Hack The Vote

Inviting Bush supporters to a fund-raiser, he has said, "I am committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year."

But last week, in a telephone conversation with Senator John Warner — who says that he's been talking about his business operations — possibly to be the chief executive of Diebold Inc., whose touch-screen voting machines are in increasing widespread use across the United States.

For example, Georgia — where Republicans scored spectacular upset victories in the 2002 midterm elections — relies exclusively on Diebold machines. To be clear, though there were many anomalies in that 2002 vote, there is no evidence that the machines misconducted. But there is also no evidence that the machines counted correctly. You see, Diebold machines leave no paper trail.

Representative Rush Holt of New Jersey, who has introduced a bill requiring that digital voting machines leave a paper trail and that their software be available for public inspection, is occasionally told that systems lacking these safeguards haven't caused problems. "How do you know?" he asks.

What do we know about Diebold does not inspire confidence. The details are technical, but they add up in a picture of cavalier carelessness. It's as, at the very least, extremely sloppy about security, and may have been trying to cover up product defects.

Earlier this year, former Diebold Vice President Janine Elsen said in a filing that she, a software engineer, worked on Diebold software "with the knowledge that its proprietary nature gives us a degree of security protection for public inspection, on the grounds that it's proprietary — on an unprotected server, anyone could download it." (The server was in a folder labeled "rob-Diebold.sp.") The server was used by employees of Diebold Voting Systems to upload software on its machines. This in itself was an incredible breach of security, offering someone who wanted to hack into the machines the information and the opportunity to do so.

Who's counting on Election Day?

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