

abuffl@aol.com

12/08/2008 11:36 AM

To

HAVAINfo@eac.gov

cc

Subject

December 8 public meeting testimony

I am resending my email of a few minutes ago because I neglected to include my name in the original submission.

Dear EAC:

1. We need to do away with electronic voting machines, that is with DRE's, direct recording electronic voting. Hand counted paper ballots are the way to go. This works in other countries. DRE's are hackable and the manufacturers have been repeatedly dishonest about flaws and have wasted thousands of dollars of taxpayer money. Even paper ballots that are counted by optical scanners result in problems because the error checks performed by the optical scanners are often processed incorrectly.
2. Election day should be a holiday or at least should be on a Saturday. The goal should be to make it easier for people to vote. The current system unfairly burdens people in hourly jobs and people with children; it is often a much greater hardship for such people to vote than for others.
3. There should be simple, federally uniform requirements and methods for voter registration.
4. Voting fraud is already a felony (at least in my state of Ohio); election and voter suppression fraud need to also be felonies. I support the legislation to increase penalties for voter suppression, legislation that was introduced by then Senator Obama.
5. It should be illegal for the person in a state who is in charge of election administration to also chair a political party or to hold any office of a political party. For example, in my state of Ohio, in 2004, it was ridiculous to have Ken Blackwell serving as Secretary of State (in charge of elections) while simultaneously co-chairing the state committee to elect George Bush.
6. Private companies should not be able to claim "proprietary information" regarding voting systems. The election process needs to be transparent.

7. Social security and motor vehicle data bases should be used as aides for voter registration databases, but not to disenfranchise voters. Discrepancies in databases should never be used for public caging lists. I know of several specific cases where discrepancies in voter registration records resulted from Board of Election clerical errors and NOT from an ineligible person trying to vote, but where these discrepancies have caused difficulties for voters through no fault of the voter. No one should ever be dropped from the voter roles without confirmed notification, a chance for hearing through a simple and convenient process, and this process should take place well in advance of election day (at least 60 days) .

8. Absolute requirements for voter registration and election day ID, such as proof of citizenship, state ID and birth certificates should not be allowed as these unduly burden lower income and elderly citizens. Alternatives are available and used in many states.

9. A higher priority needs to be given to pollworker training and competency. In our state of Ohio, the average age of pollworkers is in the 70's! Many pollworkers are dedicated public servants who do wonderful jobs, but it is also true that many problems are caused by mistakes made by pollworkers. Consideration should be given to requiring states to have two shifts of pollworkers on election day, thereby making it much easier to recruit pollworkers. This, along with making election day a holiday or a Saturday would surely result in better pollworker performance.

10. States should not be allowed to have very restrictive regulations. For example, in my state of Ohio, votes are not counted when a correctly registered and eligible voter votes in the wrong precinct. Many such voters are correctly re-directed by pollworkers to their correct precinct. A few such voters insist on voting in the wrong precinct. However, a significant number of such voters are not re-directed and are allowed to vote provisionally in the wrong precinct, but then the vote is not counted. This latter category needs remedy but allowing votes to count as long as the voter votes in the correct county. Such a policy is supported by the Ohio League of Women Voters.

11. Voters should be able to register on Election Day and vote with a provisional ballot. This is also a recommendation of the Ohio League of Women Voters. There is no credible evidence of voter fraud in states that allow same day voting and registration such as Minnesota (and in Ohio during the "golden week."

Sincerely,
Lynn Buffington ABUFFLG@gmail.com

"Richard C. Johnson" <rcjohnson@openvotingsolutions.com>
12/08/2008 11:08 AM
Please respond to
rcjohnson@openvotingsolutions.com

To
HAVAinfo@eac.gov
cc

Subject
December 8 Public Meeting Testimony

Dear EAC Commissioners:

I am CEO of a small voting systems company, Open Voting Solutions, Inc., focused on the application of Open Source and open standards to voting systems. We at OVS believe that there is a great need for transparency and trust in voting systems, that scarce public funds are best spent on economical Open Source-based voting systems, and that the use of data standards such as Election Markup Language (EML) from OASIS provide the best approach to interoperability among voting systems and to provision of election data to the general public. We believe this for the following reasons:

Why Open Source?

