

# THERE WAS A DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY WHEN BLACK PEOPLE COUNTED LESS THAN WHITE PEOPLE. NOVEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2000.

Last election day Jermaine Terry went to the polls to do his duty as an American citizen.

Yet when he arrived, he was told that his name had been taken off the voter list. There was no real reason he should have been denied his right to vote. But there was something that made it more likely: Jermaine Terry is black.

And he is just one of hundreds of thousands of black citizens across the country whose votes were never counted that day.

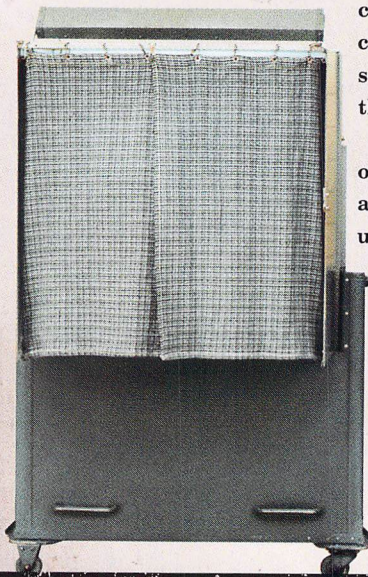
These Americans encountered a litany of abuses, not the least of which was the now infamous Votomatic punch card voting system. According to The New York Times, these machines registered no vote for president five times as often as the more costly optical scanners. And the punch cards were much more prevalent in predominantly minority districts, such as Cook County, Illinois, where 120,000 votes went uncounted.

Such districts also faced massive understaffing and inadequately equipped polling offices. As a result, many voters

with language barriers as well as those whose registrations were processed improperly were denied a part in our political process.

In the state of Florida, for example, where provisional voting does not exist, voters whose valid registration wasn't available at the precinct had to have their status confirmed on the spot. In predominantly minority districts, where there was less access to computers, poll workers had to telephone the central election office. But because the lines were constantly busy, many of the calls never got through. And scores of Americans never got the chance to vote.

Unfortunately, this is only part of a story that is nothing short of a national embarrassment. Visit us at [www.aclu.org/votingrights](http://www.aclu.org/votingrights) to learn more, and to help us in our non-partisan fight to ensure that our most fundamental right, the right to vote, is granted to everyone equally. Because how can we say that every vote counts if every vote isn't counted? Please support the ACLU.



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