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Protestors Cast Doubt on Diebold Voting Machines' Reliability

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Eureka City Council

EUREKA – A local group called the Voter Confidence Committee held an Election Day protest in front of Eureka City Hall, charging that the Diebold programming inside of Humboldt's voting machines could alter the results of elections.

"Humboldt voters mark a paper ballot, which could, and should be counted by hand. Instead, the ballot is fed into the optical scanner," said Dave Berman, the group's spokesperson. "The ballot does not simply come out the other end to reveal the results. While inside the scanner, computer programming interprets the information from the ballots and converts it into AccuBasic. This is Diebold's proprietary programming language. Neither the public, nor the media, not even our elections officials are allowed to examine the 'interpreter code' or AccuBasic language, which Diebold claims as a trade secret.

"All the info from all the ballots is in a form that can only be read by

Diebold. This is the same Diebold facing more than a half dozen class action suits from shareholders alleging fraud," Berman continued. "The same Diebold whose flawed machines have been documented in reports from the Government Accountability Office and even our own California Secretary of State."

Berman said that his group was intending to hold a second demonstration at the Elections Department.

During the course of the City Council meeting which followed the protest, several of the protestors got up to speak during the public comment section, asking that the ballots be counted by hand, and asking that Humboldt County become a model of election reform.

The City Council has no authority over elections procedures, which are under the governance of the County Elections Department. The *Humboldt Advocate* was unable to reach Lindsey McWilliams, the County's Elections Manager, for comment by press time.