



[www.networkofcitizens.org/election/index.htm](http://www.networkofcitizens.org/election/index.htm)

November 1, 2006

*Citizens,*

Here is today's rap sheet of ongoing election crimes that threaten our democracy.

*\* Read these alerts everyday  
\* Learn about the crisis we face  
\* Pass this on to educate others  
and  
TAKE ACTION TO STOP  
THE ASSAULT!*



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*Today's Crime Against Democracy:*  
**Spoiled Ballots**

According to Greg Palast, the nasty little secret of American democracy is that, in every national election, over a million ballots cast are simply thrown in the garbage.

Vote spoilage occurs in two ways -- overvotes and undervotes. An "**overvote**" occurs when someone votes for more candidates than allowed in a particular race. In this case, the particular race is invalidated but not the entire ballot. Overvotes can only occur with paper ballot voting systems such as punch card and optical scan. An example is if a voter makes a mistake or changes her/his mind about a candidate in a race, crosses out a vote, and clearly marks a vote for another candidate in that race.

An "**undervote**" occurs when someone votes for fewer candidates in a race than allowed, such as leaving a particular race blank. This is every voter's right. With an undervote, no ballot or vote is canceled -- or supposed to be. In punch card systems, undervotes can occur with old or poorly maintained machines that create hanging, dimpled and "pregnant" chads.

**Vote spoilage does not occur equally, however.** Documentation clearly shows that ballots of minority citizens -- African-American, Native American, and Hispanic -- have far greater spoilage rates than those for white voters. This is often due to older and poorly maintained voting machines being assigned to polling locations with high minority populations. In 2004, about 1 million ballots nationwide were spoiled by faulty voting equipment, or roughly one ballot for every 100 cast.

While vote tabulating machines can't read overvotes or undervotes, we humans often can. We know a hole in a card when we see one and can tell a clearly marked correction in an overvote. However, we can only decipher the voter's intent if given the opportunity to do so. Some states such as Oregon are "voter intent" states where every attempt is made to determine the voter's intent and count her/his vote. Florida is not a voter intent state, which is why in 2000 Secretary of State Katherine Harris could halt the hand count of the spoiled ballots (not halt a recount, as is generally believed) and ensure the defeat of Al Gore.



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### ***Background Check:***

## **Learn the Crime History, Routines, and Rackets**

[On "spoiled ballots" with Range and Approval \(and old-style plurality\) voting](#)

[A million votes in the electoral trash can](#), by Greg Palast

[Democracy Spoiled](#), by the Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, July 12, 2002

[One million black votes didn't count in the 2000 presidential election; It's not too hard to get your vote lost--if some politicians want it to be lost](#), by Greg Palast, June 20, 2004

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### ***Action & Prevention:***

## **Stop Wholesale Trashing of Votes and Fight for What Democracy Stands For**

1. Fight for what democracy stands for -- a society where **every** citizen's vote is **sacred**.
2. Fight for voter intent laws in states that don't currently have them.
3. In filling out a paper ballot or punching a punch card ballot, ensure **your** ballot is as clear and readable as possible and without any extra marks that could cause your ballot to be set aside and tossed in the trash.
4. The best election observation is or can be done by pollworkers. Protect election integrity from inside the system by [signing up to be a pollworker](#).
5. Download the [Citizen Action Page](#) and take action to stop crimes against Democracy.



***Nationwide Election Protection Hotline:***  
**1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)**

***Voting Rights Institute Hotline:***  
**1-888-DEMVote (1-888-336-8683)**

Post Paul Revere  
on your site!  
[Click for image URL](#)

Also, please report your findings and actions  
to **Network of Citizens** by sending an email to  
**info [at] networkofcitizens [dot] org**

**[Previous daily rap sheet topics:](#)**

Democracy: Can We Keep It?  
Voter Fraud vs. Election Fraud  
Purging of Eligible Voters  
Pollworker and Machine Shortages  
Absentee Ballots Treated Unfairly  
Provisional Ballots Rejected  
Voting Machine "Sleepovers"  
Paperless E-Voting Machines  
The Smearing of Scientific Exit Polls

**[See all the Dirty 30 election fraud tricks](#)**

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**THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO SAFEGUARD OUR DEMOCRACY!**

-- Network of Citizens --

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