – Education/Motivation component

• Provide each speaker with a specific time limit. Assign an assistant to time the speeches and hold up the time prompt cards. When the time is down to 10 seconds, go stand at the podium next to the speaker.

• Monitor the speaker's time allotments carefully. If you have several speakers, just five minutes added to each speaker's time can add too much time to the event, making attendees fidgety. You don't want attendees to leave before the mobilization portion.

• (Optional) "Pass the Hat" after the most dynamic speaker for any donations to supplement expenses incurred, if you were not able to get necessary funding beforehand.

• Ask attendees to fill out the Action Cards about two-thirds of the way through the meeting.

Part II of Town Meeting – Mobilization component

Introduction actions to take back elections:

• Direct attendees to the Citizen's Tool Kits. Tell them that the object is for each to choose an action – any action – and commit to doing it, either individually or as a group project.

• One of the best ways to exercise oversight is to go get more evidence. If you have an election coming up, you may want to focus on the "Hard Core Evidence" modules (Modules 8-16). Each involves adopting a portion of the election. Don't try to take them all on. Just select what you can reasonably achieve.

• Mention that it's up to the citizenry to make the case for election reform. Get the kinds of evidence that can't be explained away or spun: Video, Audio recordings, Photographs, (see Module 4, Be the Media); Public records (See Module 8, Public Records and Freedom of Information Documents) and Laws/Regulations (See Module 7, Find out if Officials are Following the Rules).

• Encourage attendees to sign up for the National Hand Count Registry (See Module 17: Count the Votes Yourself.) You can sign up for the National Hand Count Registry on the home page at BlackBoxVoting.org

• Question and answer: To save time and avoid delays during the question and answer period, have 3 x 5 cards and pencils available to hand out to audience to write down their questions for any of the speakers; pick them up from audience (depending on the number of speakers and the time allotment for them to speak, try to allow 30 minutes for questions); go through the questions and pick those most relevant to the issue first and pose these questions to whichever speaker the question is addressing. If there is time, you can ask the other questions.

• Try to keep the focus on the next step: Actions citizens can take.

Wrap-Up

• Thank everyone for coming. Encourage them to take the first step – just one action, no matter how small. Encourage those who like to lead, mentor and organize to do a house party or assemble a small group to take more concerted actions. Provide contact information for those who want to follow up after the meeting.

Collaboration and appreciation: Black Box Voting wishes to thank **Doreen Lazarus** of **H/L Communications** (Cleveland OH) for media contact tips for town meetings.

Your Own Additions to the
Town Meeting Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 3

Mobilization: Give a Speech to a Group

Learn to address groups of 50 to 300 people at a time to make them aware of the need, and start some of them taking action.

Your speaking engagements will be a way to raise awareness and motivate citizens to take action.

Guide for Public Speaking

Goals for your public speaking:

The purpose of these speeches will be to communicate with gatherings of people and motivate them to take action. Your speeches will vary in length depending on the venue, but each should involve education/motivation and a commitment to action.

How to get yourself in front of groups:

• Join Toastmaster (speakers group) and speak to groups about the need for citizens to take back elections, and how to do it.

• Toastmasters is an international organization whose goal is to develop the speaking skills of its members. There is nothing more confidence-building than being comfortable speaking in front of a group. It is an extremely effective way to get your message across and educate large groups on important issues such as the need to take back elections. Here's how you get started:

• Google "Toastmasters" and add your city of residence. All of the Toastmasters groups in the area can be found this way. (In Austin, Texas there are about 55 of them, which meet on different days and at different times and places.)

• Pick two or three that meet at times, dates and places convenient for your schedule and go visit them. When you find one that meshes with your personality, go back

again until you feel you can commit to joining. The usual obligation is once a week for an hour. Each club as its own "personality", so check out more than one until you find one that you like.

• In an hour long Toastmasters meeting, 13 to 15 people will have an opportunity to speak. Three are usually prepared speakers, three are evaluators who are making notes and delivering their evaluations when the speakers are done, and the rest speak on impromptu speech topics (for one to two minutes each) delivered by the "Table Topics Master". All of these roles are signed up for in advance. As a guest, you will not be required to speak. You may be called upon for a "Table Topic", but if you are nervous, just pass.

• Most speeches in Toastmasters are 5 to 7 minutes in length. Develop a talk about taking back elections that will fit into this time frame. You can get ideas from the presentation that goes with this Citizen's Tool Kit, which you can download here: http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit-presentation.pdf

• Keep it concise. The basic Toastmasters' formula is: Tell them what you're going to tell them; tell them (usually in three main points;) and tell them what you've told them (conclusion) This will give you great practice in saying the most you can in the least amount of time. A challenge for this issue, but one that is good practice for the next step:

• Expand on your basic speech and ask for two time slots at your meeting to practice it, as you prepare to deliver it to outside groups. Toastmasters is a great place to develop & polish up a good speech! Truly a credible speech on the elections issue would be difficult to deliver in less than 10 to 15 minutes (or more) which would fill two time slots in a Toastmasters meeting.

• Once you have your talk down, call on any and all local political groups that have regular meetings in your area. You can find them by Googling them up. Contact the President or events coordinator and ask to be a speaker at an upcoming meeting. Explain the time sensitivity of the issue because of the upcoming mid-term election. Do NOT limit yourself to any one party. They all have interest in this topic.

• Check newspapers or publications in your area, look for citizens' groups that might be receptive to your talk and contact them about speaking.

• If there are local radio stations that might be receptive, contact the radio show host and see about being a guest on their show to discuss election issues.

When you give your speech to groups:

• Ask how many attendees are usually expected. Make a copy of the Citizen's Tool Kit for each attendee. Ask the host of the meeting when is the best time to pass out the handout. It's best to place them on chairs before the meeting. Second best is to hand them out as you begin your speech.

• As a call to action, you might want to include a Commitment to Action card. Use your creativity. The cards can ask for name, contact information, and which actions in the

Tool Kit are of most interest to the individual. You might want to add a question as to whether the individual tends to mentor, lead or organize others, and a question about whether they would like to commit to form and lead a small group (5-12 people) to take action to take back elections.

• Collect the response cards before you leave.

The time to start is NOW! The clock is ticking! You will find that one opportunity will lead to another, and in no time you will become the local authority on this issue!

For copies of past speeches given on electronic voting, contact Vickie Karp at karp@mail.com.

This may be the most empowering thing you do in your entire life…go on, get out there!!!!

Collaboration and appreciation: Black Box Voting wishes to thank **Vickie Karp** of **Black Box Voting, National Coalition 4 Visible Ballots,** and **Vote Rescue** (Austin, TX) for contributing her expertise on this module.

Your Own Additions to the
Give a Speech Module

You can share your ideas by sending to

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 4

Be the Media

Help the media cover the People's right to oversee their own elections. Gather videotape, photographs, audio, and public records to buttress your case with the media. And become your own media – whether or not the media covers the most important issues, take it upon yourself to make sure the word gets out.

Guide to Being Your Own Free Press

Goals:

Help the media cover the issue by providing the kind of information they need, in the format they need, buttressed by the kind of evidence they need in order to persuade producers and editors.

At the same time, bring the message to as many people as you can yourself. Don't become dependent on someone else's editor to get your story out there.

Top 10 Publicity Blunders: A Reverse Tutorial on How to Get Media Coverage

Blunder # 10: Send a "News" Release That Isn't News

• Know the difference between a news piece and an opinion piece. Editors and producers want facts and a frame for why it's relevant. They aren't interested in your opinion.

• Delete adjectives. Substitute facts.

  - Don't: "VoteSolutionGroup, a dynamic and important citizens group."
  - Do: "VoteSolutionGroup, a local citizens group that focuses on elections issues"

• Learn how to write a strong lead sentence. Don't make journalists read all the way through your press release to get the point.

  - Skip the "Who What When Where Why" first sentence. Some fossil once taught this technique for press releases, but it went out with polyester suits.

  - Get to the point in the headline, then write a lead like a news story. Don't bore the reporter in your first sentence.

  - **Don'**t: "On June 12, 2006, Tom Smith examined a voting machine in Sacramento Calif. to see if it could be hacked."

  - **Do:** "You've been hacked," a Sacramento County voting machine results report announced. The test was performed by XYZ citizen's group with the cooperation of local elections officials. (quote from an elections official, by name)

• Press release format:

> **Contact**: (your name, your phone number, your e-mail, your organization)
>
> <div align="center">
>
> **HEADLINE**
>
> **Subhead**
>
> </div>
>
> CITY: date – Strong news-like lead sentence.
>
> (Supporting paragraphs)
>
> <div align="center">
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> *# # # # #*
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> </div>

• Faxed news release should fit on one page.

• Don't tease or expect reporters to call you for explanations ("But aren't reporters expected to edit the news release? Why should I do their work for them?") No. Can you say d e a d l i n e ? Put the information they need in the news release. Cite sources and provide links to government or public records to make your facts easy to verify.

Blunder # 9: Act like you're top banana. (You're just today's lunch.)

• These people can call their own shots with the media:
  - Prince William, heir to the throne of England
  - Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie
  - Osama bin Laden

• Don't make these mistakes:

"Well! This is the second information kit I sent to USA Today, at their request. If they lose this one, they'll just have to do without me."

(USA Today can do without you.)

"I think Good Morning America should pay my travel expenses if they want me."

"How much will magazines pay when they run my photograph?"

The media generally doesn't pay for the privilege of covering your story. Also, reputable journalists will never ask you to pay them.

Blunder #8: Forget How To Tell Time

• Learn how to count backwards.

- Magazines: 3-4 month lead time
- Calendar or Event section of newspaper: 2-3 week lead time
- Community newspaper: 1-2 week lead time
- Daily newspaper: 2-3 day lead time, except breaking news (6-12 hr, lead time).
- Talk show television: May take 1-4 months to get on the show, with repeated contacts. When they decide they want you, it's often with very short notice.
- Talk radio: 1 day to six week lead time
- TV: 1-3 days lead time
- On Election Day: TV news crews can often get there in less than an hour if you have a good breaking story

Blunder #7 Use News Angles That Aren't News

• Not a news angle: Fascinating you.

- Do paparazzi follow you around? If not, don't make yourself the focus.

• Not a news angle: Your topic.

- "Election reform" is not a news angle.
- "Voting machine sleepovers in San Diego" is a news angle.

• Not a news angle: Voting machines are insecure

- A better angle: Voting machine log shows three hours missing on Election Night

• Not a news angle: Buzz words and slogans.

- "Election integrity expert recommends "three A's" -- Analyze, Audit, and develop Allies" is not a news angle.

- A better angle: Develop a tie-in for current popular news stories. For example, while the news is reporting that candidates are registering to run for office, tie in

with a related angle – like "5 steps candidates can take to ensure a fair election" and send a news release about it. Timing is everything: Ride the wave, don't try to create the wave.

Blunder #6: Do one-shot PR

• PR is cumulative.

• Get yourself in their Rolodex so they know who to call when a story breaks and they are on deadline. How do you do this? By developing a variety of solid news angles on your topic and putting your name/contact info at the top with a tag line like "Available for interviews on election topics".

• Do this on every press release and offer many different kinds of story angles, which you feed to the press over a period of time.

Blunder #5: After You Get a Reporter Interested, Become Unavailable

> *"Tell radio talk show hosts that I need 3 weeks notice and I can't do any shows between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern time, because I work."*

> Okay. If you are satisfied with one-tenth of the normal result for your PR efforts, go for it.

> When called to do a show: *"I'll have to call you back after I check my schedule."*

> Accept the booking on the spot. Bookers have a slot to fill. Whoever says Yes first usually gets it.

Blunder #4: Look For Love In All The Wrong Places

• Check your media matching IQ:

> *"I would like to have Dr. Laura Schlesinger interview me about my elections group because a lot of women listen to her show."*

> This is an advice show about moral issues. She doesn't interview people about election reform.

> *"Maybe she might do it just this once, if my story is really, really good? Because I really think her audience is perfect for me."*

> They aren't going to risk losing ratings or subscribers to cover something that doesn't match their format.

Annoying Dr. Laura's producers is not a good plan. May we suggest these targets instead: *All Things Politics* (a talk radio show featuring local and national political issues from laws to elections..) Or *Action Point* (an Air America show that has been running a series on election integrity.)

• Use the Internet, or go to the library and look at Bacon's Media Directory or Burrelle's to find media outlets that match your topic.

Blunder #3: Expect Press Coverage Without Sending Any Materials

"My local media isn't covering this story."

- Have you been sending effective press materials using strong story angles, with tie-ins to current news topics and good story hooks?

- Have you made any phone calls? Phone calls don't replace news releases, but they can tell you if you've even got the right editor or if your hook is a dud. If you make calls, have a good press release ready to go and fax it or e-mail it as soon as they ask for it. Journalists are not going to permit you to dictate the news release on the phone, so have it ready to go and in the format (e-mail or fax) that they ask for.

Blunder #2: Just Get me on Oprah

Don't get hung up on a single media outlet. Repeat exposure is more important, anyway. And besides, Oprah doesn't cover this kind of issue. Don't expect her to revise the format of her show just because you think it's important. Do the legwork to get into media that is a better match first.

Blunder #1: Forget To Show Up For Your Own Press Coverage

• Did you know that talk show hosts share their guest recommendations at a private online site reserved only for radio hosts? If you no-show, you can be blackballed.

• Broadcast interviewers detest being left with dead air.

Tips for publicizing an event:

• Write a news release before contacting anyone in the media, because they will always ask you to send one to them. Always make sure that there is the name and phone number of at least one (preferably two or three) easily accessible contact person(s) who will be able to reply to media inquiries before, during and after the event.

• Most print and broadcast media these days can be found with a "Google" search on the web. If you prefer, there is a set of reference books in just about every public library called "Standard Rate & Data," which usually has a pretty up-to-date listing of every publication and broadcast outlet in every U.S. city along with the names and phone numbers of editors, news directors, etc. Some libraries have another good set of reference books called "Bacon's."

• After sending the news release (via email, snail-mail or fax), call the person to whom you sent the news release (or ask for the assignment editor or managing editor if you only were able to send the release to a generic news room number).

• Usually you can find out from a Google search which radio stations in an area have local newscasts and locally produced talk and public affairs programs. Offer to be a guest on one of their shows and/or offer to schedule a local voting integrity activist, area politician, etc. Sometimes they will allow phone interviews, but for local events they usually they prefer in-studio interviews.

• You might have to call a radio or TV station to find out who the public affairs director and talk show producers are. Quite often there will be at least one locally produced public affairs program on a National Public Radio outlet.

• No matter what type of broadcast outlet it is, always provide a concise fact sheet (about when and where the event will be) to both the producer and the interviewer as much in advance as possible – and always bring a fresh fact sheet on the day of the interview just in case they claim to have never gotten or misplaced it (or whatever). Usually that information will be placed on a TV station's screen toward the end of the interview, but unless you can actually see the info on the screen (or unless the interview brings it up himself or herself), make sure you mention the event. Interviews sometimes seem to be over in the blink of an eye, so make sure you mention the event if the interviewer hasn't already mentioned the topic.

• If you know about the event long enough in advance, you can write and send brief public service announcements (PSAs) and send them to local radio and cable TV stations. It doesn't matter whether they have a news/talk format.

• Make follow-up calls to the news media at least two days prior to the event. Then call the day before and day of the event (unless the media outlet's editor, etc. tells you not to) and schedule on-site interviews with keynote speakers, panelists, etc.

• Bring extra news releases (along with any other important literature) to give to media folks who come to the event. Don't overwhelm them with too many items, though, because they will have news deadlines to meet.

• If possible, write post-event news releases and accompany them with digital photos

Don't depend on the media: Become the media yourself

• Spread the evidence you find to every blog, listserv, forum you know and throughout your personal network.

• Talk about it at work and to people you meet everywhere.

• Learn to write an effective press release.

• Put messages on:

    - Yard signs
    - Car windows
    - Write them on duct tape and wear them
    - Print removeable stickers and stick them on things:
    - Bathroom door at the gas station.
    - On telephone poles in the dead of night

- At bus stops
- On the back of bus seats
- Stick them into your junk mail and send it back via return mail
- Slip them into menus at restaurants
- Leave them in books at the bookstore

• Make magnetic signs for your car

• If you know a trucker, have them put a message in the window as they drive across the county.

• Make a patch and put it on the front of your baseball cap

• Carry a sign and stand in the window outside the Today Show

Show leadership

• Use your real name when you post on Internet message boards about election reform

• Stand up for what you believe even if you are told "It will never happen."

BE YOUR OWN HISTORIAN / DOCUMENTARY PRODUCER:
Capture Events and People on Film

Get the hard evidence that can stand up in a court of law and preserve the historical truth behind the election reform movement.

