



YOLO COUNTY ELECTIONS

P. O. Box 1820 • Woodland, California 95776
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Freddie Oakley • County Clerk
530.666.8133

Honorable Debra Bowen

March 30, 2007

California Secretary of State
1500 11th Street, Sixth Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Draft Criteria for Top-to-Bottom Voting System Review

Dear Secretary Bowen,

It is my pleasure to transmit this letter of strong support for the Draft Criteria for Top-Bottom Voting System Review released by you on March 22, 2007.

The right to vote and to have one's vote accurately recorded and counted is among the rights properly held to be most important to the citizens of a democracy. Citizens should expect this right to be vigorously protected by those public servants whose duties attach thereto. It is my opinion that the draft criteria you propose make significant progress in this effort on behalf of the citizens of California.

Since the introduction of computer-based technology to the voting process, citizens have experienced a subtle closing of the window of transparency and accountability and a gradual dimming of the light of public inspection on elections. We are long overdue in our move to correct these defects.

Many of my election administrator colleagues have objected that the proposed review may result in a timeline too constricted for them to correct any deficiencies discovered. I am puzzled by this objection, as these same individuals have been witness to the constant, sincere and well-formed arguments of numerous credible critics that the systems we employ are seriously flawed. In fact, the argument against the top-to-bottom review seems to rest on the certain knowledge that systems currently in use are flawed.

I would summarize my response to that thinking with the words of a song by Greg Tamblyn, "When the signal arm's down and the lights are flashing and the whistle is blowing insane and you're staying on the tracks, ignoring the facts, well, you can't blame the wreck on the train."

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance as the review goes forward.

Yours very truly,

Freddie Oakley



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Dear Secretary Bowen,

I found your draft criteria well thought out and complete, and only have a few minor additions I would like to see added to your review. In order of importance:

- 1). For any equipment used in polling places the testing should encompass the kind of rough handling that is common with voting equipment. It is common knowledge that some equipment rarely works at the polling place because of durability issues that were not tested.
- 2). It is about time that vendor independence is a part of the criteria, however I would also like to see added to section IV explicit mention that we should also be able to, without vendor support, layout ballots (both DRE and paper), set-up central count scanners, generate paper ballot files that can be printed by any certified ballot printer, and perform all the other tasks involved in a central count of paper ballots.
- 3). I would like to see more tests under polling place conditions, I suggest using actual poll workers, selected and trained at random from counties with that system (UC Berkeley has an excellent poll worker study program that could handle this), and then conduct a mock election on a high school campus.
- 4). Finally I would like to see more support for mix and match, custom fit, systems. Appraise the parts both as part of complete system as well as for use separately in blended systems. That may better fit counties. Also allow for limited certification for certain conditions. For instance a system with poor language support is acceptable in a county with no language requirements.

Thank you and I look forward to the final standards next week.

Tom Stanionis
Director of Technology, Yolo County Elections