

Vermont's Electronic Voting System: *Open to Hacking, Rigging, and Software Bugs*

Vermont is not following the recommendations of the Brennan Report – the most comprehensive study on electronic voting machines ever conducted. The study, which was conducted by the former heads of computer security for Microsoft and Lawrence Livermore Labs and other experts and college professors, concluded that Vermont's election system has “*significant security and reliability vulnerabilities, which pose a real danger to the integrity of national, state, and local elections.*” The Brennan Report makes several recommendations to make our system more secure, which we do not follow. Additionally, Vermont chooses NOT to comply with the US Government's Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG). *Vermonters for Voting Integrity* is urging the Secretary of State to follow all of the Brennan Report's recommendations and adopt the VVSG Guidelines.

Vermont Does Not Currently Follow These Recommendations

- **Conduct automatic routine audits comparing voter verified paper records to the electronic record following every election.** Vermont's optical scan voting system must be audited, to make sure the machines are counting votes properly. In the audit, a small sample of ballots are randomly chosen and verified by a hand count. While several other states have a law requiring audits, in Vermont they are done at the discretion of the Secretary of State, with no stated guidelines. This year only 2 out of 8 state-wide races will be audited. Zero county and local elections will be audited. The recommendation is clear – *all* elections and all races should be audited.
- **Ban use of interpreted code.** An independent study found the memory cards in our system have “interpreted code” on them which is currently banned by the Election Assistance Commission, because it makes the system vulnerable to hacking and rigging.
- **Use a transparent and random selection process for all auditing procedures.** To be statistically significant, the samples to be audited must be selected randomly. However the Secretary chooses which 2 of the 8 races will be audited, and she chooses 2 out of the 4 precincts to sample, leaving only 2 precincts in 2 races to be chosen randomly.
- **Ensure decentralized programming and voting system administration.** Where a single entity, such as a vendor or state or national consultant, performs key tasks for multiple jurisdictions, attacks against statewide elections become easier. All of the programming, configuration, and upgrading of Vermont's system is centralized by Diebold and LHS.
- **Have clear protocols for addressing discrepancies evidence of fraud or error.** If a discrepancy is found in the audit, there need to be clear protocols for what to do, and how large of a discrepancy is acceptable. Vermont has no standard procedures for addressing discrepancies in an audit.
- **Allow public scrutiny and input.** The Secretary continues to deny the conclusions of the expert reports, discredit those who point out the recommendations made in them, and say the system is secure.
- **Conduct “risk-limiting” audits.** The most effective audits are “risk-limiting,” meaning statistical factors determine the size of the audit. For example, a smaller margin of victory calls for a larger sample size to be checked. Also, the number of voters in the various precincts should be taken into account. Vermont does not look at these factors and simply audits a certain number of precincts, decided before the election takes place.
- **Binding on official results.** Audits should be completed prior to finalizing official election results. Imagine if the official results were posted, and then the audit found a problem. The 2008 audit will take place “within 30 days of the election.” In 2006, by that time the official results were already posted on the Secretary of State's website.

Vermonters for Voting Integrity is a group of concerned citizens working to improve the security and reliability of Vermont's electronic voting system. Our current focus is to ask the Secretary of State to comply with all of the recommendations of the Brennan Report. Many other states are already following these procedures, but Vermont is falling behind and our system is vulnerable to hacking, rigging, and undetected errors. Most of these recommendations are simple and could be implemented in the 2008 election, which would address many of the vulnerabilities with the system. Please sign our petition and get more information on our website:

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