• Document public meetings, elections, recounts, election officials, vendors, politicians and anything dealing with election reform is a piece of history that cannot be rewritten, if you have the truth of what occurred on film.

• Let's get as many citizens as possible get into the habit of documenting on film anything related to election reform because it will inspire others to action and will be a reservoir of truth that we can draw from in order to find the best solutions for election reform that will preserve our republic:

• Here's a succinct guide, written by a lawyer, that provides some excellent general guidance. Download it, print it out, and keep it with your camcorder: www.krages.com/phoright.htm

General tips:

• Keep your camera's battery charged

• Keep extra blank tapes available

• The goal is to get public officials and vendors on record by asking the right questions and observing what they do.

• Show others what good public servants look like, and document the difficult ones.

• Especially for meetings, prepare ahead of time by writing questions designed to elicit definitive answers regarding voting procedures.

• Avoid over-general questions that lead to speeches, evasion and non-responsiveness.

• If you happen to capture something that has evidenciary value (which happens more often than you think), be prepared to execute a formal affidavit and/or testify, if needed.

• Throughout the Election Cycle, capture any part of:

   - Public meetings
   - Certification hearings
   - Testing
   - Ballot preparation
   - Election-related activities by third-party vendors
   - Meetings with vendors or public officials
   - Early voting
   - Election training
   - Pre-election equipment and materials transport and handling
   - Voting day activities
   - Vote Counting (all phases including videotaping chain of custody):
      ✓ Depots and drop-off sites
      ✓ Spot check audits
      ✓ Absentee ballot processing
      ✓ Mid-election and post-election equipment and materials transport and handling

   - Explanations of policies and procedures
   - Explanations of "glitches"
   - Post-election canvassing meetings
   - Obstructive behavior, intimidation tactics, evasive or non-responsive actions

Tips From a Film Producer:

• When shooting, keep any zooms and camera moves purposeful -- gratuitous zooming and "garden-hosing" makes the video hard to watch, and looks amateurish.

• Let the subject matter guide your moves. Need to see more detail? Zoom in.

• Need to include more of the environment? Zoom out.

• When in doubt, keep the zoom as wide as it will go -- this will also keep your images steadier and is more likely to catch action you'd miss when zoomed in. If you must be discreet (i.e. holding the camera casually without looking through it) keeping the zoom wide will increase your chances of catching the action.

• You'll probably be using your camera's (lousy) built-in microphone to capture audio, so if sound or words are important, stay as close to the subject as practicable under the circumstances.

• If you are forcibly discouraged from shooting video, put the lens cap on if you must, and keep the camcorder running to capture audio.

• Don't be confrontational, but whenever possible someone in the background should be ready to shoot any confrontations that may arise between you and anyone trying to prevent you from shooting. The more cameras on the scene the better.

• Learn how to make digital copies of your tapes -- never let the original tapes out of your hands. If you've captured incriminating evience, keep your original tapes in a secure or non-obvious location.

• When you remove a recorded tape from the camcorder, be sure to write-protect the cassette immediately, to prevent its accidentally being recorded over. On Mini-DV tapes, there's a shutter on the back edge of the cassette that you slide OPEN. On 8mm/Hi-8 tapes, you slide the shutter CLOSED. On VHS tapes there's a plastic tab that you pry out and discard.

• Without fail, label each tape with the subject, the date, and your phone number, and indicate whether the tape is an original or a copy.

• If your tapes should get confiscated you may still be able to shoot low-quality MPEG video on your camcorder's memory card, if it has one (get the biggest card you can afford). This may be better than nothing.

• Get familiar with your camera and practice its use beforehand. In the heat of battle there will be little opportunity to read the manual! Too much trouble? Weigh the tradeoffs, then decide.

Questions to ask to "Be the Media":

• Are there any other locations besides this where election preparations or ballot handling or processing goes on?

• When is the next small election?

• Will there be absentee voting? Who will the ballot printer be? Where will they be processed for mailing? Sorting? Counting?

• Where is the central tabulator room? Are citizens allowed to watch the central tallying?

• Where are voting machines kept?

• What staff members touch your voting machines before, during and after elections?

• Does the vendor help with your elections? What are the names of the vendor support reps?

More resources: Democracy for America has produced an excellent online course to access the media: http://tools.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool/

Collaboration and appreciation: Black Box Voting wishes to thank **Doreen Lazarus** of **H/L Communications,** and thanks also to producers of the documentary "Hacked," for adding tips and input on this module.

Your Own Additions to the
Be the Media Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 5

Adopt a Public Official

Choose one public official – an elections official, secretary of state, commissioner, county supervisor, or member of the Board of Elections. Provide encouragement and recognition if the official represents the citizenry well. Educate those who may be misinformed. If the official has been influenced by vendors, offer alternative points of view. Hold officials accountable if they are non-responsive and should know better.

Guide to Adopting a Public Official

Goals:

Develop a positive, open and mutually informative relationship with a local public official. This will involve getting to know them, learning about the challenges they face, finding out their priorities and opinions, or – for those who are non-responsive to the public will – holding them accountable.

Assume the official can be your ally

• Meet with the official to understand current procedures.

• Request information and copies of the procedures before the election. Here is a list of issues that you can address with public officials before the election:

- Vote Count Auditing   - Election Day Procedures
- Ballot/DRE Security   - Election Challenger Procedures
- Voting Machine Allocation   - Election Monitor Procedures
- Voter Purging   - Provisional Ballots
- Voter Registration   - Absentee Ballots
- Recount Procedures

• Review procedures/documents for problems and compare with other counties

• Monitor elections on Election Day

• Participate in post-election reviews and audits to evaluate election process

• Advocate for improvements

Understand how local laws and regulations affect public officials

• Find out which rules your local officials cite to educate you about why they have made certain choices.

• If you see that a public official is not following the laws and/or regulations, help them become informed. For example, if you have a public official who withholds public records, provide a copy of the public records statute and recommend that they seek guidance from the county attorney. It is not unusual for a public official to be unaware of certain laws.

Understand and work to counteract the power of vendors

• Many elections officials have developed a co-dependent relationship with vendors.

• Elections officials are usually dependent on vendor to maintain, upgrade and lend technical support for voting systems.

• Citizens can take power back and weaken the vendor-dependence by:

  - Building a case using undeniable evidence, and taking that evidence to additional public officials in various divisions, and to the media.

  - Putting public pressure on the vendor through the press, other politicians and by increasing the number of citizens taking action. This provides support for elections officials who want to hold their vendors accountable.

How to achieve change

• Make your case with evidence: Video, audio recordings, public records, photographs, laws and regulations

• Provide officials with concise, well researched information.

• Provide other alternatives.

• Locate officials who are responsive to the citizenry and provide contact information to both parties, encouraging a conversation.

• Ask them what they would need from you to make the change you want

• Provide cost analyses and comparison charts to provide a fiduciary duty for the public official to take your concerns seriously

What to do when efforts to educate and lobby don't work

• If you find a public official who is obstructive and non-responsive despite efforts to educate and persuade, it is your responsibility to hold them accountable.

How to hold non-responsive public officials accountable

• Use "judo": The weight of your opponent against them. The "weight" of a public official is in the rules, regulations and laws that control them. Get leverage by locating rules and laws that have not been followed.

• Apply public pressure:

• Provide evidence to the media (public records, photos, videos, audio recordings, laws and regulations). For tips on how to get media coverage, see **Module 4: Be the Media**. (http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit-media.pdf)

• Provide evidence to those who supervise the non-responsive official.

• Assemble a group and show up at public meetings to expose the problem.

• **Tips for applying pressure in a public meeting:**

  - Get at least 12 people involved

  - Identify yourselves by all carrying the same bright-colored notebook, wearing the same bright-colored large button.

  - If given the opportunity to ask questions, organize the questions ahead of time on note cards. If the public official evades a question, have an agreement with your group that the next questioner will ask the same question, until it is answered or the evasions become obvious.

  - Bring a press release and copies of your evidence to the meeting and talk to reporters.

• Do a background search on the official. (See **Module 6: Following the Money Trail** – http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit-money-trail). Find out if the public official has been in trouble in the past. If so, publicize that information along with the new problems you have uncovered.

• If a non-responsive public official continues to violate the public trust, lobby for their dismissal.

Your Own Additions to the
Adopt a Public Official Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 6

Follow the Money Trail: Who's Getting Paid?

Modern-day election systems are run by private for-profit corporations, rely on a few cronies for oversight, using a certification system so fundamentally flawed that it allows machines to miscount and lose votes, with hidden back doors that enable "end runs" around the voting system. Many elections officials consider the vendors to be "like family."

What's the missing ingredient? The citizens who actually own this system.

When things just don't seem to make sense, look for the money. Modern-day influence peddling takes many forms, mostly legal. It's called "Pay to Play," and just because it's legal doesn't mean it's ethical. If you doubt for a moment that government corruption actually exists, go to a news search engine like Factiva or Lexis-Nexis (or even Google "News") and search for terms like *alderman, convicted* or *supervisor, indicted*.

Guide to Following the Money Trail

Goals:

At the very least, find out who you're dealing with and what connections they have.

Where to look for information

• Where to find filings of publicly traded companies: http://www.secinfo.com

• Where to find a phone number: try http://www.bigbook.com or, for Canada, http://www.telus.com . You can do reverse phone number and reverse address searches at http://www.whitepages.com and, for Canada, http://www.whitepages.ca . Another excellent tool is http://www.anywho.com , which often lets you find phone numbers and addresses by spouse name as well. Also try Google, of course.

• If you have a phone number or an address or an IP address, Google it. Try several of the Google search options, like Google Groups, Google Blogs, and more.

• Where to find out more if you have an e-mail: Enter the email in Google, but then do another search: Hit the tab that says "groups" and you may find more.

• Where to find employee names if all you have is the company's general information e-mail: enter the end of the e-mail into Google. For example, Black Box Voting has e-mails that end in "@blackboxvoting.org", so if you were searching for employees of Black Box Voting, you could enter *@blackboxvoting.org* into Google.

• Where to find donations to candidates: For federal, go to http://www.opensecrets.org – most states have their donation lists online also. Start by looking at the secretary of state site, and also use Google with terms like *Virginia, campaign finance* or *Alabama, candidate, disclosure*.

• Where to find lobbyists: www.fecinfo.com and http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=SourceWatch. Most states also require county-level lobbyists to register. The voting machine companies make a lot of use of the county-level lobbyists. You can usually get those by going to the county clerk's office. They have to provide them for you when you come in to ask. Call first.

• Where to find contact info for public officials: Go to http://www.congress.org. This also has very good info for local officials.

• Where to find the town someone lives in: Enter name and guess an age (doesn't need to be accurate) in USSearch.com.

• Where to find who owns Web sites and trace IP addresses: http://www.whois.sc or http://www.geektools.com

• Where to find web pages that have been removed: http://www.archive.org – and here's a great tip: When you get to archive.org, enter the web site in this format: *websitename.com/** – the "/" tells it to look in all sub-directories and the "*" tells it to pull every page from every sub-directory.

Corporate information:

• Start with corporate registrations. Go to Google. Enter this kind of search phrase: *washington secretary of state* or *oregon secretary of state* or *ohio secretary of state* (some locations, like Virginia, it is secretary of the commonwealth)

• Go to the main secretary of state page. Hunt around for a "corporations" or "business search" section. Most states allow you to enter a business name and perform a search, which will lead you to the registered agent.

• Some states, like Ohio, let you search by name of agent, a very good feature. A few states make you pay to see anything. Florida has our favorite site, floridasunbiz.com, which lets you search by company name, corporate agent, or other offices, and lets you see photocopies of the documents.

• Corporate Search Tips:

- The corporate agent is sometimes a corporation that makes a business out of acting as the corporate agent. CT Corporations is one of these. That's not too helpful, is it?

- The corporate agent isn't as important as the corporate officers. Many states let you see the names of all the officers. Some companies have a corporate agent who is also an officer.

- Corporations are supposed to register in each state where they do business. Therefore, if you are looking for information on a corporation that does business in a lot of states and its home state is obstructive about corporate documents, you can go to a more open state.

How to search old news archives:

• You can do a daily fee on Lexus-Nexus or Factiva.com. Both will provide you with pay-per-article searches of newspaper archives that have lots of information in them. However, this can get expensive if you want to eyeball a lot of articles. Go to the library and you may be able to get unlimited use for free for an hour or more. University libraries are very good for this.

• Lexus-Nexus also shows judgments and some legal cases. Factiva is very good, and available in a lot of libraries.

• Tips for using news search databases

- One way to search is to have it sort from oldest to newest. You will find some of the best stuff in the oldest articles. This is because whoever you're looking at was not very careful when they first got media coverage. After all, they often didn't know they'd become an important person later on!

- Also, make a habit of cutting and pasting everything into a Word file. Later, you can easily find something you remember seeing by opening that big ol' file and doing a word search.

- Learn the shortcuts for copy and paste. On a PC, is is ctrl-c for copy and ctrl-v for paste. Much faster that way (and it sure baffles any keyloggers! (spyware)

- Another tip, when dumping the information into Word Files, is to make sure you've got icons on your menu for color text. Quickly highlight all the **people's names** and **companies** in red, and highlight **really interesting stuff** in purple or pink. Then, later, you can quickly find stuff when you scroll through the file.

• Spend a few hours with a news search database learning how modern-day bribery is done. You'll get a real education:

- Consulting deals, three-way bank accounts (dirty money goes in via clean source, gets pulled out by dirty co-signer and passed through to public officials)

- Success-fee lobbying (contingent fee, usually illegal)

- You may find out about the fisherman's solution (private company credit card made available to public official)

- The Dutch sandwich (two corporations, one making profits, one taking losses, a little sleight of hand and the public official gets a tax-free windfall).

- Run searches for the term "pass through."

- Look for contract favors: (For example, ballot printer does a funky run of ballots, later gets a county contract from another department worth hundreds of thousands.)

- You'll learn that the average public servant sells out for under $10,000 (often as little as $3,000).

- You'll run into public officials who become consultants to the same government divisions they left in disgrace.

- Immerse yourself in the dirt and – as well as becoming aware how much there is, you'll get a nose for what to look for in your general searches for background information.

How to get court records

• Start with the county courthouse. Go to the superior court clerk. When you get there, ask for help on how to use the computer to search.

- If you don't know the case number, you can usually go to a special computer to search for the case number by the person's name. The system is often customized and funky, so don't be shy about asking for help. I usually get help from another citizen nearby who seems to know what they are doing, if the clerk is busy. You can get the following kinds of information:

  ✓ criminal charges and trial records
  ✓ civil cases
  ✓ divorces
  ✓ judgments

- After you get the case number (again, this varies so ask first) you can ask to look at the case file. For old cases, this may be on microfiche. It's not hard to use the microfiche machines, and you can print off of them, usually 25 cents a copy. If it's your first time, don't be shy about asking for help. Load in the film and prepare to get seasick, and also find a lot of interesting information.

- From criminal charges you can often see depositions and transcripts of the trial, as well as evidence.

- From civil charges you can find who has sued them and what the allegations were.

- From divorce papers you can sometimes find assets.

- From judgments you can find company names and a little about the business.

- Different kinds of cases are sometimes found in different courthouses. Just ask, and they will point you at the right place.

"Waste Archeology"

• Yes, the dumpster. Look for paperwork, but you'll also find post-it notes in the gack bags.

• You cannot enter a locked dumpster. That is breaking and entering.

• In some (rare) states, there are laws that inhibit this.

• Scope it out in the daylight. If it's an important target and you have time, stake it out to observe the patterns before you go.

• Have a story ready. "Oh, I was just looking for boxes."

• Pay special attention to anything torn in half or quarters. This means someone ascribed some value to it.

• If you have the opportunity during an office visit, take a moment to study the wastebaskets in the copy room. People have some strange blind spots -- very important documents are discarded there when they happen to be printed crooked or too dark. I mean, you could go throw away a Starbucks cup, you know, if you bring it in with you as a prop.

Ask questions by phone or in person

• Prepare a list of questions and follow up questions and use the telephone. Call witnesses and simply ask them questions! You will be amazed how much you can learn.

• You may only get one shot at it, and you may only get one question. Consider your approach carefully. If you think you'll get a fair amount of time unless you ask something they don't like, load the information you need into softball questions and ask those before you hit them with the big stuff where they might shut you down.

• In many cases, you don't know if they'll be hostile or not, so craft a gentle friendly approach and then go for the most important information first. Sometimes they answer that before it occurs to they shouldn't talk to you.

• If you are very sure of yourself, grab a friend and just show up at the door. Many people -- even voting machine company employees, and especially men in the South when asked by women -- will be too polite to tell you to go away. You will often get invited in for tea and have an amazing chat.

