



January 20, 2005

Last October, the Verified Voting Foundation submitted a letter with attachments regarding verifiable voting technology to Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz, in support of Connecticut's pending consideration of election equipment changes. This update offers new information about key issues in those documents.¹

1. Successful Tests of Accessible Ballot-Marking Devices

A ballot marking device enables voters with disabilities to mark and verify a standard optical scan paper ballot privately and independently, thus allowing an optical scan voting system to meet accessibility requirements of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and other federal voting laws. The Arizona Secretary of State's office conducted successful tests of a ballot-marking device in several Arizona counties during the November 2004 election. A press release from that office is attached, along with news reports describing this test. The model² tested is expected to complete federally mandated testing required for certification this month, and to receive its federal qualification in February 2005. Another model³ is also expected to be available, thus providing the state with two prospective RFP bidders for this technology—unless limitations of the RFP exclude the participation of optical-scan system vendors. Note that Arizona uses precinct-based optical scan voting systems statewide, as does Oklahoma.

2. Nevada's VVPB Printers Performed Well In November Election

Nevada was the only State to have voter-verified paper ballot (VVPB) printers installed on its direct recording electronic (DRE) voting machines for the November 2004 election. These printers performed extremely well, both during that election and during the Nevada primary election held in September 2004, thus demonstrating the viability of this concept. News stories describing the success of these VVPB printers are attached.

3. Ohio Secretary Of State Announces Switch To Optical Scan

On January 12, 2005, Ohio's Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell announced that Ohio has abandoned its previous plan to deploy DRE touch screen voting

¹ A copy of those documents was also sent to Deputy Secretary of the State Maria Greenslade. Delivery of these documents was confirmed by the U.S. Postal Service via an Express Mail confirmation of delivery receipt. In addition, in mid-October 2004, electronic copies of these documents were sent via electronic mail to Mr. Donald Maloney, RFP Project Director . Regrettably, none of these individuals responded to any of these submissions.

² AutoMark Voter Assist Terminal (<http://www.automarkts.com>)

³ Avante Vote-Trakker (http://www.aitechnology.com/votetrakker2/accessible_optical_voting.html)

systems statewide, and will instead deploy a statewide system of precinct-based optical scanners. In addition, to meet the accessibility requirements mandated by HAVA, Ohio will also deploy one accessible voting system (either an accessible DRE or ballot marking device) to each Ohio polling place. A copy of the press release from Blackwell's office (announcing this decision) is attached. Other States, such as Michigan and Minnesota, are also developing similar plans, as indicated in an article by Minnesota's Secretary of State, which is also attached.

In summary, it can be seen that a number of other states are questioning the wisdom of deploying paperless DRE voting systems, because the results of such systems are unverifiable and because they make it impossible to conduct any kind of meaningful manual recount. In addition, many states have concluded that precinct-based optical scan voting systems, augmented by accessible equipment such as ballot marking devices, can provide a much more verifiable and cost-effective solution than the deployment of paperless DRE voting systems.

Once again, we encourage Connecticut to study the examples provided by these other states, and to promptly revise and update its voting system RFP so as to enable voting system vendors to provide bids for voting systems that are both more verifiable and more cost-effective than the very restrictive set of paperless DRE voting systems currently included in that RFP.

We would further encourage Connecticut to provide more effective means for public input into this RFP process, so that Connecticut voters are given a voice in selecting the type of voting technology that will be deployed. While we applaud the plan for conducting public demonstrations of voting systems under consideration, we believe those demonstrations should include all HAVA-compliant voting systems, including VVPB-equipped DRE voting machines, precinct-based optical scanners, and ballot marking devices.

Respectfully,

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