The assumption that the public has no option other than to chose among the oligarchy of private company voting machine vendors leads to secret operation of questioned machines, loss of trust in a government, altered ballots, missing ballots, and a huge expenditure on largely untested voting equipment. And, of course, the tests and the test results are proprietary secrets, too. Want comparative information on the relative performance of the several leading voting systems? You can't have it. When voting results are questioned, there frequently are no answers given that the voting systems in question are proprietary secrets of the voting system companies. Open Source voting systems change that balance of power towards the voting public and the general public good.

Transparency is Good

Open Source is just that: open. It is open to scrutiny, open to test by anyone, and provides the public with the ability to see what is happening to their vote, how it is interpreted, and how it is counted. Even if not every voter understands the Open Source software, there are many voters who do and there are experts available to all of the contending parties to U.S. elections. Also, open public standards such as OASIS' Election Markup Language (EML) can help standardize a complex process.

Many Hands

Open Source means that many hands may be available to work on various parts of a voting system application. Some may be paid workers at companies who volunteer their services, while others are unpaid technically proficient volunteers who donate their time, efforts, and creativity. Together, they make up the Open Source community.

Many Eyes

Even more volunteers are available to read and critique the Open Source programs, which (unlike private or proprietary code) are available both in the human readable source code and the machine-readable compiled versions. Thousands of volunteers in the Open Source community have the ability to read code and look for problems, errors, and even mischief.

The Price is Right

Open Source code, distributed under the GPL license, may be shared, copied, distributed, used, but not sold. In short, it is free of cost and may not be converted into a product sold for money. This dramatically changes the cost structure of voting machines, which may be built from Open Source software and commodity hardware (PCs and scanners and other peripheral equipment). Ideally, states and counties could build their own systems using free Open Source software and inexpensive, off the shelf, computer equipment. Needed services can be provided by Open Source providers: consulting, testing, training, service, and support.

Service Businesses Enabled

Open Source in voting systems will actually shift the paradigm and business models of the industry, away from product sales to provision of needed services, thus giving local and state authorities far more needed services and substantially less investment in quickly obsolete specialized hardware.

Assumes Open Test

Open Source, which any person could compile and test with any PC and peripheral devices, assumes that test results are open to public scrutiny. There is no proprietary secret to protect and no reason not to know how voting systems function under test. So far, the public has been kept in the dark about how voting machines perform under test, since private companies consider such test results none of the public's business. Open Source and Open Test can change that around completely. Note: anyone wishing to know the bugs filed against the FireFox browser can easily find out; anyone wanting to know the defects in Microsoft Internet Explorer has to ask Microsoft, who is usually not telling. Adequate advance testing of voting software and publication of test results is the necessary missing link between voting systems and voter assurance that the machine in front of the voter has some basis in fact to be trusted.

How Does That Change Public Service?

Public participation in the execution elections now is limited to poll watching and part time work at election sites to supplement full time election workers. Open Source

provides yet another venue for the public to become involved in code development, code review, and code testing.

Brings Public into Process

The Open Source voting application brings the public into the process of handling ballots. Most Open Source systems feature a paper ballot, rather than a summary paper trail. The difference is subtle but very important; the ballot shows all of the choices available to the voter, but the paper trail summary documents only the choices made (supposedly) by the voter and not the choices from which the voter selected the ones for whom to vote.

Public participation in election technology is good, both for the Open Source community members and for the general public. There is every expectation that the commitment to the common good is enhanced by the visible participation of ordinary citizens in the process.

Builds Trust as People Participate

The trust of people in election results should not be taken for granted. We have just enjoyed an election for president with unquestioned results; this follows two elections when voting machines themselves had notorious problems and may well have determined the outcome of the election. It would be a very serious problem indeed to ignore voting machine problems until the next questioned election. The largest benefit, in fact, of Open Source is to add trust to the process of handling the peoples' ballots.

No Secrets, No Necessary Barriers

There need be no secrets as to how Open Source software works, no barriers to understanding how the count of ballots is done by the machine. It is a good thing to combine machine counts of ballots with a sampled hand count in order to provide a final assurance that the election results are correct.