• Keep the door open for more contacts. The best investigative work is done by building relationships. Try to find out everything you can, because maybe you won't get another chance, and also try to keep the door open so you can come back for more.

• Never offer "protected source" status if they don't ask for it.

• Always ask for documents if you think they might have them.

• Do not surreptitiously tape record unless you are in a single party consent state.

• Visits get more info than phone calls, and phone calls get more info than e-mails.
  Never e-mail. It's asking to have doors slammed shut, and once they're shut, it takes
  less assertiveness for them to keep refusing to talk.

Your Own Additions to the
Money Trail – Who's Getting Paid Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 7

Find Out If Officials Are Following the Rules

Who checks to see that public officials are following their own rules? What can you do if they ignore the rules? How can citizens go about changing the rules? Citizens are taking the initiative to make a case – with proof – by themselves, sometimes as lone individuals. These actions require patience, good research skills, and the ability to read and parse out written information.

This module was the most challenging one to write, not because it's difficult to tell you where to find laws and regulations, or how to find out whether the rules are being applied, but because we want you to know that your efforts truly do make a difference.

In this module, we will show you citizens who took extraordinary measures to follow the correct steps to hold public officials accountable. Sometimes it worked.

Too often, even though citizens did the leg work, learned the applicable laws, followed appropriate procedures, and supported their case with solid evidence, their officials were never held accountable for breaking the law. In the end, the system failed.

It is important for you to find out for yourself whether public officials *can* be held accountable in your jurisdiction. We encourage you to follow the steps in this module. In areas where the system works, these techniques will provide you with powerful leverage. Even more important, if your democratic process has become infected, the role you play in exposing the breakdown of the system might just prevent the death of our governmental system altogether.

<div align="center">**Guide to Holding Public Officials Accountable**</div>

Goals:

Find the statutes and regulations that pertain to elections, public records, or other areas related to problems you are experiencing with governmental non-responsiveness.

Locate examples of failure to follow the rules. Expose those failures to the public, to the media, and if necessary, in court.

What to do:

Start by working together with officials -- election officials who understand the laws and their nuances, legislators who understand how to get laws passed learning what the laws are in order to identify holes that need to be plugged.

1) Learn where to find your state election laws
2) Identify the gaps
3) Track pending legislation
4) Work to pass legislation to close the gaps

Where to find laws and legislation for your state:

On-line sources for legal information do come with a disclaimer warning people to verify that information is the most current version before relying on information posted on their web sites. With that disclaimer in mind, here are a few resources you can use to help locate legal information for your state.

• For Statutes concerning Elections:

The Legal Information Institute at Cornell (Scroll Down to Elections): http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/state_statutes2.html

LawResearch.com: http://www.lawresearch.com/v2/statute/statstate.htm#elections

• For tracking the status of Election Reform Legislation try The National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) search page.

http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legman/elect/elections.cfm

• Also try your local State Legislators web site. You can try a Google search for "State Legislature", "web site"

Identify the gaps

• Read current statutes, regulations and policies
• Interpret and make a concise translation in view of the specific problems you are seeing
• Be careful how you use language
• Try to imagine how someone can get around the specific wording.

For example, the term "voter verifiable" sounded good to many at first, until companies like VoteHere proposed to use printers at the polling place, not for printing a ballot that you can look at and authorize, but to print a code number to take home and look up on the Internet to "verify" your vote.

Be very very careful of words. In the VoteHere example, above, it turned out that by "verify" your vote they meant "verify that your vote had been cast" (not verify that the vote recorded for you represented who you voted for).

Where to find pending legislation

http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legman/elect/elections.cfm

and

http://www.fairvote.org/action/

Passing new legislation

• Practice reading legislative law, which can be daunting to some.

• Develop the knack for figuring out other people's alliances and positions. Figure out which officials can be counted on (and how far), and which cannot.

• If you are new to this, try to find someone to work with who already knows the system.

• If you work with a citizen's group, when choosing its name make sure it encompasses a broad region, like a state.If you tie the name to a specific county, representatives from other areas might not listen because they assume your group would only represent a limited area.

• In addition to focusing on specific legislative language, work on influencing lawmakers' willingness to tackle the issue. Lawmakers can be influenced by stories you get in the media and by the perception that their voting base is watching what they do.

Assign your public officials to a category and take strategic action accordingly

Category 1: Sympathetic to your position
Category 2: Would be sympathetic if they could (but are under too much pressure e.g. afraid of losing their jobs)
Category 3: Ringleaders for the opposition or those who enthusiastically break the law.

Strategies to hold officials accountable:

• For the first group (Sympathetic to your position) focus on identifying gaps in current policies and procedures. Work with the official to update procedures and lobby for improved legislation.

• For the second group (would be sympathetic but under pressure not to be) focus on rearranging the order of incentives. If the official doesn't want to rock the boat, mobilizing the voters he depends on to keep him in office may help. "Pressure from constituents" can provide the cover needed to make a tough decision.

• If you have a ringleader for the opposition or a public official who willfully violates the law, tactics need to focus on evidence, public exposure, and consequences.

How to invoke consequences for public officials who break the rules

• When you see problem behavior by public officials, such as certifying obviously unsuitable voting systems or refusing to let you see public records, search for the laws and rules that pertain. The kind of evidence you need will be public records, video, audio recordings, or photographs that clearly show what you are trying to prove. Also come armed with copies of the law. This will give you leverage.

• If you find out the rules are being broken, take action to expose this and use the regulations to force a change in behavior. Here are some of your options:

  - Publish the evidence on Internet blogs
  - Send the evidence to the media
  - Become a plaintiff in a lawsuit to force government accountability
  - Call for the removal of the public officials responsible

• Politicians respond to public opinion and bad publicity as 2 and 3 on their priority list, generally with 1 being responding to those who support their campaigns.

They will respond to 2 and 3 when they are overwhelming enough. Remember the scenes in 'Frankenstein' when the villagers are chasing the monster with pitchforks and torches? You, the "'villagers" are *crucial* to getting public opinion and bad publicity to the tipping point. Your vote is your pitchfork and the media is your torch.

Look at the following examples, all achieved by citizens acting independently:

One day, a Washington public official named David Elliott took a phone call from a citizen about a requirement for prior certification. In Washington, voting systems could be accepted only if they had first been certified and used elsewhere. The caller, a citizen named Linda Franz, thought that requirement stifled state options for voting equipment. Elliot suggested she support pending legislation to delete those requirements.

Perhaps he didn't expect her to look up the legislation and read all of it, because after looking more closely, Franz found that the *only* positive aspect of the bill was dropping prior-use requirements. The rest of the bill eliminated the requirement for a separate ballot, enhanced the legality of the electronic vote record and *gave the secretary of state free rein to accept voting-system changes, certified or not*. Franz, along with other concerned citizens such as computer consultant Marian Beddill stopped the bill and its various incarnations in its tracks. Never underestimate the power of one or two determined people.

Linda Franz is not a very public person. Why would a private individual such as Franz decide to take on voting legislation and the public officials who are promoting it?

"All I know is that I'm 50 years old, and I never expected to have to spend the second half of my life fighting for my son's right to vote," she says.

* * * * *

Jim March is an entirely different kind of lobbyist. He decided in August 2003 to apply his bespectacled, 6-foot, 4-inch presence to voting issues. March has been known to pull out "rig-a-vote" CDs he created which contain a certified version of voting system software, with step-by-step instructions for how to manipulate elections. He brings this CD to reporters and public officials and demonstrates the software's flaws to them.

March often focuses on influencing lawmakers' willingness to tackle the issue. Public officials have come to know that Jim March will pop up like poison ivy when there are certification hearings, sometimes toting whistleblower witnesses and signed affidavits. His efforts helped make a Senate Elections Committee hearing on certification a reality. That hearing, held by Senate Elections Commission chairperson Debra Bowen, provided devastating evidence that testing labs were passing systems that violate federal standards. See this transcript: http://blackboxvoting.org/itahearing.pdf

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New Hampshire has had a long tradition of manual recounts. But citizens like Nancy Tobi, of Democracy for New Hampshire, wanted this to be codified into law so that the tradition wouldn't be lost for one reason or another. Tobi and others worked with election officials and state legislature to craft legislation that passed with enthusiastic bipartisan support. Now the law better reflects New Hampshire's tradition.

* * * * *

When New Hampshire needed to re-approve an insecure and unacceptable voting system that had already been used in many cities and towns, Nancy Tobi and Democracy for New Hampshire notified the citizenry about the public hearing. About 75 people showed up to witness and testify against the re-approval. Following more than four hours of evidence and moving testimony, the Ballot Law Commission nonetheless approved the machines.

This was not a success story. But these New Hampshire citizens aren't done yet:

• They have the hearing on video. In fact, they have on video the Diebold representative testifying that Diebold admits the software is defective.

• As of this writing, New Hampshire citizens are asking for the transcript of the hearing under the right to know laws.

• One commissioner voted in a way that was responsive to the citizenry.

• These New Hampshire citizens are now urging other citizens:

    - We need to gather evidence (audiovisual and public records).
    - We need to know the laws.
    - We need to show up.
    - And we must not give up.

* * * * *

Riverside citizen Douglas Dye provides this account of a Riverside citizen audit of the June 6, 2006 election with research showing that the elections division broke the law:

"Riverside County is out of compliance with election code 15302."

What follows is the history of the development of data to support the above assertion.

- On Jan 11 I attended a meeting with Barbara Dunmore (Registrar of Voters) and her staff. This meeting was called in response to a report I had sent to Dunmore asserting that the total votes in the Nov 2,2004 Statement of Vote was not in agreement with total votes as calculated from voter registration method of vote data.

- We discussed the concept of reconciling total votes as shown on Statement of vote with total votes as derived by a query on the voter registration data base. It was agreed that it is possible to do this provided a copy of the registration data base was made on the day of certification. At the time they contested the accuracy of my assertion because I was not using voter registration data collected on the day of certification.

- We also requested a copy of the Canvas certification procedure used in Riverside County.

- I received a copy of a document called "California Canvas Process". I also received and reviewed a document called "Canvas Requirements". This document is available at http://www.forefrontelections.com/Reference%20Library/Canvass%20Chapter%20FINAL.pdf

- It is clear to me from a reading of these documents and California Election codes that this reconciliation **is not only possible it is in fact required by California Election Code**.

- On June 27 the staff of Riverside county registrar saved a copy of the registration data base for this purpose.

- The table below is data taken from the June 6 primary in Riverside County. June 27 is the day the statement of vote was certified in Riverside County. This table is a combination of data from that data base and the statement of vote. In this table the 'Vote Methods' column and 'vote Count' column are from a query on the voter registration data base. I put the result of this query into an Excel spread sheet and then manually added data from the Statement of vote on the Riverside County web site. In the "vote counted" Colum I indicate cases where a vote was counted as yes and cases where a vote was not counted as no.

- The total of all votes in cases where a vote was counted is 198907.

- The total of all votes taken from the Statement of Vote is 200333.

- **Thus I contend this is an error of 1426 votes.**

- **I contend that California election code 15302 requires that these numbers either be in exact agreement or any discrepancy be investigated and reported.**

- At the time of the Jan 11 meeting I was not familiar with EC 15302. I simply thought it was a good idea to reconcile that data.

- The typical Statement of Vote published in California does not inform the public of such things as absentee ballots rejected on challenge. It also does not inform the public of any other case where a vote submitted in good faith was later rejected by the vote tally process.

- In preparation for the June 6 primary I was a member of the EOP (election observer panel). While observing the counting of absentee ballots the EOP was given copies of Riverside County procedures for processing of absentee ballots.

- **It was clear that if these procedures are carried out as stated there should be zero disagreement between the two total vote numbers.**

- **It is clear that errors that should get investigated, resolved and reported to the public in fact do not.**

- The table below shows a total of 1426 more votes reported by the central tabulator than recorded in voter registration vote method field. This is evidence of violation of California Election Code 15302.

Vote Methods	vote Count		Vote counted
Absentee Ballot	96001	yes	
Voted at Polling Place	94246	yes	
Mail Ballot Issued but not Returned	17870	no	
Voted by Mail Ballot	8481	yes	
Challenged Voter	4689	no	
Undeliverable Absentee Ballot	427	no	
Inactive Voter At Polling Place	177	yes	
Undeliverable Mailed Ballot	82	no	
Absentee Voided after Issue	29	no	
Voided Ballot	21	no	
Voted Early	2	yes	
Not Registered	2		
Summary			
total votes from voter registration	198907		
total reported from official			
Canvas Statement of Vote	200333		
Difference not explained	**1426**		

Reconciliation is required by California law.

Follow-up is pending on these findings as of the time of this writing.

* * * * *

Susan Pynchon of Florida Fair Elections Coalition did a detailed analysis of the contract when her county was purchasing new voting machines. By carefully reading the law, she learned that many of Florida's standards for voting system certification are in violation of state law and are not compliant with the federal Help America Vote Act. Upon finding this, the Florida Fair Elections Coalition wrote a detailed report and published it on the Internet, where it was circulated nationwide by several election integrity groups: http://www.bbvdocs.org/general/FFECreport.pdf

The state of Florida has never addressed the issue, and the county proceeded to purchase the machines.

Pynchon and others subsequently discovered that an uncertified version of voting machines was delivered to various Florida counties, and that delivery of uncertified voting systems is a felony (for the vendor) in the state of Florida. Pynchon and other Florida citizens have filed a lawsuit in an attempt to force the state of Florida to comply with the law.

* * * * *

California citizen Joseph Holder reports the following:

The Secretary is required by the Election Code (19204 and 19207) to make specific "findings" (a legal term with a very specific definition). In addition, in the "Procedures for Approving......" that is still being referenced in the Staff Reports, Sections 508, 509, and 602 also amplify on the requirements of the Election Code…In his final decision approving a voting system he is required to make it in writing, signed, and include a statement of reasons for his decision with "specific reference" to the above referenced criteria (findings). I made a specific request for any such documents, because each Certification of Approval does not state anywhere in it that any of the voting systems approved this year are safe to use, or conform to all applicable laws, procedures and regulations as is required, etc.. What the Secretary has responded is that the STAFF REPORTS substitute for the statutorily required written statement by the Secretary.

• They do not fulfill the requirements of the law. The law requires the Secretary himself to make those written findings and incorporate them in the decision to approve a voting system, and then signed by him. This means that none of the voting systems approved this year were legally approved.

Joseph Holder has filed a lawsuit against the secretary of state of California, together with a citizen-driven group called Voter Action.

* * * * *

The California document called "Procedures for Approving, Certifying, Reviewing, Modifying and Decertifying Voting Systems" has disappeared from the secretary of state's Web site -- and many citizens are looking for these regulations.

They want to know how it is that the Secretary of State can claim procedures were followed, given the sorry state of security and accuracy in many of the voting systems now being used in California. The answer is simple: The secretary of state decided to change the rules and regulations, apparently without public notice. He hasn't issued new ones.

This information was first circulated by e-mail, then published on the Internet, then circulated widely through listservs. Citizens are using this information to mobilize for an upcoming hearing.

* * * * *

While it is discouraging that some public officials seem to feel no need to do anything about it when they are found to be in violation of the law, forcing citizens to undertake the cumbersome, time consuming and expensive route of litigation – and even if the lawsuits are dismissed, as they often are – it is important to continue to document violations of regulations and laws.

"We never really know when something has succeeded or failed, because the effects of our actions are often felt much later on - sometimes after we are not around to know about it," says Nancy Tobi. "We've had so many failures in our efforts here in New Hampshire, many more failures than successes, I would say.

"I have something I keep in my pocket at all times, through all the inevitable failures and setbacks. These are the words that came from one of my favorite people, much smarter than I, who, during a dark time, said to me (with a genuine laugh!), "this is the best thing that could happen to you, this is food for your soul."

Another citizen named Brant Lamb is less charitable:

"All of this scurrying around that these people do is like rats, the rats do it in the dark and the politicians do it secretively. *Publicize the hell out of any of these efforts*, if you can't get press coverage, pin it up in your local grocery store! Publish highlighted copies of the regulationss infringed right next to the pictures/stories of who infringed it. Explain in clear detail what they did wrong. Things don't get changed in an informational vacuum. We subconsciously think everybody knows this stuff because we do. Rouse the 'villagers'!"

Even if you don't have a legal case you may well have a publicity case. There's nothing wrong with using aggressive tactics if you tell nothing but the truth.

* * * * *

This isn't just an intellectual problem we are facing. It can become a crisis of the human spirit. Citizens who undertake to truly hold public officials accountable are kindred spirits with Martin Luther, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Rosa Parks, and yes, the women suffragettes, who dared fight against what seemed impossible odds and won.

