

Basic Detail Report



Voting Machine used in the 2000 Presidential election in Florida

Date

n.d.

Primary Maker

Computer Election Systems, Inc.

Medium

Metal; Plastic; Paper

Description

A Computer Election Systems, Inc. Votematic III voting machine, used in the 2000 U.S. Presidential election in Marion County, Florida. The voting machine consists of a metal briefcase with plastic interior components. The exterior of the briefcase has a green sticker that reads "PROPERTY OF / MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA / 8937." Two black stickers are located near top. One sticker reads, "CES / VOTEMATIC III" with a small tear in the label. The other sticker reads "CES Computer Election Systems / Berkeley, California / SER. NO. 3000-158142." The interior contains a power cord connected to a light array at the back. Voting instructions are affixed at top. The base features a blue plastic holder with a flip card system containing candidate information and the area to perforate the voting card, which is inserted in a slot at the rear of the machine. A pen is mounted to the machine with a small metal chain to make selections. The machine's original legs are not present. The 2000 United States Presidential election took place on November 7, 2000, throughout the country. Republican nominee George W. Bush, then-Governor of Texas, defeated Democratic nominee Al Gore, then-Vice President, in one of the closest and most controversial elections in American history. At the end of election night, the state of Florida was still undecided and the race was too close to call. Florida's results required a recount, and through a series of legal filings the United States Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in the case *Bush v. Gore*, which ended the recount. Bush won Florida by 537 votes, or a 0.009% margin. Voting machines, such as this one used in Marion County, Florida, became key figures in the recount's legal battle. Part of this decision came down to the standard for which a "chad," the removed portion of a paper ballot on the so called butterfly ballots, could be counted depending on how detached each piece was from the ballot. "Hanging chads" became synonymous with the election's controversy, and have continued to remain a part of American political and cultural lexicon.