Transparency Assures the Public is Served

The ability to see the process working beneath the surface, to see what is happening in the basic democratic process, is the only real assurance the public has that the right things are being done. The press, a powerful agent of information for the public, functions best when transparency is standard. The inability of either press or public to determine what happened in questioned elections is almost entirely due to a lack of the transparency available through Open Source. Of course, the design and execution of Open Source voting systems is also important. A poor design, a badly built Open Source system is not good simply because it is Open Source. Transparency and the ability see, know, criticize, and correct, however, is at the heart of the Open Source option.

Service Businesses Enabled

The growth of competitive service businesses is enhanced with Open Source, simply because the information on which it is based is open to all. Universities and other public institutions have full access to Open Source for research and teaching; there is no private company with an exclusive lock on knowledge about a given voting system when Open Source is selected. A company providing services for an Open Source voting system could readily be replaced if it did not perform adequately as to services. On the other

hand, with the present reliance on private company products, once you buy the product, you are stuck. You buy a voting system from Brand X and you must buy support from Brand X, who is the sole source of support services for that product.

Pitfalls and Benefits?

Pitfalls

The biggest pitfall for Open Source voting systems is the need for funds to prepare for and participate in the legally mandated testing and certification which all voting systems must do. Private companies charge prices adequate to compensate for these costs; Open Source contributors do not propose to sell voting applications and thus are at a disadvantage. New York State has a regulation relieving Open Source of some testing expenses and other states may do likewise. The best solution is to have a state or county commission an Open Source voting application and then pay for testing themselves. The net result is much lower cost than simply buying private election systems from vendors. The best bridging of this pitfall is for counties and states to combine to commission an Open Source voting application and then share in its testing costs.

Benefits

The benefits of Open Source voting systems include transparency, quality, and cost. There is a virtue in having many eyes look over code, not to achieve 100% certainty of no errors but to increase the chances of spotting an error before it becomes a problem. The availability of free software to test allows thousands of citizens to test the voting application before it is ready for use.

What Difference Does It Make in Elections?

The ability to use, examine, test, and experiment with Open Source software prior to elections is the key to a trouble-free election. Since the software is free, there is no reason not to use it extensively in training and teaching exercises for both voters and officials alike. With a reduced cost for machines, long lines at voting sites need no longer suppress the vote; all jurisdictions should be able to afford any reasonable number of voting machines.

Transparency

Transparency, the ability to know what is happening in the code, how the count is done, and to learn from test results the expected behavior of the voting application in an actual election, makes all the difference.

Enhances Trust

Trust is not engendered by keeping secrets and asking the public to “trust us to do the right thing.” Only the bright light of public scrutiny, only the complete openness to the press, allows real trust in the most important of our democratic institutions, the means by which we choose to govern ourselves.

Improves Quality and Reliability of Election Procedures

Open Source voting applications enhance the quality and reliability of election procedures, since volume use and testing by the Open Source community can reduce errors and increase reliable operation on election day.

Allows for Full Use of Paper Ballots

Most Open Source architectures allow full use of the paper ballot as a standard expression of both the choices open to the voter and the choices actually made. No one need be denied the benefits of a paper ballot just because a vendor does not have that option available.

Lowers Cost of Elections

Lowering the cost of elections is perhaps the biggest benefit of Open Source software. There is no premium that must be paid for proprietary gear; all components are standard and available off the shelf.

What Difference Does It Make in Government?

Lowers Cost of Elections

The cost of elections is a major expense for county government, and one that is difficult to control. By law, elections must be held. It does not make sense to purchase expensive, dedicated and specialized voting machines which may quickly become obsolete. Open Source software is usually coupled with off the shelf hardware available at commodity prices. With precinct scanner voting systems built with Open Source software and commodity hardware, the price of a voting system drops under \$1,000 for each unit.

Increases Public Support of Government and Lessens Distrust

Since we are a government of, by, and for the people, it is important that government processes such as elections have the support and trust of the people. Even those who do not choose to vote have more confidence in a government which provides transparency and open process in its operations. Open Source increases the support of the public for government and lessens distrust. This is important in the United States and, arguably, even more important in elections held in the developing world.

