

someone holding a ballot

Stephen Maturen/Getty

RESOURCE

Hand Counting Ballots

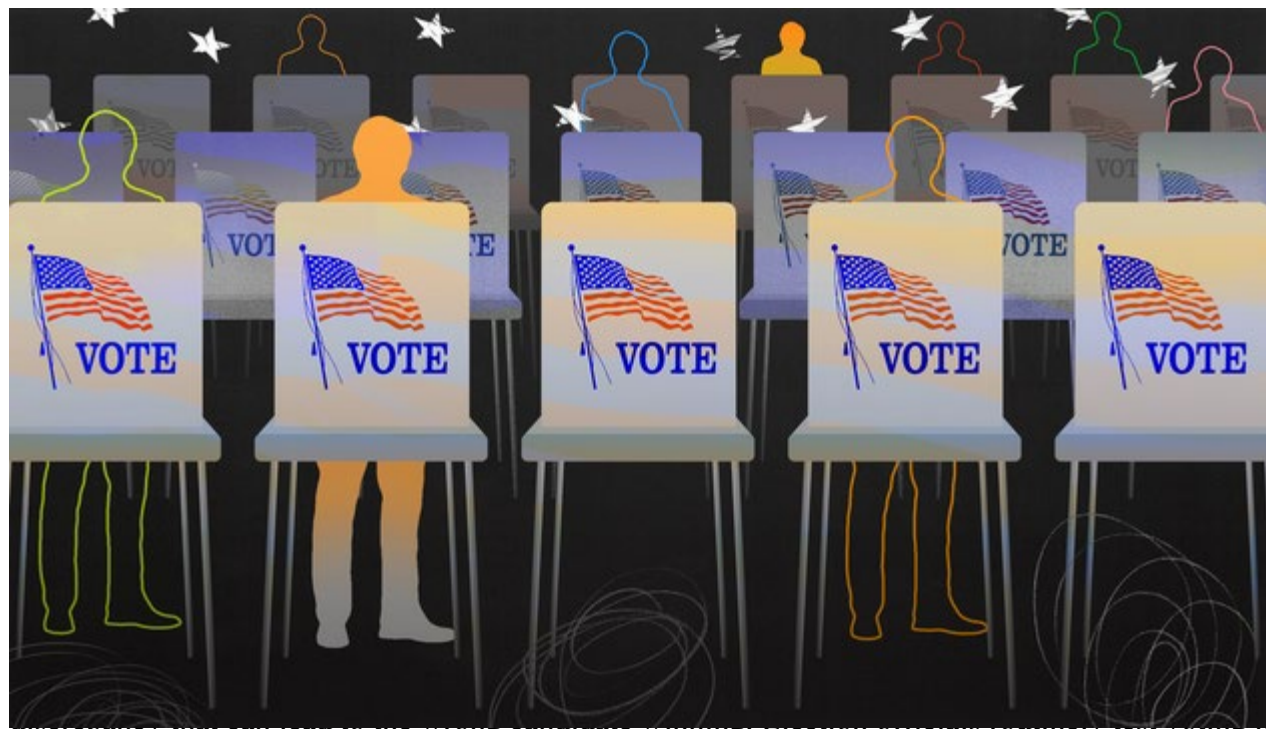
Nearly all election jurisdictions across the country use voting machines to count ballots because they are more accurate, faster, and cheaper than counting all ballots by hand.

Published July 29, 2024

[Voting & Elections](#)

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Part 1 of 2: Hand counting machines are more accurate than hand counts when it comes to



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Election Rumors before and after elections to ensure they are counting ballots correctly.

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Hand counts are not only less accurate, they take more time than machines, which delays election results. And [Election Integrity](#) they cost taxpayers more. One [county](#) of 111,000 voters estimated that a hand count would cost over \$1.6 million and require hiring 1,200 additional staff members — and the process would take 18 days.

Finally, while certain other countries may hand count ballots, they typically have one or two contests per election. In the United States, a single ballot may contain dozens of races, making it much more difficult to hand count ballots.



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Rumor: Vote-counting machines cannot be trusted and counting ballots by hand would produce accurate results.

Vote-counting machines are complex, and the public is largely unaware of the safeguards in place to ensure the machines consistently produce accurate results. Bad actors have exploited these knowledge gaps to claim

that counting ballots by hand is the only way to ensure election results are accurate, when in fact hand counts can have error rates up to 50 times [higher](#) than vote-counting machines. Only a handful of very small counties — typically with fewer than [1,000 voters](#) — have the resources to conduct accurate hand counts.

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