Your Own Additions to the
Following the Rules Check~up Module

You can share your ideas by sending to

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 8

Get Public Records and

Freedom of Information Documents

Public records are the kind of evidence that can stand up in a court of law. And like a box o' chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get.

Guide for Requesting Public Documents

Goals:

Get provable documentation to find out what's really going on. Anything that's on paper or e-mail at a government agency is fair game, with a small handful of exceptions. You can't use public records request to ask a question, but you can use them to ask for documents. All you have to do is try to imagine what documents might contain answers to your questions, and request those records. It is the legal obligation of governmental agencies to provide the documents you request.

How to Ask For Public Documents

• Label your request "Public Records Request" if you are requesting it from a state or local governmental entity, or "Freedom of Information Act Request" if you are requesting it from a federal governmental entity.

• Make sure to date it and provide an address for them to send responses.

• You cannot request a record before it exists. To request election audit logs, for example, you need to wait until the election events have taken place.

- Once you have requested a record, it is illegal to destroy it. If you think you might need a time-sensitive record but you aren't sure, request it as soon as possible and ask that they quote you a price for it. You can always decide not to purchase it.

- Ask for a document, and be as specific as you can when describing it. You can't ask them to tell you information, instead you must request a record. For example: "Final, executed contract between vendor and Secretary of State's Office."

- In most locations, you can do public records requests by e-mail. An exception is Arizona, which requires you to fill out a form, which you can obtain from the Secretary of State's Web site.

- In most locations, you can request records and they must give them to you even if you don't live there. Exceptions include the state of Tennessee, which requires residency.

- The simplest thing to do is to just ask – if there is a rule against sending you the records for some reason, they will write to tell you that.

- Most states have a statutory deadline for responses to your requests. Usually, you will get a response within three weeks, sometimes within a day, if you sent it by e-mail. An exception is the state of Maryland, which can take up to 30 days to respond to you.

- You will usually be informed of an estimated charge for the records, in which case you can opt to quit or go on. Charges are regulated, but vary widely from state to state. Usually the charges involve only minor copying fees. Sometimes they tack on a labor charge, around $20 per hour. Just ask them to quote you the price before filling the request. The most exorbitant fees we've seen are from the state of Michigan, which once quoted us a fee of $125,000 just to look for some records. Obviously, you do not have to accept the fee if it is extravagant.

- You can find the public records laws for your state here: www.foiadvocates.com/records.html. We recommend that you just try making a request without spending a lot of time studying up on it. The laws will be something you will want to refer to if you are turned down on your request, or if they quote a price that is too high.

- Citizens doing public records requests for the first time often take an adversarial approach, believing they must show assertiveness. In fact, all governmental agencies are quite used to filling records requests, and there is no reason to be aggressive.

- Requesting public documents is not hard, and even imperfect requests are usually processed.

- Avoid the temptation to ask for everything but the kitchen sink. Be as specific as possible, and limit your request to a few items at a time.

Tips for describing the records you want:

• Put a date limitation on the records. For example, request "All correspondence, electronic or otherwise, to or from Inspector G. Gadget between the dates of January 1, 2004 and April 30, 2004."

• Many states will refuse to fill records requests they consider to be "too broad" or "overly burdensome" so resist the temptation to ask for things like "all correspondence for the last 10 years from all elections directors." Put tighter qualifications on your requests.

• The government does not have to send you records that contain security-sensitive information. If you believe your request might tread on that area, ask anyway and add that, in the event portions of the request invoke security exceptions, the appropriate items – and only those items -- be redacted.

• Your requests can be denied if they request personal information, such as the home address of your local policeman.

When you request sensitive items that someone might not want you to have

• If possible, have evidence ahead of time that the document exists before you ask for it and be prepared to get stonewalled and/or that the document may disappear.

• Don't shine a spotlight on what you really want. For example, if you want to know whether Dirty Harry was a paid contractor for the elections division, you might want to request "the list of approved vendors and contractors for the elections division" or "all disbursements by the elections division between the time period of June 1, 2006 and July 31, 2006."

• You may find more cooperation on sensitive matters from another division that has the same set of records. It is generally advised that if you are making finance or purchasing-related records requests for an elections division, that you go to the accounting division to make the request.

• Try to have others working with you who can either make appropriate related requests before, at the same time, or after you to help make your case.

Elections records to ask for:

• Some of the most interesting records you can request are copies of all "trouble slips," reports, telephone notes, poll worker notes and service notes pertaining to any anomalies or problems in a specific election. Request these promptly.

• Zero tapes and poll tapes, date and time stamped, from the location you are auditing

• "Statement of votes cast" or "Detail report" for final election results (which breaks the results out precinct by precinct).

• Modem logs

• Audit logs: Beginning date three months prior to the election, ending date two weeks after the election is certified.

• Windows event log

• Assignment sheets and locations including:

    - The list of polling places and precincts for the Nov. 7, 2006 election.

    - The poll worker assignment sheet for the Nov. 7, 2006 election.

    - The voting machine assignment log (identifying which voting machines were assigned to which locations) for the Nov. 7, 2006 election.

    - Authorized observer assignments for each polling place. Name of any political party observers and/or general public or civic group observers assigned to each location.

• All access logs of any person having access to the central tabulator.

• All "change logs" indicating changes, updates, deletions, or security programs added to your voting system dating back to _____ to _____.

Examples of public records requests:

You can see dozens of examples along with many of the responses to the requests here: http://www.bbvforums.org/forums/messages/2197/10455.html

Your Own Additions to the
Public Records and Freedom of Information Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

_____

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 9

Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election

Watch the System Testing

This project requires someone who is comfortable with technical subject matter. You need not be a computer expert, but you should have an eye for detail.

Part of system testing is called "Logic and Accuracy" testing. Other testing involves setting up the system and testing the modems. The tests performed vary by jurisdiction.

Your elections office will test various components of its computerized voting system -- always before, occasionally during, and sometimes after the election. Each testing period is supposed to be publicly noticed. There is wide variation in how cooperative local officials are with public notices, how willing they are to answer questions, and how much you can see. Be prepared for anything.

IMPORTANT: Take a video camera to document the testing. Focus on how the testing is conducted; document any obstructive behavior blocking the you or other members of the public from viewing the testing; get a visual record of whether the machines are positioned so that the public can adequately view the testing, and document which components of the voting system were tested.

Guide for Observation of System Testing

Goals for the observation:

The purpose of your observation will be to create a record of the testing process. During the process you will have the opportunity to observe equipment and ask questions (unless you are obstructed, in which case you should document that as well)

Before the Testing:

• Obtain a list of each test that is done.
• Find out, when, when each testing session takes place.
• Ask about any requirements for attending.

• Your elections office should have written procedures for each type of testing. These are a public record. Request copies of each.

• Many elections officials will provide you with copies of the testing procedures if you e-mail them or call ahead and arrange a time to pick them up. They may charge a reasonable per-page copying fee. If you cannot obtain the procedures that way, do a public records request in writing, which puts your public officials under a legal duty to produce the documents. (See Module 8 for tips on how to do public records requests).

• If you are told written procedures do not exist, or that they are unavailable to the public, document the response by getting it in writing. To turn down a public records request, public officials are confined to specific rules, so find out what regulation they are citing that provides an exception to public records law.

• Find out what brand and model voting system your local jurisdiction uses. If you like, you can review user manuals and operating guides for those systems before attending the test. Many of these can be found in the Document Archives at Black Box Voting: Go to the Voting Machines section. Here is the direct link to that section:
http://www.bbvforums.org/forums/messages/2197/2994.html

What to bring to the testing:

• Bring the following items with you, if possible: A video camera, a small digital camera, a notebook and writing implement.

• If you are told you cannot video the procedures, ask why (keeping the camera running, if possible). In the following states you can secretly audio record; flip the lens cap on and keep rolling, or use a small pocket audio recorder:

Alabama • Alaska • Arizona • Arkansas • Colorado • District Of Columbia • Georgia • Hawaii • Idaho • Indiana • Iowa • Kansas • Kentucky • Louisiana • Maine • Michigan • Minnesota • Mississippi • Missouri • Minnesota • Nebraska • Nevada • New Jersey • New Mexico • New York • North Carolinia • North Dakota • Oklahoma • Oregon • Ohio • Rhode Island • South Carolina • South Dakota • Tennessee • Texas • Utah • Vermont • Virginia • West Virginia • Wisconsin • Wyoming

• Other states require two-party consent to record, and it is up to you whether you want to fight for your rights to record under public meetings law. Generally, you need permission to record audio in the following states:

California • Connecticut • Delaware • Florida • Massachusetts • Maryland • Montana • New Hampshire • Pennsylvania • Washington

Why is it so important to record? Because telling a story is not hard evidence, and you're there to collect evidence. If you cannot record the testing on video, try to take photos with a digital camera.

• The other kind of recording you can do is on a notebook, with contemporaneous notes. To do this, consider yourself a "human audit log" and mark down the time, who was there, and any unusual events.

Here are some of the things to document during testing:

• Find out whether voting machines are placed in a "test mode." Ask if the machines are ever tested while in election mode.

• Ask whether the testers will be using the voting machines in the same way that voters would be on Election Day? On election day, DRE machines (touch-screens and roll-a-wheel systems) are often networked together. Sometimes they are not networked, but daisy-chained together with a power cord. See if you can document differences between testing and election day.

• Will the testing include large numbers of votes? Document how many actual votes are tested on each machine. If an automated script is used, document that as well. (Obviously, testing with an automated script does not replicate casting real votes.)

• Is testing done on every candidate and ballot question choice, or just a few of them? For locations with multiple languages on the ballot, are the foreign language ballots tested as well?

• Will the Logic & Accuracy testing include vote tally checking? (On election day, votes from each machine are later fed into a central tabulator machine. Does the testing replicate this step or omit it?) If it omits testing the central tabulator, find out if/when they will test that system and see if you can observe that as well.

• Will the testing include the use of an independent log comparing the system count with those selections made by the voter? Are testers allowed to choose any votes themselves, or is all testing done with a pre-set selection of votes?

• Ask that the testers make themselves available for questioning prior to and after each testing session (remember to videotape their answers to your questions).

After the testing:

• Consider writing up your observations.

• You may want to write to or meet with elections officials to discuss any problems.

• If your local elections officials are unresponsive, you may want to publish your findings on the Web or send them to local reporters. You can publish information at Black Box Voting in the Forums section, under your state or in the more general "Tech Central" area. You can also publish your findings on the One-on-One Consulting section and request individualized input about what to do next.

Your Own Additions to the
System Testing Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

_____

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 10

Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election Check On Voter Registration Lists

This is a records gathering, tracking, matching and sleuthing job. You and/or your group will ask for many different kinds of public records, track changes and updates in voter registrations, match up some information to check its accuracy, and investigate oddities.

Voter registration lists present one of the thorniest challenges facing elections officials and voters in the United States. Voter registration technology is changing rapidly, as are the computerized components of the voting system that access these lists.

New statewide computerized voter registration databases were mandated by the Help America Vote Act, and the new privatized software sometimes doesn't work very well. Political operatives have manipulated voter registrations in the past – registering people more than once, registering dead people and comatose nursing home residents, and "accidentally" purging voters they don't want.

Guide for Checking on Voter Registration Lists

Goals:

The purpose of checking up on voter registration rolls is to get a general idea, ahead of the election, of how many voters to expect, to identify oddities or manipulation of the voting rolls, and to get a general idea as to whether your local voter rolls are accurate.

Obtain the following kinds of information:

• A copy of your state's "uniform and nondiscriminatory" list maintenance program for removing the names of voters. This is required by the National Voting Registration

Act. A state may legally remove an individual from the voter registration rolls for the following reasons:

- Upon the death of voter;
- Upon written confirmation that the voter has changed his or her address to a location outside the registrar's jurisdiction (in most states outside a county);
- Upon failure to respond to mailings from state or local elections office asking the voter to confirm that he or she has moved to an address outside the registrar's jurisdiction AND the voter fails to vote in two subsequent federal general elections;
- Upon the request of the voter;
- Upon the finding of mental incapacity of the voter as provided by state law; or
- Upon the criminal conviction of the voter under state or federal law.

• Local deadlines: Your jurisdiction will have written requirements for purging voter registrations and entering new registrations. Find out the following deadlines:

- The last date a voter can register before requesting an absentee ballot.
- The last date a voter can register before voting in the next election.
- The deadline when all new voter registrations must be entered into the system.

• Request your jurisdiction's written policies pertaining to voter registration.

• Request information on what vendor and brand of software is being used to track voter registrations in your jurisdiction.

• Get the number of registered voters (total, and by party) from last two elections.

• Ask for a CD for the voter registration database for your county, and ask for the updates periodically. In some jurisdictions, you must be a representative of a political party to obtain this. In that case, make contact with someone who is, explain your project, and collaborate.

• Ask for the "ineligible voter list" (removed from the rolls since 2004 election)

• Ask for the list of "inactive voters" (different from ineligible)

• If possible, request a copy of any and all contracts between database companies doing work related to the voter registration system from both your state and your local jurisdiction.

• Ask for the names of any professional firms doing voter registration drives.

Here are some of the things to look for when checking voter registrations:

• Track the number of registrations up to the deadline for entering them into the system.

• Check to see that voters aren't purged after the deadlines. Purging of names on the basis of change of addresses should not occur any no later than 90 days before a primary or general election.

- Find out about the political affiliations and ownership of firms conducting voter registration drives. It is generally legal for partisan firms to do voter registration drives, but it is not legal for them to double-register voters and toss out registrations for voters not in their preferred party. For more about how to research vested interests, see **Module 6,** Money Trail.

- Spot-check some of the addresses in the database. Following your best hunches, spot-check whether they are residences. Google "maps" has a satellite option that allows you to enter an address and see a satellite photograph of the area, though it is not 100 percent accurate. If you spot addresses that appear to be vacant lots, or industrial areas, drive out and see for yourself.

- Do you find clumps of dates? For example, large numbers of voters who were added on the same dates, or an unusual number of birthdays on the same date, or birthdates that are impossible (for example, in the 1800s).

- Using the "ineligible voter list" (removed from the rolls since 2004 election) choose a small percent and call and ask: "In the 2004 election did you vote by early, absentee, in the precinct or did something come up that prevented you from voting that day?" If they did vote, they should not be on the ineligible list.

- "Caging" tactics: See if you notice evidence of a large number of purges in a specific demographic group or area. Some political parties undertake the expense of sending registered letters out, then urge the removal of any voter who did not respond to their registered letter. This has been documented in areas like military bases, where the citizens losing their right to vote are deployed oversees.

On Election Day:

- Does the voting turnout make sense, given what you know about past trends and the number of current registered voters?

- Compare the number of registered voters on the results sheets on Election Night with the number of registered voters reported as of the last deadline for the voter registration list prior to the election.

- Are there too few or too many votes overall? For a particular party? For example, in spring 2004, for example, Prairie County Arkansas had a 120 percent turnout for a primary election where the statewide average was only about 25 percent.

Your Own Additions to the
Voter Registration Check~up Module

You can share your ideas by sending to

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 11

Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election
Become a Poll Worker or Elections Judge

Here's a way to monitor elections from the inside. Every elections official needs poll workers and citizens to act as elections judges. Sign up as soon as possible if you plan to work in an election.

Citizens who work in elections will be expected to participate in one or two training sessions. You must be able to follow the prescribed procedures. Poll workers and election judges should have good attention to detail and enough stamina to work a 12-hour day.

Guide for Becoming a Poll Worker or Elections Judge

Goals:

Assess overall compliance from the inside focusing on issues found in **Module 12** (Monitor the Voting) and **Module 14** (Chain of Custody). Your first duty is to make sure the election goes smoothly and to comply with the requirements in your jurisdiction. You will be in an ideal position to gather evidence on voting machine malfunctions or other breakdowns in the system.

How do I sign up? It's easy: Contact your local elections office.

Before the election:

• Familiarize yourself with the issues: Read over the modules in the Citizen's Tool Kit.

• Attend a training session – approximately two hours in length. In some jurisdictions there is more than one training session.

• At the training session, take notes on each piece of equipment you will be using. For example, nowadays many jurisdictions are using hand-held devices which interact with the voter registration database to authenticate voters. Write down the brand name and the manufacturer of each such device.

• Ask questions about chain of custody for each piece of apparatus and for portable devices like voter card encoders, electronic pollbooks, cartridges, memory cards and the like. Report "sleepovers" (equipment sent home with you or other workers) and take careful note of the instructions for handling the electronic ballot boxes (also called memory cards, PEBs, cartridges).

• Make notes of any trucking firms, transportation companies or third-party vendors who will be bringing you equipment or taking it away.

