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Regional news briefs: **Paper trail voting bill advances**

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However, the Senate has yet to agree to the paper trail idea.

The House bill would direct state elections officials to put paper voting records in place by the next gubernatorial election, a project that could cost over \$16 million according to state estimates.

The sponsor of the idea - Delegate Sheila Hixson - said the paper trail is worth the expense even in lean budget times because it would increase voter confidence.

The bill aims "to give people a trust in their vote, that it really counted," said Hixson, D-Montgomery.

The Senate is considering a similar proposal, but that idea has not yet made it to the full Senate. Last year, the House passed a paper trail requirement, and it had then support of then-Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. But the change didn't become law in part because of concern there wouldn't be time to change the voting machines before last fall's elections.

[http://www.hometownannapolis.com/cgi-bin/read/2007/03\\_21-36/TOP](http://www.hometownannapolis.com/cgi-bin/read/2007/03_21-36/TOP)



**Paper Trail Voting Bill Moves Ahead in Md.** 03/21/2007

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If enacted, the bill may require a replacement of the state's Diebold voting machines, although details would be worked out later.

Critics of the current voting system cheered Tuesday's House vote.

"It's a good first-step bill," said Shazia Anwar, director of TrueVoteMD. That group advocates a return to optical-scan voting, where voters mark their choices with a pen, but opinions differ on whether the House bill would mean optical-scan ballots would return.

Hixson said some sort of paper trail bill is an important step to increasing voter turnout.

"We need more people to vote, not less," she said.

<http://www.wboc.com/Global/story.asp?S=6257570&nav=QEMt>

## **ASSOCIATED PRESS:**

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