

My name is Marjorie Preston and I am a concerned member of Ohio Vigilance. We are on the web at [www.ohiovigilance.org](http://www.ohiovigilance.org). Acting as an informed citizen, I have discussed election reform and voting issues on the national Air America radio program the "Randi Rhodes Show" and on the Minneapolis radio program the "Wendy Wilde Show." I am not here today to appeal to one political party or another. What I would like to make absolutely clear is that this Board of Elections presents a clear danger to the taxpayers of Cuyahoga County if Diebold machines are purchased. I maintain that such a purchase would be the height of fiscal irresponsibility to the people it serves.

We've heard testimony today intended to prove that indeed, if the board installed Diebold machines in our county, we could not trust the integrity of the machines, and we would have no assurances that our votes are properly counted. What I am here to point out is that, in addition, we are dealing with a company that has just this week seen its stock plummet to its lowest point in a year. In other words, choosing Diebold is also a bad investment and this board intends on making that bad investment with our county's already cash-strapped budget.

Here are some other points to consider:

- Diebold described its own performance as "unacceptable" last month and has begun restructuring, including naming a new president and chief financial officer. Former COO Eric Evans resigned in September and last month CFO Gregory Geswein also resigned. These changes have stock analysts revising their earnings forecasts.
- The company Scott & Scott LLC, which represents investors in securities class action lawsuits, recently announced it was litigating/investigating Diebold.
- Maryland and Georgia, states that have been using Diebold machines, have indicated they want voter verified paper ballots, but the Diebold machines they have do not work with paper ballots. The company will most likely lose millions in those two states alone as the market votes against Diebold.
- Recent tests in California show statistically significant machine failure in Diebold machines. Election Privatization Advocates do not care that the machines do not work. They just want our money. If we think Ohio is making national news now, just wait until we adopt failing voting machines from Diebold.
- According to the Dept. of Homeland Security website, a Cyber Alert was issued last year stating that software in the Diebold GEMS Central Tabulator was vulnerable to hackers. That vulnerability has, by Diebold's own admission, never been addressed.
- Diebold blames losses from Hurricane Katrina for some of its ills, though the Associated Press wonders, "Are the storms really hurting business or are they being used to divert attention from more serious problems?" The AP advises us to see how competitors deal with such issues.
- Diebold's highly public ethical blunders with voting machines have damaged its brand name. CEO Walden O'Dell was a member of Bush's elite "Rangers and Pioneers" donor group and in 2003, promised to help "Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year." Some people find Mr. O'Dell's pairing of interests -- as voting-machine magnate and devoted Republican fund-raiser -- troubling, a conflict of interest, even corrupt.

General voter confidence is low, and with good reason. The Conyers Report, called What Went Wrong in Ohio, was over a hundred pages filled with voting irregularities from the 2004 election alone, including problems with electronic machines made by Diebold and other companies. So it is not surprising to see a lack of trust of Diebold. Their stock plummets as shareholders see Diebold's true colors. I wonder if any of you own Diebold stock? Investing in this company will be a colossal mistake and a waste of money. It's clear not enough research has been done on this company and we must ask you to research more accurate, trustworthy and transparent systems.

Given your recent history, do you expect us to trust black boxes with our votes? I feel certain that the answer is NO. Thank you for your time.