• Ask and make note of the specific procedures for any repairs or troubleshooting on the machines or the peripheral devices on Election Day.

On Election Day:

• Report to work at the assigned time on Election Day and serve until all duties are completed after the closing of the polls.

• In general, duties include:

- Set up the voting booths
- Put up election signs
- Verify voter eligibility
- Process voters
- Issue ballots to voters
- Assist voters according to the procedures
- Operate the voting system and peripherals according to the procedures
- Other miscellaneous clerical duties
- Dismantle voting booths and pack up all supplies after the polls close
- Designated elections workers will pick up election supplies at the Board of Elections and return election materials to the proper location as designated by the Board.

• For any voting device that has problems: Write down the time of day and the serial number. Make a copy of this information for yourself and also submit a copy to the elections office so it will become a public record.

• Note the name of any "rovers" or technicians who visit during the day. Whether the procedures dictate this or not, request to see the identification of any technicians or rovers, even if they are just asking questions rather than servicing the equipment. (In 2004, fake technicians showed up in one Washington state jurisdiction; poll workers obtained the license plate numbers and phone numbers of each and submitted it to the elections office, where the information was retrieved by Black Box Voting.

Your Own Additions to the
Poll Worker / Elections Judge Module

You can share your ideas by sending to

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 12

Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election

Monitor the Voting

Look at both **Module 12** (Monitor the Voting) and **Module 13** (Monitor the Counting) and choose one or the other. Voting happens for a 12-hour period during the day; Counting happens from the time the polls close until around midnight, and also before and after the election (absentee and provisional votes).

Guide for Watching the Voting

Goals: Document what goes on inside and outside the polling place.

Before the election

• Generally you cannot stay in the polling place to watch unless you have "poll watcher" status. To apply for permission, check the requirements of your local jurisdiction.

• Many locations require you to have a party affiliation, which is not difficult to obtain if you are a member of a political party. If this is the case, contact your local political party to obtain poll watcher credentials.

• Some jurisdictions may not require a party affiliation, but will require you to register in advance to become a poll watcher.

• If you cannot become a poll watcher, you can still observe everything that takes place inside your polling place while you are voting on Election Day.

What to Watch For During the Voting

• Focus on gathering evidence, not telling stories. What you observe in the polling place may become evidence in an elections contest, and it may receive coverage in the media, so gather the kind of evidence that is most useful to journalists and attorneys:
- Video
- Audio
- Photographs
- Names and phone numbers of witnesses
- Voting machine serial number, time of day, names of poll workers present

What to bring with you to the polling place

• See this article: http://www.bbvforums.org/forums/messages/73/27587.html
  for an easy guide to gadgets like audio recorders and videocams.

• You may face restrictions as to what visual images you are allowed to record. This varies from place to place. If possible, bring a small video or digital camera. Many digital cameras can also take Web-quality video.

• Bring a notebook and a writing implement.
• Bring a small audio recorder.
• In the following states you can audio record without asking permission:

Alabama • Alaska • Arizona • Arkansas • Colorado • District Of Columbia • Georgia • Hawaii • Idaho • Indiana • Iowa • Kansas • Kentucky • Louisiana • Maine • Michigan • Minnesota • Mississippi • Missouri • Minnesota • Nebraska • Nevada • New Jersey • New Mexico • New York • North Carolinia • North Dakota • Oklahoma • Oregon • Ohio • Rhode Island • South Carolina • South Dakota • Tennessee • Texas • Utah • Vermont • Virginia • West Virginia • Wisconsin • Wyoming

• Other states require two-party consent to record, and it is up to you whether you want to fight for your rights to record under public meetings law. Generally, you need permission to record audio in the following states:

California • Connecticut • Delaware • Florida • Massachusetts • Maryland • Montana • New Hampshire • Pennsylvania • Washington

Questions to ask when observing:

Even if you are technically savvy, keep your questions simple and innocent and you'll elicit more information. For example:

  - "What's that?"
  - "Who's that guy?"
  - "How come he's..."
  - "What's he doing?"
  - "What did he just put in the machine?"
  - "Where's he taking that?"
  - "Where do those cables go?"
  - "Where are the [Diebold/ES&S] guys?"

What to document inside the polling place

• Names of poll workers, election judges and other poll watchers

• "Zero report" doesn't work or isn't Zero when machines are turned on at beginning of day. Note voting machine serial number and write down the anomaly on your notepad.

• Voting machine problems: Most voting machines nowadays are optical scan machines (which use paper ballots) and DRE machines (touch-screen or roll-a-dial computers).

• Lack of equipment or supplies to vote -- For example, some of the voting machines are not working, there aren't enough ballots, or some other item (like a card encoder or check-in computer) is not working

• Inappropriate challenges of voters

• Ethnically inappropriate remarks

Here's what to look for with DRE machines:

- Your vote shows up on the wrong choice
- You can't see the paper record of your vote (some states don't have one, but in states with a DRE voter verified paper trail, it may be hidden under a closed door or other obstruction)
- Confusing machine: Hard to figure out how to use it
- A candidate or question is missing from the screen
- The screen automatically fills in votes the voter doesn't want
- The screen fails to report that vote has been accepted. Usually it will say something like "vote cast" -- or the message can be more confusing, like "choices printed."
- Voting machines aren't running
- Error messages appear on the screen
- Administrative or technician screen appears instead of the ballot choices
- Voting machine crashes or freezes
- Voting machine screen is dim, has lines through it, colors are distorted or is otherwise hard to read.
- Voter card doesn't work
- (For accessible machines) The accessibility function aren't working (headphones, large text, keypads, sip n puff)
- Repairman is working on one of the voting machines

Here's what to look for with optical scan machines:

- Repairman is working on one of the voting machines
- Ballots are rejected, jam or ballot indicator doesn't advance after taking a ballot
- Machine is replaced
- Memory card is replaced on election day (before, during or after voting)

• Mark the time and get serial number; get video, audio or photographs if possible. Write a brief report and submit it so it will become a public record.

• Write down (or photograph with your cell phone) anything that looks "weird".

• **Other problems to document:**

   - Modems can't connect
   - Cards/cartridges won't upload
   - Results don't match each other
   - Machine does not print precinct results;
   - Voting machines, ballot boxes or memory/cartridges sent to elections headquarters without proper chain of custody

What to document outside the polling place

Access to the polls

• Polling place switching or closure

• People who the right location, but no signs or indicators for where to vote

• Long lines

• Polling place but it isn't open for business on time

• If poll opening is significantly delayed, call the media. If it is delayed more than an hour, report it to someone who has access to lawyers (such as a candidate or legislative representative). Briefing papers may need to reach a judge by 11 a.m. or noon in order to extend the hours for that polling place.

• If poll opening is delayed due to voting machine problems, when you get inside to vote, ask questions of the poll workers and record their answers to document the problem.

• Ask questions and make sure your audio recorder is running to capture the answers.

• Here are things to jot down in your notebook if you witness a problem:

   - Precinct location
   - Names of poll workers
   - Name of your county/township elections chief
   - Names and contact info for any other citizens who witnessed the disenfranchisement

• Police checkpoints or surveillance of polling places

• Make sure your video recorder captures these situations

• Get photos, note the location, names of witnesses, names of perpetrators

Your Own Additions:
Monitor the Voting Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org
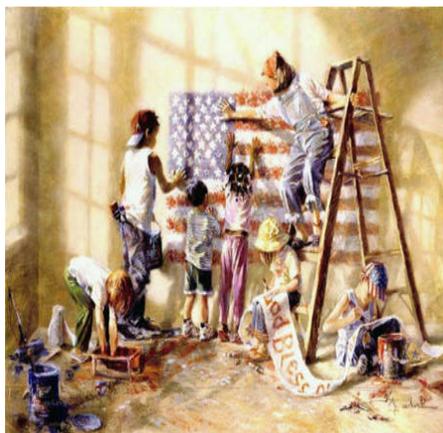
What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 13

Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election

Monitor the Counting

Watching the *counting* of the vote may be even more important than watching the voting. Widely attributed to Stalin, the saying goes: "Those who cast the votes decide nothing; Those who count the votes decide everything."

In many jurisdictions, vote-counting begins before the election with absentee counting (though we are promised that no one looks at the results from this early counting).

The dramatic action happens on Election Night, beginning when the polls close and continuing until the wee hours of the night. After the election, counting of absentee ballots and provisional ballots continues.

Guide for Watching the Count

Goals:

Become a "human audit log" and document who is there, what you see happening, problems, crashes, huddles, and carrying things from here to there. Here's where you'll see that citizens cannot actually authenticate the accuracy of vote counting at all. Nevertheless, you can gather a lot of information.

It is not unusual for serious problems occur during the counting of the votes.

What to bring with you:

• Binoculars (for viewing detail on computer screens)
• Video camera / audio recorder / digital camera
• Notebook and writing implement
• Phone numbers for local news reporters

• Cell phone
• Laptop
• Timekeeping device

What to Look For:

• Videotape, photograph, or write down a detailed description of the machines and peripherals.

• Avoid the conversation trap. You are there to document, not socialize.

• Don't go home early. The most interesting problems happen from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.

• If they haven't finished uploading the votes by midnight, call a friend and settle in for the wee hours. This is when things get interesting.

• Keep a written audit log. Jot down the time every five minutes and note events. For significant events, write down the exact time. If you see any significant events, call them in to reporters.

• Can you see the computer screens? Can you see everything in the counting room?

• Document the names and positions of each person who enters the counting room.

• If you see anyone working for a vendor touch the machine, document it.

• Can you observe handling and processing of memory cards or cartridges.

• Collect each interim results report and keep it, especially if they come around and try to collect them or ask for them back, and especially if they say there is an error on it.

• Document chain of custody when they take things from one place to another

• Note the time and circumstances when you see conferences or huddles. (Note: Some elections offices use a "wrangler" who will attempt to distract observers during time periods when there are significant problems).

• Document what the official party observers do. Are they making an audit log, or are they chatting, sleeping, reading books, or wandering around. Do they seem to know what events are significant, or do they only wake up when results are printed?

• Check to see if results for any candidate go down when more votes come in

Other problems:

• Memory cards won't upload

• Computer crashes

• They turn off the machine or blank the screen so you can't see what's on it (for example, hiding error messages)

• Technicians working on voting system during the count

• Submit a written request for the audit logs and system event logs for the evening. Compare the computer logs with your own "human audit log."

Questions to ask when observing:

• Even if you are technically savvy, keep your questions simple and innocent and you'll elicit more information. For example:

  - "What's that?"
  - "Who's that guy?"
  - "How come he's..."
  - "What's he doing?"
  - "What did he just put in the machine?"
  - "Where's he taking that?"
  - "Where do those cables go?"
  - "Where are the [Diebold/ES&S] guys?"

Document any obstructive behavior

• You are not allowed to see the computer screens

• You cannot see who is in the counting room

• Some of the processing and tabulation takes place in rooms you cannot see

• They won't tell you where any other networked machines are or, they won't let you observe the area where other networked machines are

• You cannot see who is handling memory cards (or cartridges, or disks)

• They won't tell you the names (and/or who employs) the people who are tabulating and processing votes;

• You cannot see all of the computers processing your vote

• You are not allowed to have the all of the results reports (They usually run "interim" reports every 30 minutes)

• You are not allowed to see the polling place results tapes at the precinct (end of day precinct results)

• You are not allowed to watch the processing of the absentee ballots

Your Own Additions to the
Monitor the Counting Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 14

Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election Watch the Chain of Custody

If you don't know who is handling election machinery and data, there is absolutely no way you can know whether your election has been either fair or accurate.

Guide for Watching Chain of Custody

Goals: See if you can map out where each of the key parts of the voting system are during the life cycle of the election. Identify who has access at each point and what records are kept.

Chain of custody applies to:
- Ballots
- Voting machines
- Memory cards
- Voting system peripherals, like voter cards and voter authentication devices
- Election data (the path of the votes from the time they are cast until they are counted and printed)

Before the election: Ask questions and do public records requests. Here are some good things to find out:

• Where is each key element of the election manufactured?

• Who had custody when transporting it to your jurisdiction?

• Who had access before it was stored?

• Where was it stored and who had access to its storage and how was this recorded?

• Who pulled it out of storage, and when, and was the public allowed to watch and document?

• What accounting is there for purchases of ballots, memory cards, voting system peripherals, voting machines and computers?

• What contractors have had access to parts of the system?

• Forget about who has permission to access, *who has keys*? How are keys and access logged? Are there video cameras?

• What company prints the ballots? Are there overages? Are the extra ballots at the printing house ever accounted for? Who has access to them?

• Who mails the absentee ballots?

• When absentee ballots are mailed back in, does the U.S. Post Office keep a count of those received? Where is the paperwork on that?

• Where do the mailed-in absentee ballots go after the post office? Directly to the elections office or to a middleman?

• What is the chain of custody at each stage of absentee ballot processing?

• Is any voting equipment (or supplies) sent home for sleepovers with poll workers?

• What transportation companies are in charge of delivering items to the polling place? From the polling place?

Special chain of custody events to watch:

• Preparing voting machines for election and/or testing: Go to the warehouse and watch as they pull them off the shelves and put memory cards into them. Watch what's going on with the memory cards/cartridges and the machines.

• Who are the people who are handling the machines and cards? Permanent employees? Temps? Have they been background-checked?

During the election:

• Are any memory cards or voting machines swapped during the election?
• Did technicians work on voting machines during the election?

After the polls close

• Are the machine precinct counts posted at the polling place before putting them into the central counting machine?

• On Election night, observe the handling of the ballots boxes (memory cards / cartridges). Could they be swapped? Watch to see if they are ever handled by political party operatives or vendors.

• In many jurisdictions, election supplies and ballot boxes (memory cards / cartridges) are taken to a drop-off point, called by various names. You will find that almost no one watches what happens at the drop-off centers. Get a list of the drop-off sites and go observe on election night. Can you track chain of custody for memory cards, supplies, machines, peripherals? (Here is a videotape taken at a drop-off point. Could you spot a memory card swap here? http://www.bbvdocs.org/videos/inthedark.mpg)

• Yellow cabs, political observers or truck drivers transporting ballot boxes (memory cards / cartridges) from the polling place to the elections division on election night

• Are observers allowed to see all of the rooms where ballot box (memory card, cartridge) processing is taking place?

• Are observers allowed to watch check-in of cartridges; memory cards?

• Did technicians work on the central tabulator during the vote count?

• Were there any problems with modems or data transmission on election night?

During the week after the election:

• Where are the ballots kept?

• Who has access to the ballot vault, at what hours, and how is access logged or recorded?

• During recounts, who has access to programming the machines for recount?

• Who has access to ballots?

Your Own Additions to the
Chain of Custody Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 15

Hard Core Evidence: Adopt Part of an Election Audit for Accuracy

When we first set out to audit elections, we sent public records requests all over the United States. What we learned is that the records generally do not authenticate the count. But don't take our word for it – Try it yourself.

Guide for Auditing Elections

Goals: See how far you can get before you hit a brick wall. The goal is to match up records to make sure all votes can be accounted for and validated.

Basic audit records:

• Voter registration rolls (show who is allowed to vote)

> (Note: It's important to obtain and preserve the voter registration list that is *in effect on the day of the election*, since this evidence is important but often not archived by officials, who say their database is "live" and that they don't know what the list was on election day because it's been changed.)

• Zero reports (represent that no votes were in the machine before the polls opened, though these can be hacked, as demonstrated by the Black Box Voting Hursti study of May 26, 2005: http://www.blackboxvoting.org/BBVreport.pdf) These should be date and time-stamped, should NOT be detached from their matching results tape (see below) and should contain poll worker signatures.

• Polling location list (has locations of each precinct and polling place. Some polling places have more than one precinct.)

• Voting machine assignment sheets (show which serial numbered machine is assigned to which precinct)

• Poll books (show who came to the polls to vote). Number in the poll book should not exceed number of registered voters and should come very close to matching number of votes actually cast.

• Polling place results tapes (show how many votes were actually cast and what the results were on each machine). These results tapes should be date and time-stamped and should contain poll worker signatures.

• Election night interim results sheets (show combined results from each precinct and also the absentee results so far). The first election night report will show pre-counted absentee votes. Each subsequent report will show accumulated results up to that point. Each interim report should be date and time-stamped.

• Post-election interim reports (show combined results as more and more absentee votes and provisionals are counted)

• Precinct ID – Precinct location chart (if precincts go by number, this should identify the physical location of each polling place along with the number)

• Early vote accounting: There should be early voting poll books showing who showed up to vote early; there should also be an early voting machine results report, which will tell how many early votes were actually cast (should come very close to matching early voting poll books); and there should be an accounting for early votes on the Election Night accumulated results.

