

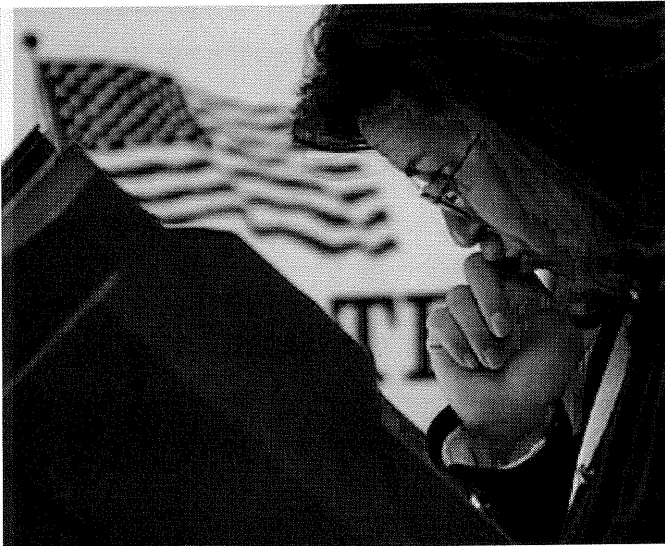


## ELECTION


**Tuesday, November 07, 2006**

Cuyahoga encounters voting problems  
**THE PLAIN DEALER**

1:41 p.m.



Dale Omori/The Plain Dealer

**Photos:** [Election Day Gallery](#) 

As of 12:30 p.m. all polling places in Cuyahoga County were using electronic voting machines, a Board of Elections spokesman said. However, it's not clear whether all machines are working at every polling place.

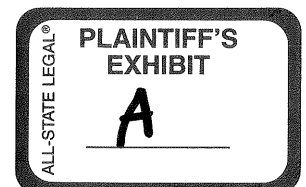
Elections board spokesman Alan Melamed said fewer than 10 polling places had to use paper ballots this morning. Melamed did not have the site locations, and it wasn't clear how many paper ballots have been cast.

Also, Melamed said paper ballots are being placed in provisional ballot envelopes and marked "regular" if voters present valid ID. He said that's because the multipage ballots can't be placed into boxes or they would scatter. He said the paper ballots marked "regular" should be counted tonight, although he's still checking on that.

This morning, more than 40 polling places in Cuyahoga County reported problems when the polls opened.

Forty-three of the county's 573 voting places either failed to open on time or couldn't get some or all of their electronic voting machines to work, Melamed said.

At Boulevard School in Shaker Heights voters who showed up first-thing were turned away temporarily because electronic voting machines were not working. The poll workers later reverted to paper ballots and began welcoming voters, Melamed said.

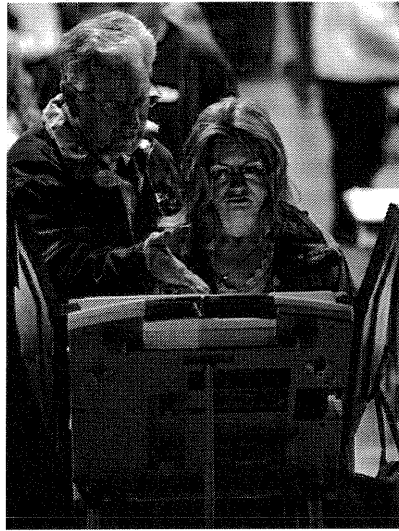


It was not clear mid-morning how many polling places are using paper ballots, which must be scanned by the Optical Scanning Machines.

Otherwise, there were no major problems at Cuyahoga County's polling sites this morning, according to the Board of Elections.

A new computer system allowed staff at the Board of Elections in downtown Cleveland to electronically monitor the opening of polls, allowing technicians to be dispatched quickly to troubleshoot. Purple lights on computer screens indicated a critical situation, such as machines not working.

Melamed said four purple lights showed problems at sites in Parma and Cleveland but they were resolved quickly. Sometimes the problem was that no technician showed up to start the machines.



Dale Omori/The Plain Dealer

Candice Hoke, director of Cleveland State's Center for Election Integrity, said some of her public monitors reported that poll workers were incorrectly requiring some voters who used paper ballots to fill out a provisional voter form. Voting results for any of those forms won't be counted until the official count begins 11 days after the election.

Hoke said provisional ballots should be used only when, for example, a voter has a new address or has changed her name, not because a registered voter uses a paper ballot.

Despite the glitches, Hoke said so far, today's election is much-improved over May's primary.

"The important thing is the problems are being taken care of relatively quickly," she said.

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