



Voters pack ERC forum to share concerns

- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Election Reform Coalition of Pinellas County (ERC) was formed to solicit and study public input regarding voting and election issues, spurred by post-2004 election revelations of local Supervisor of Elections (SOE) errors and unhealthy, persistent rumors of “stolen elections”. Representing over 350,000 registered voters, ERC consists of the Democratic, Green and Libertarian Parties, as well as more than a dozen community organizations such as the NAACP and the Alliance for Retired Americans. The coalition also enjoys collaboration with distinguished members from other organizations including the League of Women Voters, the ACLU, and the Republican Party. ERC continues as a contact group to act on areas of common concern and to solicit continuing feedback via listed contact persons and via the website www.ERCPinellas.org.

The full Report and Action Plan is available from this website and features additional discussions on practices and policies of elections in Florida and Pinellas County, background for each Action Item, and raw data archives.

Public forums were held and the ERC study found:

- Distrust of paperless voting systems. The greater the technical knowledge of the witness, the greater was the concern about reliability, accuracy, and security of the current system.
- Serious systemic problems and implementation disconnects that threaten election integrity and voter confidence. Some witnesses made unfavorable comparisons to the recent Iraqi elections.
- Dissatisfaction with government responsiveness and representation, with few competitive districts leading to entrenched incumbencies and systemic stifling of alternative voices

The ERC study produced numerous action items (detailed in the report) which represent the voice of the citizens. The ERC affiliates pledge to promote reforms, including:

- Implementing **Voter Verifiable Paper Ballot** system to preclude lost votes and bolster voter confidence
- Forming **Citizen Advisory Board** to work with the SOE to improve the voter experience, increase transparency, and disseminate information in both directions.
- Amending the Constitution for **Non-Partisan Redistricting** and implementing (initially at the local level) **INSTANT RUN-OFF VOTING**

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