Tennesseans are proud of our rich civic history.
As the Volunteer State, we made history by answering our nation’s call to service. And as the state that cast the deciding vote to ratify the 19th Amendment, we helped empower millions of women across the country.

Today, our state is taking steps to continue our civic legacy.
In 2017, we became the 37th state to implement online voter registration, embracing a technological advance to give citizens a new way to register to vote and helping to ensure the accuracy of voter rolls. And civic organizations throughout the state are doing their part to engage Tennesseans in our upcoming elections.

But Tennessee voters want our state to do more to protect our elections from outside threats.
Neighboring states have implemented innovative tools to upgrade and safeguard their election systems, and Tennesseans want the same to happen here.

A 2018 survey of likely Tennessee voters reveals concerns about the security and modernity of Tennessee's elections.

- 56% are concerned about foreign countries or governments trying to influence elections
- 69% are concerned about computer hacking of voting results
- 56% are concerned about outdated election infrastructure, like voting machines and databases
- 55% are concerned about the privacy of voter data

86% of Tennessee voters would support the state government modernizing its election system to prevent tampering and hacking.

68% of Tennessee voters want the state to do more to ensure elections are modern, secure and free from fraud and tampering.
Our Local and National Elections Face a Threat Unlike Anything Seen Before

The threat to U.S. elections is ongoing. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security informed 21 states that their 2016 elections were targeted by Russian hackers. CIA director Mike Pompeo said in early 2018 that he has “every expectation” that Russia will continue to try to interfere with the upcoming midterm elections.(ii)

This threat is not going to go away.

CIA director Mike Pompeo (Jan. 2018)

The threat to Tennessee elections is real. While Tennessee was not one of the 21 states targeted in the 2016 Russian cyberattack, the state has experienced election-related aggressions. In May 2018, for example, a “global cyberassault” of online traffic from 65 foreign countries crashed the Knox County Election Commission website on Election Day, delaying the reporting of election results.(iii)

Lessons from Other States: Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails and Secure Electronic Transfer

Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails

In 2016, 80% of Americans voted on machines that produced voter-verified paper audit trails (VVPAT)—a permanent record of each vote that the voter can check for accuracy before submitting.(iv) In the event of a potential hack or other threat, VVPAT allows states to audit election results to confirm accuracy.

Prompted by security concerns, other Southern states previously using machines without VVPAT have also chosen to upgrade their voting machines.

In Tennessee, however, just seven counties—fewer than one in ten voters—used machines capable of providing a paper record during the last statewide election.(viii) Tennessee’s use of paperless voting machines prevents it from carrying out audits that can confirm the accuracy of election outcomes.

Secure Electronic Transfer

Used in 35 states, Secure Electronic Transfer (SET) digitally transfers voter-registration information, such as names and addresses, from DMVs and other state agencies to local election offices, ensuring more accurate, up-to-date voter-registration lists.

In Tennessee, this information is sent by mail or delivered in person.

In states that have implemented SET, state and local governments are seeing significant cost savings. One Arizona county, for example, experienced a savings of $0.80 per registration—$370,000 in a single year—when it switched to an electronic-based registration system.(ix)

(kno)
Tennessee Has Opportunities to Safeguard its Election Systems

**Local Progress on Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails**

Since the 2016 presidential election, six additional Tennessee jurisdictions have upgraded to election machines that produce a paper trail. Together with the seven counties that had VVPAT previously, these counties are leading the way toward a more secure system.

The idea of upgrading to election machines with VVPAT has received early bipartisan support from Tennessee state legislators. The 2018 General Assembly considered—but did not pass—a bipartisan bill (SB2090/HB2300) that would have required all future election machines purchased to produce a paper trail.

**Federal Funding Available to Enhance Election Security**

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) provides federal funding to states for the purpose of modernizing and securing election systems. States have used this funding to purchase new voting machines, update their voter-registration databases and enhance cyber protections.

This money can have a tangible and immediate impact on the efficiency, security and accessibility of our nation’s elections systems.

Chairman Thomas Hicks, U.S. Election Assistance Commission (June 2018) (xii)

Up to $38 million of HAVA funds are available to enhance our state’s election security. As of 2016, Tennessee had nearly $30 million remaining from a sum granted in 2003 – more than all but three other states, including each of our neighbors. An additional grant of nearly $8 million became available to the state in early 2018.

To access this federal funding, **Tennessee must submit its timeline and budget request by July 16, 2018.** States then have five years (until March 22, 2023) to draw down funds, after which time the funds will automatically be returned to the US Treasury.

**Can Tennessee do more to ensure our elections are modern and secure?**

![Tennessee Election Machines with Paper Trails](thinktennessee.org)

![Total 2003 HAVA Funds Remaining as of 2016 ($ Millions)](thinktennessee.org)
NOTES AND REFERENCES


