

WHY OCCUPY WALL STREET MUST INCLUDE DEMAND FOR HONEST, OBSERVABLY COUNTED, UNRIGGED ELECTIONS

Too many critical parts of our electoral process are controlled by private partisan corporations. The counting of our votes now takes place inside black boxes – in secret.

Evidence indicates that We The People are consistently being cheated out of the candidates we truly elect.

How can we hope to achieve any of the many demands for change with the ballot box rigged to thwart them?

The Problem

With mass outrage coming to a head and with Occupy Wall Street exploding coast to coast, people are proposing many specific demands for change. Reform is in the air. Few have yet grasped, however, that we can no longer expect change or reform through the ballot box because our electoral process in America has been outsourced to private, partisan corporations.

It doesn't look that way when you go to vote at your local precinct and see the same old community members acting as election workers. You may even be voting on a paper ballot. But don't kid yourself. More than 98% of the votes in our country are now counted by computers manufactured, programmed, and maintained by a handful of private partisan corporations. The radicals who have commandeered this critical function make no bones about their extreme right-wing agenda; they do not hide what they would like our country to look like.

OUR VOTES ARE MEANT TO BE CAST IN SECRET, NOT COUNTED IN SECRET. But when our votes are counted inside a black box—with no citizen oversight, so that no one other than the hidden few who have actual control over the counting process can know whether the numbers spit out by the machines are true and accurate—we no longer have a democracy. You heard that right: the election officials, the citizens, and even the candidates have no way of knowing whether the election results “counted” by the machines have any resemblance to how we voted.

We are talking about flat-out election theft through wholesale concealed manipulation of vote counts, made possible and effectively undetectable by the very infrastructure of our privatized, corporate-run,

and computer-tallied 21st Century electoral process. Covert election theft is a crime AND a coup—silent, unspectacular, no guns, no tanks, but just as devastating as a violent takeover.

Evidence

In study after study, highly respected IT experts, from major universities (Princeton, Johns Hopkins, UCLA, etc.) to the government's own GAO, have all confirmed beyond the shadow of a doubt that electoral outcomes can be altered, undetectably, by just one person with access to the hardware and/or software. It seems that the equipment itself has been constructed so that there are virtually unlimited ways this can be done. Even with a hand-held wireless device by someone standing across the street from a voting site! Or by setting the zero counters on the memory cards in optical scan counting machines to, say, +50 for Candidate A and -50 for Candidate B before an election, so at the end of the night the total votes appear to add correctly and the election administrator is thereby satisfied that the election was "clean," while in fact a net of 100 votes would be shifted in each precinct so targeted. "Trojan horse" software can be inserted into the software that takes every nth vote for Candidate X and gives that vote to Candidate Y. That piece of code can also be made to self-delete 15 minutes before the polls close, never to be seen again.

Back in 2004 it was demonstrated how anyone with Windows and a PC could change election results at the regional level – nothing has changed since then! In fact it's just gotten easier—a lot easier. You don't even have to pre-program when you can change the totals in "real time" as the votes are "processed" regionally (off-site, and often out-of-state) through privatized, corporate-controlled computer networks, a technology spreading to more and more states. The means of hacking our vote counts are legion, and getting progressively more difficult to detect.

So we know it can happen. Has it happened? No one, often not even election officials, are allowed to see a cast ballot, a memory card, the software code, or any of the "proprietary" election files and materials owned by the private corporations to whom the states have outsourced our elections. How then could we possibly produce a "smoking gun?" We are reduced to repeating patterns of statistical, circumstantial, and anecdotal evidence.

But scholars have produced volumes. Analysts have long since amassed a ton of solid forensic evidence. It always points in ONE DIRECTION. As a body of work, it is extremely damning. Many of these analyses and papers are posted for reference on this website. The consistent shift of votes to the right as compared to tracking-polls, exit-polls, baseline races, and hand counts cannot be random.

The Mainstream Media

But, the mainstream media, with the story of our lifetime dangling in front of it, refuses, and indeed appears to be forbidden, to cover this issue and will not comment on one piece of this scholarly work. Courageous journalists have written about particular elections with suspicious results and procedural red flags, but it seems that they are almost never allowed to broadcast or publish their stories, and certainly never to follow them up with the dogged persistence—think Woodward and Bernstein—required of investigative reporters. Small wonder: the major media, after all, is big-time corporate.