• Absentee votes requested (shows how many absentee votes were requested)

• Absentee votes received (shows how many absentee votes were mailed back and logged in. This number should not exceed the number requested)

• Voting machine logs: Each voting machine, and the central tabulator, have internal logs that are supposed to record each event. These logs are a public record. You can request them and examine them. These logs will show you how many copies of the electronic ballot box were created (memory cards / cartridges), when results reports were printed, date and time stamps for the Logic & Accuracy tests, date and time stamps for each report that was run, date and time stamps for opening the election, when results were transmitted into the central tabulator, and much more. You can find many "User's Guides" here:
http://www.bbvforums.org/forums/messages/2197/2994.html

• Find out what manufacturer and kind of voting machines are used in your jurisdiction, and check the appropriate user's guide for the names of the voting machine logs to request.

• Central tabulation machines, and the Diebold touch-screens, run on Windows, and there are also Windows system logs. There are three: The Windows program log, the Windows event log, and the Windows security log. You can request these as well. These logs often provide information about networking and remote access as well as system errors and events.

What kinds of things to look for when you audit:

• Things don't add up; for example, there are more votes than registered voters, or only half as many votes as people signed into the poll books

• Votes that show up in precincts with no registered voters

• Precincts results that don't match central tabulator data

• Absentee votes co-mingled with polling place votes so you can't see which are which

• Precincts are missing

• Records are missing or incomplete

• Chain of custody or authenticity of records cannot be established. (For example, in Palm Beach County in 2004, dozens of machines had votes that were time and date-stamped weeks or even years before the election, sometimes in the middle of the night; in Volusia County Florida, polling place results tapes were provided that were printed 13 days after the election and missing signatures. In King County Washington, three hours were found to have been deleted from the central tabulator audit long during prime vote-counting time on election night.)

• Official refusals to let you see the records.

• Statistically bizarre numbers. For example, in one Iowa county during the 2004 election, voting turnout was said to be 100 percent; in Miami County, Ohio during the same election, voter turnout was an improbably 98.55 percent.

• Look for extraordinary percentages of overvotes or undervotes, especially when concentrated among a single demographic group. (For example, in Montgomery County Ohio during the 2004 election, 6,000 voters stood in line to vote, but 25 percent of their ballots showed no vote for president.)

(Note that "down-ballot" races will usually have significantly fewer votes than the presidential race. Some people do not vote for lower profile races).

• In recounts and manual spot-checks, look for mismatches and ballots that are clumped together, all voting for the same candidate.

Your Own Additions to the

Audit for Accuracy Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 16

Legal Actions

Some say litigation is the lowest form of discourse. Whether or not you agree with that statement, it certainly is the *slowest* form of discourse. But sometimes it is the only recourse.

<p style="text-align:center"><strong style="color:red">Guide to Citizen Litigation</p>

Goals:

Litigation employs one of the three governmental checks and balances: The courts. (The other two are the executive branch – governors and president, and the legislative branch). Like "rock, paper, scissors," one can trump another. When a public official doesn't do what you want, theoretically litigation is the way a citizen can trump the public official.

Go in with your eyes open

Before taking legal action, remember that the legal process is most often slow and tedious and can be costly.

• In the end, many cases are dismissed before you get a chance to present evidence

• If your case is deemed to be frivolous, you can be asked to pay the costs, which can be substantial.

• There is no such thing as a slam dunk case. If your opponents have more money than you do, you might be the one that gets slammed even if you're in the right.

• This information is not meant to discourage you, but rather to give you a realistic understanding of how the judicial system works.

Types of litigation that may apply to elections:

• Writ of mandamus: To force an official to comply with a law

• Injunction: A preliminary order to prevent something from being done if you can show evidence that it is likely to cause harm

• Civil rights: A lawsuit based on violations of your rights

• Constitutional: A lawsuit based on violations of the state or federal constitution

• Elections contest: A lawsuit by a candidate or, in some jurisdictions, a citizen's group contesting results or procedures in an election.

• *Qui Tam* (false claims): A lawsuit filed by a whistleblower when taxpayer funds are expended on goods or services based on false claims by the vendor

• *Pro Se*: A lawsuit brought by a citizen on their own behalf, without a lawyer

• Unfair business practices: A lawsuit against a vendor based on unfair practices, which can include false advertising

• RICO suit: A lawsuit alleging a pattern of fraudulent conduct, racketeering

• Antitrust: A lawsuit alleging collusion between vendors to gain inappropriate control over the market

• Stockholders lawsuit: A lawsuit by stockholders of a corporation alleging that the corporation misled, withheld information, and damaged them economically

• Class action: A lawsuit by a class of injured parties against the entity that damaged them.

• These are just a few of the kinds of cases that can apply to elections and voting system manufacturers. All of the above kinds of cases, except perhaps the class action suit, have been tried in recent efforts to clean up elections with varying success.

Obstacles to successful lawsuits:

• The single biggest obstacle to citizen lawsuits to clean up elections is the issue of "standing." In order to bring a case, you must be deemed to have a right to sue.

• Surviving the "standing" test is surprisingly difficult for citizens. When it gets to the courtroom, voters have very few rights.

• Surviving dismissal may prove to be your most difficult challenge.

• Another challenge is the assignment of the judge. No matter how good your case, if you draw an unfriendly judge you may be dismayed at the result.

Strategic use of litigation:

• The elections industry shares some traits with the tobacco industry. Fighting an elections-related lawsuit can involve confrontation with powerful vested interests. One of the strategies that worked with tobacco litigation was having several different kinds of small lawsuits in different venues, and cooperating to share items obtained in discovery and collaborate and expand on successful tactics.

• Another strategic use of litigation is the discovery process itself. If the litigant can survive dismissal, the action moves to discovery. This process compels information to be provided, of great value for a situation where the public interest is held hostage to nondisclosed software, personnel, and financial dealings.

• An additional advantage to litigation is that it helps the media to cover the issue. There are always two sides to litigation, and there is always evidence of the argument (the filing papers). That makes the story "safe." Because controversy sells, the press has a good probability of covering the issue through coverage of lawsuits.

Choosing a lawyer:

• Pro bono (free) lawyers are hard to come by. Even if you do find one, you have no guarantee they are good lawyers, and when it comes to litigation, the best lawyers with the most financial resources are far more likely to prevail than weak or poorly funded attorneys who are "right."

• Look for attorneys with a practice that includes the type of case you want to file.

• If you are a candidate, have an attorney in the wings *before* the election, because you have only days to file a contest after the election.

• One of the first things a law firm must do is a "conflicts check" to make sure they haven't been representing any entity that could have a conflict of interest with you. If you plan to embark on litigation against a government agency or a large company, allow ample time for this. Big government and big companies tend to do business with lots of law firms, and it can take more time than you expect to go from one law firm to the next as they discover they can't represent you due to conflicts.

• You'll need an attorney who knows the local lay of the land. Besides the issue of being licensed to practice in your jurisdiction, out of town attorneys may not have a feel for the personalities of the judges and local customs.

The equalizer

The courts are one of the few remedies available to put ordinary citizens on an equal playing field. Going to court can give you the ultimate David and Goliath moment.

Unfortunately, the playing field may be "equal" but it is also tilted. If you choose to litigate, prepare to run uphill against an opponent who has deeper pockets and more players than you do.

Your Own Additions to the
Legal Actions Module

You can share your ideas by sending to

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

Module 17

Count the Votes Yourself

Voting machines aren't secure, often do not count accurately, and fail to allow ordinary citizens to oversee or authenticate the election. Sometimes use of voting machines results in a complete fiasco. Can We, the People, offer any other solutions?

Perhaps. We were never asked if we wanted to abandon hand counted paper ballots. There has been no public dialog, no town meetings, no vote on this. American citizens have not been privy to any real problem-solving attempts to see if hand counting is feasible in modern election environments. We've simply been told that wiser minds have looked at it and others have decided it is no longer possible. This is a propaganda technique known as "Foregone Conclusion."

Officials from the state of New Hampshire have been willing to take a second look at hand-counted paper ballots, and with your leadership and action, other areas might also want to take a new look at this solution. Thanks to efforts by Democracy for New Hampshire and others, new solutions are being offered that may bring the idea of hand counted paper ballots back in style.

Let's develop Plan B: Hand Counted Paper Ballots

Goals:

Help citizens and local officials prepare for the catastrophic failure of computerized voting. If you doubt that this can happen, take a look at the May 2006 election in Cuyahoga County Ohio, where not a single one of the 17,000 absentee ballots could be read by voting machines. Or Allamakee County Iowa in November 2000, where 300 ballots were fed into the machine and four million came out.

Plan B, hand counts, became a reality in Pottawattamie County when the elections chief noticed something wrong and found out, after counting by hand, that the machines gave a different result and a different winner. When hurricanes destroyed voting equipment, elections officials – feeling they had no other option – decided they might have to cancel or postpone elections.

The goal of this module is to restore the reputation of hand counted paper ballots as a viable form of running an election.

Obstacles to hand counted paper ballots

Some countries, like Canada, quickly hand count the ballots for a whole nation. Why are they able to do it but not the U.S.?

• Many ballot questions – The hand counted ballot in Canada doesn't have lots of races and issues – just one or two. If it takes four hours for a nation to count just three ballot questions, will it then take 12 x 4 hours to count 36 ballot questions? If the math works like this, no one can blame elections officials for avoiding 48-hour marathon vote counts.

• Many ballot styles – Some jurisdictions have hundreds of different ballots. Because of overlapping boundaries for water districts, school districts, and odd-shaped congressional districts, your ballot may differ from your neighbor's, even if you live just down the street. Hand counters would need a way to separate out all the different ballot styles to count them efficiently.

• Not enough ballot counters – Elections officials have trouble getting enough poll workers for computerized voting, which is less people-intensive than hand counting. Poll workers already put in a long day, and shouldn't be expected to hang around for several more hours to count ballots. This means a separate team of counters needs to be brought in, which requires even more people.

• Project management skills – Managing an election has already become almost a heroic event, especially in large, densely populated jurisdictions with complex boundary lines. Adding recruiting, training and management of ballot counters presents challenges that are overwhelming to many elections officials.

• Disabled voters – The Help America Vote Act was designed to allow disabled voters to vote independently and privately. Does going back to hand counts roll back the rights of disabled citizens?

• Fraud – Hand counted paper ballots have been a target for fraud, like the "short pencil" technique where a piece of lead is hidden under the fingernail of the counters, used to double-mark (and invalidate) ballots, and/or to vote for undervoted races.

• The "elections industry" and its support industries – Entire lines of business have sprung up surrounding the voting machine industry. It isn't just voting machine vendors we're talking about, though they've been hunting like dogs in a pack to bring down some $4 billion in projected revenues for selling their machines to American

elections officials. And that's just the U.S. market. They want to dominate international markets as well.

- Other lines of business include testing and certification, election "auditing", election consulting businesses, printing businesses, database management and data mining operations, "voter education" projects to teach people to use the new machines, large grants to scientists to study computerized voting, and grants to public interest group to watchdog and lobby for improvements. If we go back to hand counted paper ballots, a lot of people who have carved out a niche for themselves become irrelevant and lose revenue.

These obstacles are real. Unfortunately, a solution was forced on the American public to accept computerized voting solutions, with millions spent on studies and recommendations but almost no input from the public. Had an equivalent amount of money and effort been spent on seeking solutions while keeping low-tech voting, might there be more options?

We think so. Thanks to the efforts of ordinary citizens and some unusually independent-thinking public officials in New Hampshire, many of the obstacles now have solutions. What remains is to educate others about this and practice using the system, refining it as needed.

MANUAL COUNTING OF PAPER BALLOTS

Relying on voting machines carries inherent risk to the republic, for the following reasons:

- They are insecure, and cannot really be made secure, due to their complexity and therefore, the number of attack and failure points that exist.

- Shoddy products and unreliable have passed certification and have been purchased, and are not de-certified or recalled even when they are found to be defective

- Neither poll workers nor voters can be adequately "trained" to use them on short notice. In addition, new systems are being put into large-scale deployment without first achieving bug-free pilot testing in smaller locations, and elections are a mission-critical endeavor that is almost impossible to redo or repeat.

- They are not cost-effective and are economically unfeasible due to the inherent life-cycle issues of software products; and

- They can not ever be truly "certified" or properly tested.

Soon to be released from the New Hampshire Secretary of State's office is the *New Hampshire Election Procedure Manual*.

The manual will define the preferred method of hand counting used by the Secretary of State's office for all manual recounts, which are large scale operations requiring maximum efficiency. The ballots receive multiple redundant reviews, are quick, efficient, and trusted.

The report includes the following descriptions of hand counting methodologies used in New Hampshire elections (*i.e.,* the tally method, is seen in the Wilton and Lyndeborough videos, and the sort/stack method in the State Recount video – (The "We're Counting the Votes Kit ("Kit") and Videos can be found here: http://www.democracyfornewhampshire.com/)

Counting methodologies

One of the methodologies described in the New Hampshire Election Procedure Manual is the "Ballot by Ballot Tally Method." This method is more time consuming than the second method, but is traditionally used by many hand counters.

More time consuming, creates more errors:

• One member of a two-person team reads the ballot, declaring those legal votes apparent from the voter's marks.

• The second team member places a mark on his/her tally sheet for the candidate receiving a vote.

• This method involves the possibility of a mistake because the ballot is examined only once or a mistake because only one person is doing the tallying.

• Since this method commonly involves reading through the entire ballot, the ballot reader's eye and brain are not focused on looking for a single type of data, and thus the reader must expend mental effort to distinguish among the contests in which choices are made.

Faster, fewer errors:

The second method described in the manual is the "Ballot Pile Method." This is the method used by the New Hampshire Secretary of State for all of its manual recounts.

• Use of ballot sorting and piles – speeds counting and reduces errors.

• One member of a two-person team picks up the ballots and places them in piles corresponding to each choice in a particular race.

• The other team member observes each ballot as it is placed in a pile.

• After the sorting process is complete, one team member counts each pile in stacks of 25 and then the other team member recounts each stack. This process enables at least two persons to simultaneously examine each ballot at least once, and to keep things simple by identifying choices in a single race at a time. If one person makes a mistake, the other can catch it.

• This method is often modified so that each ballot is rechecked during the stack-counting process. Hence, each ballot can be seen two times by each member of the team, for a total of up to four views of each mark on a ballot in each race.

• The ballot sorting and pile method, which involves as many examinations of the same ballot as there are contests, is noticeably faster than the ballot reading and tally mark approach.

According to Voting Rights advocate, Catherine Ansbro of Ireland, who played a role in stopping the use of electronic voting machines in that country and the continued use of hand counts instead: "The sort and pile method, with double-checked counting and public observation throughout, is what is used in Ireland. It is fast and accurate."

Other suggested approaches to overcoming obstacles:

• Multiple ballot questions: Limit precinct size to around 1,000 voters. Using the sort and pile method, it takes approximately one second for each ballot per race/ballot question. For 1,000 ballots, this works out to 60 per minute, or 600 races sorted in 10 minutes. Counting an entire precinct with 1,000 ballots can be done in less than 20 minutes. To count 10 races will take approximately three hours; Four counting teams can count 40 races in three hours.

• Many ballot styles – Some jurisdictions have hundreds of different ballots. Count at the precinct. Each precinct has only a small number of ballots styles (often only one). Use the sort and pile method to first separate ballot styles, then count them. For precincts with 1,000 voters, this will add 20 minute in counting time for ballot style sort.

• Not enough ballot counters – If we can check a box to volunteer as organ donors when we apply for a driver's license, we can check a box to volunteer to hand count when we register to vote. Elections officials will then have a sufficient pool of counters, who need not be paid. Counters will be called for duty, much like jury duty. Also like jury duty, there will be some questionnaires and preliminary screening activities needed to make sure the counters can follow instructions and are able to count and sort accurately.

• Project management skills – Software and training programs for project managers have improved greatly over the past few years. Make use of the same kinds of event management technologies that are used to manage massive undertakings like the Olympic Games. Don't re-invent the wheel, borrow tools from others who have to do the same kind of deadline-driven, mission critical project management.

• Disabled voters – Make use of tools like Vote-Pad and/or provide DREs with verified paper trails for the disabled. The small number of paper trails can be hand counted quickly.

• Fraud – The number of attack points available for hand counted paper ballots at the precinct is quite small. Develop attack trees and mitigations like requiring a large mark for a vote choice, making it more obvious if a poll worker is marking it.

• The "elections industry" and its support industries – Consider the removal of the vast sums of money going into these businesses to be government cost-saving and use this cost saving to pay a penny or two on the national debt.

