

## Frequently Asked Questions

Got questions? We've got answers! The Maryland State Board of Elections and the Local Boards of Elections offer an array of Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers) in response to inquiries on Maryland's new voting system, election policies and procedures affecting *How Maryland Votes*.

### **Why do we have a new voting system? Why are we voting on paper in 2016?**

In 2007, the Maryland General Assembly passed Chapter 548 of the 2007 Acts (House Bill 18) requiring a new voter-verifiable paper record voting system to replace the touchscreen voting system. The law required funding to procure the system. Budget concerns delayed funding for the new system until 2014. The State Board of Elections' contract to lease new voting equipment was finalized in December 2014, and the system will be used in the 2016 presidential elections.

### **What is the new voting system?**

Maryland's new voting system is a voter-verifiable paper based solution leased from Election Systems and Software (ES&S). Voters will mark a paper ballot and then feed the ballot into a ballot scanner. The ballot scanner will read and count the voter's selections and the ballot will drop into a locked ballot box. When voting ends, the system produces a total report of each vote from the paper ballots.

### **What is the ballot scanner?**

The DS200 Precinct Scanner (ballot scanner) is a high resolution image scanner with mark recognition capability. It scans paper ballots of various sizes and captures the voter's selections marked on each paper ballot.

### **How does the ballot scanner work?**

The ballot scanner uses digital-image technology to identify voter selections. When you mark a paper ballot by hand, the scanner looks for marks inside of the ovals. If you make other marks (check marks or underlines) outside the ovals, the scanner lets you know that you need to correct the ballot. You can let the scanner accept the ballot as-is or ask the scanner to return the ballot and make corrections on a new ballot.

An overvote is when you select too many choices in a contest or question on the ballot. When a ballot with an overvote is scanned, the scanner lets you know that you need to correct the ballot. You can let the scanner accept the ballot - and votes for all contests or questions except the overvoted contest or question will count - or ask the scanner to return the ballot to you. If you want to correct the ballot, an election judge will give you another ballot.

### **Is there a paper trail?**

Yes. All marked paper ballots are scanned, tabulated and secured in the ballot box. You will not be issued a "receipt" showing how you voted. (You will continue to get an "I Voted" sticker to show that you voted.) After polls close, the local boards for elections will safely store the marked paper ballots.

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### **The new voting system produces a paper trail. Will I get a receipt showing how I voted?**

No, you will not get a "receipt" showing how you voted. (You will continue to get an "I Voted" sticker to show that you voted.) When you insert your ballot into the ballot scanner, you will see a message that your ballot was accepted and your votes were recorded. Your ballot will be kept in the locked ballot box.

### **Has the new voting system been tested?**

The entire system was thoroughly tested and certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. State and local election officials have tested each device that will be used in Maryland, and the local boards will conduct pre-election testing on all equipment being used in the 2016 elections.

### **Is the new voting system secure?**

Yes! Maryland's new voting system produces a voter-verifiable paper record – a "paper trail" – of each voter's selections. Election officials can compare the ballots marked by voters against the results generated by the ballot scanners to accurately confirm the intention of the voters. All paper ballots will be stored by the local board of elections and available for auditing and recounting purposes.

### **How will I vote?**

1. Go to your election location and check in.
2. An election judge will give you a paper ballot and a pen.
3. Mark your paper ballot by filling in the ovals next to your selections.
4. Review your selections.
5. Insert your marked ballot into the ballot scanner.
6. If the ballot scanner sees an error on your ballot, it will notify you and give your ballot back.
7. The ballot scanner will count your selections and your ballot will automatically drop into the locked ballot box.

### **What if I make a mistake? How can I correct it?**

If you make a mistake marking your ballot, let an election judge know right away. In most cases, the election judge will void or cancel the ballot and give you another ballot.

If the ballot scanner finds an error, it will let you know. If you have an error, an election judge can give you another ballot. Please carefully mark the replacement ballot, a voter is only allowed two replacement ballots.

### **What happens after I scan my ballot? How do I know my ballot was counted?**

Scanning your ballot is the biggest difference of the new voting system! When the ballot scanner accepts your ballot, you will see a message saying that your ballot was accepted. This means that the ballot scanner recorded and counted your selections after you inserted your ballot. Once your selections are counted, your ballot automatically drops into the locked ballot box.

## **How are ballots counted?**

Each ballot is counted when it is scanned. When the polls close on election night, election judges will close the ballot scanner, generate results from that unit, and drive the memory devices and voted ballots to the election headquarters. The memory devices are loaded into a database to provide countywide results.

## **Can you tell the order in which I voted and find my ballot in the box?**

No. Ballots are stored randomly as they drop into the locked ballot box. It is impossible to determine voting order from the ballots in the ballot box.

## **What happens to the ballots? Do I get to keep mine?**

Ballots automatically drop into the locked ballot box after being scanned by the ballot scanner. The ballots are kept as the voting record. You can review your ballot before you insert it into the ballot scanner, but you can't keep it or get a receipt showing how you voted. (You will continue to get an "I Voted" sticker to show that you voted.)

## **Will anyone be able to see how I voted?**

All voting booths will have privacy panels so you can mark your ballot privately.

When you check in to vote, an election judge will give you a privacy folder. You can put your marked paper ballot in the folder to carry your marked ballot to the ballot scanner.

Once your ballot is scanned and automatically drops into the locked ballot box, no one can tell which ballot is yours.

## **Is the new voting system accessible? How is it accessible?**

Yes, the new voting system is accessible for most voters with disabilities.

A ballot marking device will be available at early voting centers and at polling places on election day. These devices are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and let you make selections using a keypad with Braille-embossed navigation buttons and an audio headset. You can also make words larger and change contrast on the screen. The ballot marking device can also be used with other assistive devices. When you check-in to vote, please advise the election judge that you need to vote using the ballot marking device.

## **May I take a selfie when I vote?**

No. Want to take a voting selfie? Great, but technology like handheld electronics and recording devices may not be used inside voting centers and polling places. You may take pictures outside of the polling place or early voting center with a sample ballot and please use the official Maryland election hashtag, **#MDvotes2016!**