To the extent even the “progressive” media pays any attention at all to election processes, it is all directed at overt tactics for unbalancing the electoral playing field.

It is true that these overt disenfranchisements have blossomed, most recently the allowance for unlimited amounts of anonymous corporate money in our elections, and the new draconian Voter-ID laws selectively eliminating millions from the voting rolls. But those tactics alone are not enough to overcome the actual votes. Something even more insidious is necessary to thwart the public will. And that something is flat-out election theft—votes added, deleted, switched in the darkness of cyberspace where no one is looking or can look.

You heard that right: in many cases, we the citizens are probably NOT electing the extreme candidates we are told we have elected. We the citizens have most likely not, in many cases, voted for all the right-wing positions in the various referenda. We are told those are the results but in about 98% of the cases, not one private citizen has been able to observe the vote count. So it is really unlikely that we are the right-leaning nation we have been told we are since 2000 when the computerized election equipment began to take hold in every state. This disjunction between who we are politically and the representatives and leaders we are told we’ve “elected” and who purport to “represent” us lies at the heart of the bizarre political turmoil now engulfing our nation.

The History

Yes, there has always been election fraud. But it used to be labor-intensive. Each ballot box or lever machine had to be tampered with individually. Now, with the proliferation of computerized voting and/or counting, the scale has changed profoundly. ONE PERSON CAN CHANGE THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS FOR AN ENTIRE STATE (OR MORE) AND NOT LEAVE A TRACE! This person can be a company insider, a programmer, or even a malicious hacker. The equipment has been designed so that rigging/hacking/stealing elections is child’s play.

Historically, over time our elections have shown “normal” shifts, sometimes right and sometimes left. Some places more conservative and some more progressive. When things overall veer too far in one direction, our people have historically self-corrected through the ballot box. That is how America has survived this “experiment in democracy” for more than 225 years. We don’t allow the pendulum to swing so far in one direction that the whole system can tip right over and we don’t allow it to be held in place by a hidden fist. UP UNTIL NOW.

With our elections now in the hands of a corporate few, all that has changed and is only getting worse.

The People’s Demands

So how can any new People’s Agenda come about? Without a return to observably counted elections in America, we can forget about making any progress through our electoral process. Forget about loosening that corporate stranglehold—which, in fact, will only tighten far beyond our worst imaginings.

Occupy Wall Street

Occupy Wall Street is hope. OWS is showing us, at last, who We The People really are—and that we're not the rightward-drifting mass of willing victims that you'd think we are, judging by our "elections" and even by the polls that have virtually all now (unethically) changed their methodology to be aligned with electoral outcomes. OWS is beginning to state the sensible and necessary needs and demands of the 99%. And yet we never will make good on this life-saving movement if we don't demand immediate and radical reform of our preposterous voting system.

It is time to ask ourselves why Americans appear to vote against their own best interests. Why the vote counts consistently end up to the right of exit polls, pre-election polls, and hand counts? Why the public, and even election officials, can't look at the software used to count votes? Why journalists appear to be forbidden to investigate how votes are counted in America?

As we continue to witness the true believers and profiteers of the Right doing so much to corrupt our democracy and lock in economic unfairness and cruelty, it is time to ask how we can believe it wouldn't have occurred to at least a few of them to use their control of the vote counting computers to determine the entire political landscape of America.

We must reclaim our U.S. elections from the 1% and for the people. We need to dump all computerized voting systems and go back to paper ballots, hand-counted in full public sight, on Election Night before the ballots have been removed from that sight. No more secret vote counting inside black-box machines. Our electoral system, the most fundamental of our democratic processes, must be wrested from the control of private corporations whose own agendas can so easily trump the public trust. Our electoral system must be restored to us, the 99%.

These demands must be unshakeable and non-negotiable—because the promise of this moment will most certainly be lost if we don't OCCUPY AMERICA'S ELECTIONS.

For more detailed information, background, blogs, films, etc,
go to http://electiondefensealliance.org/resource_list