What citizens can do RIGHT NOW:

• Sign up for the National Hand Counted Paper Ballots Registry:

http://www.bbvforums.org/cgi-bin/forums/board-profile.cgi?action=register

• Identify locations that may be willing to try the hand count procedures, starting with small population jurisdictions. Pilot test on a smaller scale, then try on progressively larger population bases.

• Volunteer for recounts that involve hand counting. Document the procedures on video, identify obstacles, and share information with others.

• Pay for a recount and hand count. Videotape it and make the case using real ballots in a real election.

Your Own Additions to the
Count the Votes Yourself Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 18

Candidates:

How to Protect Your Election

Not all votes are counted accurately, and not all elections are fair. Sometimes erroneous results are not even close to the real results. And not all elections end on Election Night.

Candidate Al Williams saw 90 votes wander off his tally between election night and the following day, though no new counting had been done. At the same time, his opponent, Tom Tangen, gained 32 votes. At one point several hundred ballots added to returns didn't result in any increase in the number of votes. But elsewhere, the number of votes added exceeded the number of additional ballots counted. A candidate achieved an amazing surge in his absentee percentage for no apparent reason. The miscounts were sporadic and thus hard to spot, but the errors disproportionately favored just one party. A bad movie script? New math?

No, these kinds of incidents are not uncommon. Welcome to computerized voting.

Guide for Candidates and Campaigners

Goals:

If you are a candidate or you are campaigning for a political issue, learn how to take defense measures. *Even if you lose by a wide margin, do not concede until the canvass is completed*. If a computer can count 4 million votes when only 300 were fed in, does it really matter if your opponent won by a 30 percent margin? Take the time to check things out before you concede. You owe it to those who voted for you and to those who campaigned on your behalf.

Miscounts are not uncommon

• In a Salt Lake City election, 1,413 votes never showed up in the total. A programming error caused the ballots not to count, though they had been run through like all the others. When the 1,413 missing votes were counted, they reversed the election.

• "It was like being queen for a day — but only for 12 hours," said Richard Miholic, a losing candidate for alderman who was told that he had won a Lake County, Illinois, primary election. He was among 15 people in four races affected by voting machines that miscounted.

• An Orange County, California, election computer made a 100 percent error during a school bond referendum. The Registrar of Voters Office initially announced that the bond issue had lost by a wide margin; in fact, it was supported by a majority of the ballots cast. The error was attributed to a programmer's reversing the "yes" and "no" answers in the software used to count the votes.

• A software programming error gave the election to the wrong candidate in Onondaga County, New York. Bob Faulkner, a political newcomer, went to bed on election night confident he had helped complete a Republican sweep of three open council seats. But after staffers rechecked the totals, Faulkner had lost to incumbent Elaine Lytel. Hours later, election officials discovered that a software programming error had given too many absentee ballot votes to Lytel. Faulkner took the lead.

• Akron, Ohio officials announced that Ed Repp had won the election. No, cancel that, a programming error was discovered and Repp actually lost. Another error in the same election resulted in incorrect totals for the Portage County Board election. Then it turned out that the bond referendum results were wrong too.

• In a Tennessee governor's race, a programming error in Shelby County began crediting votes to the wrong candidates. Computer cartridges containing 295 individual precincts were taken to a central location because the scanner couldn't read them. The system had posted the incorrect results to newsrooms across the city. At least one television station broadcast the wrong results.

• One hundred eight of 403 Chicago area precincts were not counted. A pin from the cable connecting the ballot reader counting computer had gotten bent after three-fourths of the precincts been counted correctly. No one could explain how a pin inside a become bent during the middle of the count.

• In San Francisco polling place 2214, machines counted 416 ballots but there were only 362 signatures in the roster and only 357 paper ballots were found.

• In the 2002 general election, touch-screens in one Georgia county listed the wrong county commission races. Officials shut down the polls to fix the problem but didn't know how many wrong ballots were cast or how to correct errant votes. In another, a county commission race was omitted from a ballot.

These problems, and 100 more like them, can be found with footnotes, cites and sources here:
http://www.blackboxvoting.org/bbv_chapter-2.pdf
http://www.blackboxvoting.org/bbv_appendix.pdf
http://www.blackboxvoting.org/index.pdf

Steps to take on behalf of those who voted for you:

• **Candidates:** Advise your party, staff, aides, and constituents that you will not concede until every vote has been fairly, observably, and securely counted, even if it means asking for a recount.

• **Campaign managers and volunteers:** Fight for your candidate. You owe it to those who voted for your candidate.

• Be aware of the election laws and the procedures used by local election officials to conduct the elections and enforce these laws.

• Conduct a strategic political analysis to understand which polling places, personnel, and races are particularly vulnerable targets for fraud.

• **Absentee votes:** Assign someone to monitor all aspects of accounting for absentee votes: Request the records for how many absentee ballots were requested, how many absentee ballots were mailed out, how many were returned. Keep track of this on a daily basis until the last day for accepting incoming ballots. Assign someone to watch the absentee vote-counting process.

• **Absentee votes:** Find out if commercial programs are being used for absentee signature comparison. If so, find out whether the automated signature recognition feature is being used, and see if the tolerance is set the same for all machines.

• **Absentee votes:** Find out if any middlemen are used to process the absentee ballots. Who mails the ballots out? The elections office? The ballot printer? A mail processing center? Who takes in the incoming ballots from the Post Office – a middleman? Who monitors that? What accounting is there of the number of ballots received from the Post Office vs. the number handled by the middleman vs. the number given to the elections division?

• Help recruit poll watchers who are also committed to election integrity monitoring; give them Module 12 of the Citizen's Tool Kit: Monitor the Voting. http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit-voting.pdf

• Conduct informal exit polls at strategic locations: Randomly query 50-60 people throughout the day and compare this exit poll with the announced outcome;

• Find out where the Election Night "drop-off points" are. Have volunteers take a video camera and go to any drop-off points to observe chain of custody and procedures. Write down who is there and keep a log of what they are doing.

• Assign someone to watch the counting of the vote at election headquarters on Election night. It is not unusual for serious problems occur during the counting of the votes.

Download Module 13: What to watch for during Election Night counting
http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit-counting.pdf

• The above module contains a list of typical problems observed in real elections. Have your Election Night observers download it and use it for guidelines on what to watch for and to train them on what to expect.

• Check to see if results for any candidate go down when more votes come in

• Submit a request for the audit logs and system event logs for the evening

• Compare the number of registered voters on the results sheets on Election Night with the number of registered voters reported as of the last deadline for the voter registration list prior to the election.

• Does the voting turnout make sense, given what you know about past trends and the number of current registered voters?

• Are there too few or too many votes overall? For a particular party?

In the days after the election:

• Request the interim results reports showing the increments in the absentee vote results. Watch for changes that would indicate a clump of votes all voting one way.

• Request the "trouble slips" and attempt to confirm stories of problems, especially if it is a close election.

• If the race is close, compare the voter list with the National Change Of Address directory. You may find voters registered at vacant lots, at boarded up houses and some who have moved and left no forwarding address. Find out if these voters were authorized to vote where they did or not.

• See if you find any precincts with larger than normal turnout. This can mean that there is a computer error. Request the records to verify the number of poll book signatures and the ballots themselves.

Here are the kinds of records you can request:

• Voter registration rolls (show who is allowed to vote)

• Zero reports -- should be date and time-stamped, should NOT be detached from their matching results tape (see below) and should contain poll worker signatures.

• Polling location list (has locations of each precinct and polling place. Some polling places have more than one precinct.)

• Voting machine assignment sheets (show which serial numbered machine is assigned to which precinct)

• Poll books (show who came to the polls to vote). Number in the poll book should not exceed number of registered voters and should come close to matching votes cast.

• Polling place results tapes (show how many votes were actually cast and what the results were on each machine). These results tapes should be date and time-stamped and should contain poll worker signatures.

• Election night interim results sheets (show combined results from each precinct and also the absentee results so far). The first election night report will show pre-counted absentee votes. Each subsequent report will show accumulated results up to that point. Each interim report should be date and time-stamped.

• Post-election interim reports (show combined results as more and more absentee votes and provisionals are counted)

• Precinct ID – Precinct location chart (if precincts go by number, this should identify the physical location of each polling place along with the number)

• Early vote accounting: There should be early voting poll books showing who showed up to vote early; there should also be an early voting machine results report, which will tell how many early votes were actually cast (should come very close to matching early voting poll books); and there should be an accounting for early votes on the Election Night accumulated results.

• Absentee votes requested (shows how many absentee votes were requested)

• Absentee votes received (shows how many absentee votes were mailed back and logged in. This number should not exceed the number requested)

• Voting machine logs: Computerized voting systems have internal logs that are supposed to record each event. These logs are a public record. You can request them and examine them. These logs will show you how many copies of the electronic ballot box were created (memory cards / cartridges), when results reports were printed, date and time stamps for the Logic & Accuracy tests, date and time stamps for each report that was run, date and time stamps for opening the election, when results were transmitted into the central tabulator, and much more. You can find many "User's Guides" here:
http://www.bbvforums.org/forums/messages/2197/2994.html

• Find out what kind of voting machines are used in your jurisdiction, and check the appropriate user's guide for the names of the voting machine logs to request.

• Central tabulation machines, and the Diebold touch-screens, run on Windows, and there are also Windows system logs. There are three: The Windows program log, the Windows event log, and the Windows security log. You can request these as well. These logs often provide information about networking and remote access as well as system errors and events.

What kinds of things to look for:

• Things don't add up; for example, more votes than registered voters
• Votes that show up in precincts with no registered voters
• Precincts results that don't match central tabulator data
• Absentee votes co-mingled with polling place votes so you can't see which are which
• Precincts are missing
• Records are missing or incomplete
• Chain of custody or authenticity of records cannot be established.
• Official refusals to let you see the records.
• Statistically bizarre numbers.
• Any extraordinary percentages of overvotes or undervotes
  (Note that "down-ballot" races will usually have significantly fewer votes than the presidential race. Some people do not vote for lower profile races).

Recounts

• Be knowledgeable about the recount laws in your particular state;

• Be prepared in advance with a lawyer, if you have the resources to file a legal contest.

• Determine the estimated amount it would cost to conduct a recount;

• Establish a dedicated fund ahead of the election to pay for recounts, if necessary, and solicit donations specifically for that purpose;

• In recounts and manual spot-checks, look for mismatches and ballots that are clumped together, all voting for the same candidate.

This is not just about "the Candidate", it's about the integrity of the election. It's about all of us. It's about counting the votes.

Your Own Additions to the
Election Protection for Candidates Module

You can share your ideas by sending to

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 19

Famous Voices

Elections Actions for Celebrities

Celebrities have always involved themselves in causes. Audrey Hepburn worked with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund for five years; Danny Kaye worked with UNICEF for 30 years and Humphrey Bogart led a 1947 group that protested the U.S. government's probe of communism in Hollywood. Jerry Lewis has hosted his Muscular Dystrophy Association telethon for 40 years. Paul Newman has raised more than $200 million for charity.

High profile people are citizens, too.

The kinds of unique opportunities available to celebrities aren't limited to movie stars. Media talk show hosts, stand-up comics, community theatre groups, sports personalities and artists also have special skill sets that can help us take back our elections.

High profile individuals and people in the creative and communications industries have unique opportunities through networks of acquaintances and access to the media, speaking venues and other public settings. Here are some ideas to help high profile people capitalize on unique skills. This section also includes tips for citizens who may have access to celebrities.

Celebrity Citizens Guide

Goals:

Empower the citizenry. Capitalize on personal networks and communications opportunities to help motivate citizens to take back elections. Celebrities open doors. In today's celebrity-obsessed culture, having someone famous show up to say, "This is important, and here is why" can breathe life into events.

Obstacles

• Some perceive citizen oversight over elections to be a partisan issue, and many celebrities are not eager to become publicly partisan. This should be a non-issue. In fact, most citizens want fair and accurate elections no matter what political party they support. Celebrity involvement can easily sidestep partisanship by focusing on election oversight actions instead of election personalities.

• Celebrity involvement can provoke criticism of so-called self serving behavior or publicity seeking. In fact, celebrities are citizens too, and have every right – and obligation – to take civic duties seriously.

• Some worry that celebrities don't really understand the problem. That concern does have merit. Elections, especially now that they are computerized, are a complex, multifaceted beast filled with techno-babble and spin, so getting up to speed on the issues is challenging. But celebrities who don't want to go through the learning curve can still participate, and this module provides several options for low-intensity actions. Those that want more in-depth involvement can get up to speed on the Internet, at sites like BlackBoxVoting.org and others.

Organizations that cater to celebrity action

There are organizations that run workshops that teach celebrities how to be effective speakers, introduce them to other activist-minded celebrities and suggest causes in which they can get involved. For example, The Creative Coalition, based in New York, focuses on lobbying for arts-related issues.

Organizations like the ONE campaign take a great deal of time and trouble to make sure the celebrity is the right fit. Actor George Clooney reportedly signed up to the ONE campaign in the US, after much due diligence on both sides. As Clooney puts it: "You want to make sure the things you get into are the right ones."

• Talk with other celebrities and seek out activist-minded organizations; if necessary, network together with leading voices in the election integrity issue.

Low intensity celebrity actions:

• Especially when appearing in public during election season, have a T-shirt or button made and wear it in high profile situations. If appearing on TV, let the host ask you a question about the slogan on your shirt. To make it even easier for you, citizens from all over America have contributed ideas (some slightly tweaked here). The following slogans provide accurate sound bites for today's elections:

Is E-Voting Really *ME* Voting?
Contributed by Amy S. from Oklahoma

My vote is so secret, even *I* don't know how I voted
Contributed by Mike Myhre from Washington state

I voted. I think.
Contributed by Isaac Smith from California

E-Voting: We Do Not Consent
Contributed by Dave Berman from California

Show me the ballots!
Contributed by anwar adi from California

We're counting the votes. Get over it.
Contributed by Nancy Tobi from New Hampshire.
(make that):
We're counting ALL the votes. Get over it.

We only agree on a vote we can see
Contributed by Brian Lynch from New Jersey & Catherine Ansbro from Ireland

We'll trust the honor system for elections when banks trust it for money
Contributed by R.R.

It's Nov. 7th. Do you know where your votes are?
Contributed by Chris Jacek from Texas

No Ballot Left Behind
Contributed by John Pagakis from Arizona

A vote is a terrible thing to steal
Contributed by R.R.

Real Democracies Count All Their Votes
Contributed by Joshua Landess from Arizona

Oh goody. Elections are now corporatized, privatized, and secretized
Contributed by Gail J (tweaked)

Is democracy in the USA too fragile to survive a vote count?
Contributed by Joseph C. Ferguson from California

No more faith-based elections!
Contributed by Hamilton Richards from Texas

Just Count the Ballots
No, make that:
Just Count the F*ing Ballots
Contributed by Christy Sweet from Virginia

Vote by computer and abracadabra
Contributed by Sherry Noland from Nevada

Count the votes or suffer the consequences
Contributed by P Schlichting from California

How many electrons does it take to change a vote?
Contributed by Brian Lynch from New Jersey

Trust us with your votes. We're a huge multi-national company.
Contributed by Isaac Smith from California

Is America Over?
Contributed by Anne Gabriel from Massachusetts

I Think I Voted? (with flag sticker)
Contributed by Wakean Maclean from California

If your vote isn't counted publicly, you don't live in a democracy
Contributed by Joshua Landess from Arizona

Computerized voting: Don't COUNT on it!
Contributed by J. E. Quidam from Georgia

Invisible votes: Media should not report what cannot be proven
Contributed by Dave Berman from California

We're supposed to *VOTE* in secret, not *COUNT* in secret
Contributed by Sally Castleman from Massachusetts

Get your voting machine away from my democracy
Contributed by BD from Washington state

Oh Canada! Land of Paper Ballots!
Contributed by Sam G.

• Put your art or media skills to work: Convert a slogan into legal graffiti, yard signs or billboards.

High intensity celebrity actions

• You can hook up with one-on-one help through e-mail at any of the voting integrity sites. Google "electronic voting" or "election integrity" and you'll find contact information.

• Get up to speed. Arrange a meeting with a citizen who is experienced and knowledgeable about elections issues. Check the Internet or ask local activists for input or collaboration on your ideas.

• After getting a primer on the issues and solutions, apply your talents:

• Narrate or appear in videos/documentaries that support meaningful election reform.

• Host a benefit event to fund local citizen's efforts.

• Reach out to your colleagues to inform them about elections problems, and encourage them to get involved in some way.

• Take part in an election reform conference.

• Show leadership: Give a nonpartisan statement for a press release on the importance of citizens having the right and ability to oversee our own elections.

• Contact any of your media contacts and urge them to have voting rights advocates as guests on their show.

• Act as a trustee or figurehead for a group of citizens taking action on elections.

• Do a publicity event with local citizens; For example, the event could involve taking a sledge hammer to a voting machine purchased on e-bay, or stage a Boston Tea Party tossing voting machines into the bay.

• Produce a commercial or a public service announcement about the issue.

• Write a song, work it into your stand-up routine, make a cartoon, look into doing a book, screenplay, or feature film capturing this issue.

• Host a nude fashion show to benefit elections. Feature real accessories with imaginary clothing. Call it "Black Box Fashion: The Emperor's New Votes"

• Convince your editor or producer to do a series of articles or shows on election problems and solutions.

• Pull together a group of influential friends and invite some citizens who are out there in the trenches working on election reform to a meet-up. Ask the citizens how you and your colleagues can help most effectively.

Financial support

Another low-intensity action you can take is, of course, financial support. Citizens are out there slogging through the mess that has evolved during four decades of ignoring our elections, and they need your financial help. The simplest things can make a big difference in citizen's ability to be effective. Things citizens need:

• To pay for public records
• To travel to hearings and testify
• To distribute educational materials
• Scanner with ability to convert public documents to pdf files to share them with others
• Video cameras
• Hidden cameras (a $300 attachment available at "The Spy Store")
• Audio recorders
• Sponsorship of costs for town meetings (and a celebrity master of ceremonies certainly wouldn't hurt!)
• Donation of public theatre for a night to show election issue films to the public
• Contribution of a publicist to local or national citizen's group around election time, to help get the word out about how to protect elections and send up the red flag when problems are found.

The total annual budget for all election integrity citizen actions nationwide is *less than what a single celebrity recently pledged* to help former child soldiers around the world (Nicholas Cage, $2 million pledge).

Action star Jackie Chan said he intends to dispense half his wealth - that's $128 million to charity. How much is real citizen election oversight worth to you? Elections would be one place to start.

The elections industry is out scooping up $4 billion in voting machine sales. How much is it worth to you to balance corporate efforts with real citizen oversight?

How can celebrities choose what groups to help?

- You can easily find the major nonprofit, tax-deductible groups on the Internet. BlackBoxVoting.org is one such group. But this is a situation where you shouldn't limit support to nonprofit 501c(3) groups.

- Ordinary citizens are doing heroic work on a shoestring, day in and day out. They often work alone or in small groups of 5-10 citizens. It makes no sense for them to undertake the infrastructure of a nonprofit group when perhaps all they need is a scanner and a few hundred bucks for public records. Forget your tax deduction this time: Find effective citizens and give them what they need.

- Check around your community, or contact Black Box Voting (crew@blackboxvoting.org) for recommendations on the most effective citizens and groups near you.

Whether you choose low-intensity or high-intensity efforts, get involved. As a celebrity, one of the best things you can do is motivate copycat behavior by others to help American citizens take back elections. Be the tide that helps raise all the boats.

For Citizens Who May Know a Celebrity

Citizens often express hope that a famous person will "become a spokesperson" for election integrity issues.

- If you want to persuade a spokesperson, be sure to provide consulting and expertise. Encourage them to view the issue as any citizen would, and provide the tools they need, which most likely will be information.

- It may be more realistic to get a celebrity to support election integrity actions by proposing a specific event, or asking for collaboration or a specific favor. Review the list of suggestions for actions celebrities can take and have a few ideas and proposals in mind before making an approach.

- Be considerate and professional in your approach to any high profile person. Celebrities may be advised to shy away from lending their names to a cause/issue, and this is understandable. High profile people are typically pulled in many directions at once, and are sometimes exploited.

- If you get a meeting, have a clear idea in mind for what the goal is, and have two or three different suggestions for how the celebrity can take action to help. Don't leave them wondering what you have in mind, and don't expect them to come up with all the ideas.

- Do not "drop names" or use a celebrity's coat tails without permission!

- The decision by a celebrity to become a spokesperson for any cause or issue must be viewed as a personal one and should be respected as such. Staying within these boundaries is key to persuading them to lend their celebrity to elections issues.

How to contact a celebrity

Agents and representatives:

How you contact your chosen celebrities very much depends on who they are.

• Most writers, musicians, singers and actors or actresses are contactable through their agents. Some have secretaries. The best way to find out who the particular agent of the figure you are interested in is to contact their publisher or record company.

• For actors' and actresses' agents search Spotlight, the casting directory or The Stage, the actor's publication. Both will be able to direct you to the appropriate person or organization. The publication 'Who's Who' is an excellent source for agents or contact addresses. All this can be found in your local library.

• Try to include celebrities from different parts of the political spectrum.

Write a letter:

• Write an effective letter outlining your cause/issue and its implications. Remember to stress why the support of the celebrity is particularly important and raise points specific to them that you have learned from your research.

• Don't waffle. You want to make your case briefly but effectively and you don't want to confuse them with too much detail. You can include a press pack with more information should they be interested.

• Make specific suggestions, and include a link to this Tool Kit Module.

Media actions

• Contact your local radio programs if covering anything that remotely deals with election reform and call in and get the conversation going on the issue.

• If you know any local media personalities, call and ask if they would like to participate at an event or a town hall meeting that is focusing on election reform and ask them if they would like to be one of the speakers.

• View high profile individuals as "access points" in drawing attention and raising awareness about the election reform issue. Because celebrities tend to be perceived as role models, gaining public participation from a celebrity will help draw media attention.

As a citizen, engaging the interest and action of celebrities is a great way to apply your persuasive skills. Celebrities are articulate. Celebrities are media-savvy.

And celebrities vote.

Your Own Additions to the
Famous Voices (Celebrities) Module

You can share your ideas by sending to

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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Module 20

Election Actions for

High Net Worth Individuals

Black Box Voting developed its effective presence on the U.S. election reform scene almost entirely through small donations from individual citizens. In our first two years, we raised over $1 million, with tens of thousands of citizens giving an average of $59 each. It wasn't easy, but it worked: Unbeholden to any vested interest, we were free to tackle election issues straight-on. Now that we have established the importance of *having* an elections watchdog group, we are transitioning to more traditional methods of grant writing and gifts from small family foundations.

What began as a single individual grew to a tiny nonprofit with two full time employees, and has now grown into an organization with a small office, computers, a business manager and the infrastructure to support permanent election oversight actions.

This is a nice success story, but neither *Black Box Voting* nor *any other national organization* can do this alone. If we want truly independent ongoing citizen oversight, we have to nurture the extraordinary independent citizens who undertake elections oversight using a less formal structure.

If you are a high net worth individual, of course you are familiar with development drives. In this module you will find organizations worthy of your gifts and grants. But we encourage you to invest also in informal citizen actions. While the top-down model (national organization with chapters in each community) is often favored by philanthropists, we encourage you to "think outside the Black Box" and take a different approach. It's time to provide necessary support for truly independent citizens who do the legwork day in and day out. This module provides practical tips for how to do that.

Guide to Election Integrity Philanthropy

Goals:

Bring philanthropy into citizen elections oversight – not just with tax deductible donations and grants to 501c(3) nonprofits, but by providing the support that's needed to effective individuals working independently. Let's start bypassing the red tape to take small amounts of needed support directly to the people.

Regardless of how much money you pour into election oversight, the real work will always be done by local citizens, who juggle full time jobs with extraordinary commitment to civic duty. These citizens, who attend meetings, read up on laws and regulations, request public records, feed information to the media, and hold public officials accountable are the very backbone of our republic.

Let's keep it that way!

While it may be appealing to seek out the most established election reform groups, the front-line work is mostly being done by unaffiliated citizens and tiny local groups you've never heard of. What do these citizens need, and how can you find them?

How to empower citizens as an Elections Angel

Become a Tool Kit Angel

The "Citizen's Tool Kit" is the most comprehensive training guide for citizen's election oversight available. It's available free on the Internet, but *making copies costs money*. Citizens need copies of the whole Tool Kit to distribute at town meetings, house parties, public speaking engagements and conferences. Many of the best and most dynamic citizens are bootstrapping their own elections watchdog expenses and can't afford to make the copies.

Find out how many copies your local citizen's group needs. Download the latest version of the Tool Kit (http://www.blackboxvoting.org/toolkit.pdf). We constantly take citizen input and it is frequently updated and improved, so get the latest before making copies. Have someone take it to the copy shop. Box them up and have them delivered to the event.

Become a DVD Angel

The most powerful tool to mobilize and motivate citizens is visual media. Citizens educate and empower each other by having meetings and showing election-related films. New films are coming out all the time – each better and more powerful than the last. E-mail us for recommendations on the latest, best, and most accurate election films. As of this edition of the Tool Kit: Don't miss "American Blackout." This fall, we hear that other hard-hitting films will be released.

Get copies of the most effective DVD documentary. Provide copies to citizens and ask them how many more they need to provide for public officials, local candidates and campaigns, party observers, and public interest groups.

Become a Public Records Angel

Citizens absolutely MUST get hold of public records to oversee elections, and not just during election season. Expenditures, contracts, procedures, costs analyses and procurement activities often take place during "off years" for elections. Public records cost money. In some states, costs are as little as three cents per page, but in other states labor fees of $20 per hour or more are tacked on, or fees are as high as $1 per page. Citizens need help paying the public records fees, and also need simple tools like scanners which can convert the files to pdf format, so they can distribute copies of the records as needed.

If you can underwrite costs for batches of public records, and/or underwrite purchase of a scanner with the appropriate software (usually about $300), you can expedite citizen's efforts tremendously.

Become a Gadget Angel

Citizens doing elections oversight quickly learn that if they can't get their proof on video, audio, a photo or a public record, no change will occur.

Gadgets citizens need to oversee elections:

• A good digital camera with web-quality video capability and a disk to quickly transfer images to laptops – and therefore the Web – can be had for about $350. That may seem like a small amount to you, but it's not affordable for many citizens doing the hardest work of all.

• Small pocket digital audio recorders

• Hidden cameras (a $300 attachment available at "The Spy Store")

• Binoculars, to see computer screens which are typically placed in difficult to see locations

• Small portable scanners, to take on-site copies of election results and records.

• Laptop computers

*Very Much Needed***: Travel Angels**

• One of the most frequent needs for citizens doing elections oversight is travel donations, including air miles. Citizens are often called upon to drive hundreds of

miles to appear at state legislative hearings, and frequently need to bring experts in from out of state to testify at local hearings.

One philanthropist we know made things much easier for citizens. After getting to know a few citizens who are effective, she allows them to call her for travel expenses when they must travel somewhere to testify or attend a meeting.

One reason citizen's interests are not well represented is that – unlike paid lobbyists and "experts" with a vested interest – they are not paid to be there. In fact, they must not only be out there in the field, attend public meetings, meet with local officials, but they are expected to dig into their own pockets to travel across the country in order to be represented at important meetings where decisions are made.

Become an Event Angel:

• Help local citizens by sponsoring costs for town meetings they organize. This can involve renting a hall, copy costs for handouts, and sometimes travel expenses for a speaker.

• Donate a public theatre for a night to show election issue films to the public

• Contribute funds for local advertisements or a publicist to help get the word out

Become a Project Angel:

• Consider providing a small, one-time stipend to help a particularly effective individual complete a project. This can expedite the project's completion. Some of the most effective citizens make their "real world" living as consultants or independent contractors. This enables them to have the schedule flexibility to attend Board of Elections meetings (usually held during the day) and take days off around elections time. The down side is that when very significant problems arise, everyone leans on a small number of effective citizens to get things done, and those citizens take a real hit financially.

If you can't get out there in the field to do the work yourself, consider making it easier for someone who's already proved they have the commitment and ability to do effective work on this issue. Investing in effective people directly is money well spent.

An easy way to choose your Election Angel projects:

Angel's E-mail List

• The Election Angels e-mail list introduces high net worth individuals to extraordinary citizens. Each occasional e-mail contains simple information describing the citizen and how a modest one-time donation from you will translate into direct action. You will not be bombarded with e-mails, but you will receive e-mails when we come

across a citizen who has already proved commitment and effectiveness, who needs short term support for something specific.

• We forward the information to you on the **BBV Election Angel's List**, and it is up to you whether to make contact with the citizen and provide your support.

• To join the BBV Elections Angel List, just e-mail angels@blackboxvoting.org.

• We don't accept citizen solicitations for this list. We hand pick citizens based on what they've proven they can do already, using their own initiative and their own dime. We send out Angels e-mails only on an as-needed basis.

Black Box Voting is committed to building more citizen leaders. This provides an easy way for you to help out as more and more citizens prove their effectiveness.

• Your name is never provided to the citizen unless you do so yourself. We will provide you with the name, e-mail, and contact information if you see someone you'd like to help.

• You choose whether to reach out – and you can be certain that you will make a difference!

The BBV Angel's List is simply a way to introduce high net worth individuals to extraordinary citizens who have short-term situations that can be expedited with a modest donation from an angel like you.

The Black Box Voting "Eagles"

Since 2002, Black Box Voting has been in touch with extraordinary citizens who seem to do six impossible things before breakfast every day. They don't work for us and we don't tell them what to do. They are effective and independent and they usually attract others who follow their example. We call them Eagles.

After the 2004 general election, we realized that we need local citizens who can be counted on for acts of leadership. We need these self-directed, creative people more than we need followers to march in line. The truth is, you can't really oversee your government by pushing "send" on an e-mail that someone tells you to write. Citizens make a difference when they get up out of their chair and go into public settings to take small, meaningful actions, especially when they think of the actions themselves.

We set out to identify and help American citizens who could be counted on to take effective action on their own. We traveled throughout the U.S. to mentor, train, and meet with local citizens, and kept ongoing communications with those who are consistent, creative and effective. We provided evidence for them to use, places for them to share and collaborate, and this Tool Kit with actions to take.

*"Doves, sparrows and other low-flying birds flock together in bunches.
But eagles soar alone, and must be gathered one at a time."*

We are continually amazed at the creative genius of our citizenry. Hundreds of citizens have now made the BBV Eagles List. Due to privacy concerns, we no longer release the list to the public, but if you would like to provide support to an "Eagle" we can help match you up with the right person.

Watch the Eagles Soar:

It's a beautiful sight.

Some work alone, like Jody Holder, who has collected formidable evidence documenting breakdowns in California public policy regarding voting machines. Holder does impeccable research. Holder is currently taking on the California Secretary of State in court.

Some citizens begin alone, but later develop a local group of equally committed citizens. Art Cassel, together with Jeremiah Akin and Tom Courbat, have energized the elections oversight scene in Riverside California. Cassel had been a long-time government oversight guy, regularly popping up at town meetings about land development and other issues. Cassel, Akin, Courbat and other interested citizens in Riverside organized 70 local citizens and conducted an in-depth citizen's audit of the June 6, 2006 primary election, identifying significant problems and recommending solutions.

Melissa Urda is a citizen in DuPage County, Illinois. She discovered hidden information about a wireless device being used to transmit voter data back and forth during elections. While researching this, Urda and the small band of citizens she began to work with learned that $30,000 was being spent by the elections division on a highly partisan political consultant. These DuPage citizens got that story into the local newspaper and started checking all the other expenditures. When they learned that the DuPage elections division was throwing away federal election records well before the allowed time period (while failing to provide copies to citizens in response to public records requests) they submitted the matter to the U.S. Attorney.

How much is it worth to you to have citizens out there watching the store?

Don't force local citizens to become 501c(3) nonprofit entities, which saddles them with infrastructure, making them to divert time into administration and fund raising. Help citizens do what they do best: *Direct action*.

Skip the middleman. Give your donations directly to effective citizens.

No need to go through Black Box Voting to find these "Eagles."

You can find many of them by doing a media search. Local citizens who are effective have a knack for getting reporters to cover them. You can use Lexis-Nexis or Factiva search to look up articles about election problems, and contact the citizens interviewed by the reporters. **Focus on *local* citizens and small *local* groups.**

You can also call reporters to ask them for the names of citizens and small local groups doing the work in your location.

If you'd like to take a shortcut, we'll provide individual consultation to help you identify the most effective citizens and small groups in your area. Call Black Box Voting (425-793-1030) or e-mail (crew@blackboxvoting.org)

Traditional philanthropy: Grants and support for nonprofit 501c(3) organizations:

Some of our favorite elections-related nonprofit groups:

Black Box Voting, Inc – 425-793-1030; crew@blackboxvoting.org
330 SW 43rd St Suite K
PMB 547
Renton WA 98055

Voter Action (Does election reform-related litigation)
http://www.voteraction.org

Florida Fair Elections Coalition
386-804-3131 susan@floridafairelections.org

Your Own Additions to the
Be the High Net Worth Action Module

You can share your ideas by sending to crew@blackboxvoting.org

What worked well?

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What new ideas did you come up with?

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Was there anything that didn't work very well?

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