Increases Public Involvement in Government

Finally, the biggest difference Open Source makes in government is to increase public involvement. The vast Open Source community of code readers, testers, and developers can lead the way towards more citizen participation in government processes, not just in elections, but across the wide range of government activities. The market place in ideas can be organized to affect how government works, the software used by the government, and how the government interacts with the citizen. Open Source voting applications are just one of many instances where the Open Source model is suitable for increasing the public involvement in government.

Please do not hesitate to call me at the numbers below should you have any questions about the above public testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Johnson

--

Richard C. Johnson, Ph.D.
CEO
Open Voting Solutions, Inc.
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631-689-3736 Office
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Hlingbrook@aol.com
12/08/2008 12:40 PM

To
HAVAinfo@eac.gov
cc

Subject
December 8 public meeting testimony

From: Hlingbrook
To: HAVAinfo@eac.gov
Sent: 12/8/2008 12:37:25 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
Subj: (no subject)

Dear EAC:

1. We need to do away with electronic voting machines, that is with DRE's, direct recording electronic voting. Hand counted paper ballots are the way to go. This works in other countries. DRE's are hackable and the manufacturers have been repeatedly dishonest about flaws and have wasted thousands of dollars of taxpayer money. At the very least we must insist on paper ballots counted by optical scanners, any ballots thrown out by the optical scanner as having an error, should be hand counted.
2. "Election day" must be at least a week long (including the weekend) throughout the United States so that greater participation is possible. Each of these days should have longer hours available for voting, not just one day. The goal should be to make it easier for people to vote. The current system unfairly burdens people in hourly jobs and people with children; it is often a much greater hardship for such people to vote than for others. Having a week or more of voting opportunities also reduces the influence of local "press" who may effectively suppress the vote by running "weak or trumped up" accusations on local candidates or inflammatory articles in general, as was done this past presidential election in Miami County, Ohio in the last days and weeks of the presidential election.
3. There should be simple, federally uniform requirements and methods for voter registration. It only makes sense to tie voter registration to social security numbers so that they are mobile when people are caught in a situation of moving during the voting week or weeks. Drivers license numbers are not helpful when people are caught in situations of moving across state lines. Also, voters should be able to register on Election Day and vote with a provisional ballot. This is also a recommendation of the Ohio League of Women Voters. There is no credible evidence of voter fraud in states that

allow same day voting and registration such as Minnesota (and in Ohio during the "golden week").

4. Voting fraud is already a felony (at least in my state of Ohio); election and voter suppression fraud need to also be felonies. I support the legislation to increase penalties for voter suppression, legislation that was introduced by then Senator Obama.

5. It should be illegal for the person in a state who is in charge of election administration to also chair a political party or to hold any office of a political party. For example, in my state of Ohio, in 2004, it was ridiculous to have Ken Blackwell serving as Secretary of State (in charge of elections) while simultaneously co-chairing the state committee to elect George Bush.

6. Private companies should not be able to claim "proprietary information" regarding voting systems. The election process needs to be transparent.

7. If both social security and motor vehicle data bases are used as aides for voter registration databases, they should not contribute to disenfranchising voters. I've heard of 2 cases in Hamilton county, Ohio, University of Cincinnati students, who thought they had registered to vote through the motor vehicle department and one found out later she was not registered, and re-registered, one did not find out until too late that their registration had not actually been recorded and was not able to vote.

8. Discrepancies in voter registration records can result from Board of Election clerical errors and NOT from an ineligible person trying to vote, these discrepancies have caused difficulties for voters through no fault of the voter. I know of situations where people's social security numbers and birthdates were recorded wrong, this is information that most voters do not have access to, even by checking the internet for their registration status. This probably normally doesn't matter, but if it is in a situation that involves a re-count it could be a contributing matter into whether their vote ultimately counts. No one should ever be dropped from the voter rolls without confirmed notification, a chance for hearing through a simple and convenient process, and this process should take place well in advance of election day (at least 60 days). Discrepancies in databases should never be used for public caging lists.

9. Absolute requirements for voter registration and election day ID, such as proof of citizenship, state ID and birth certificates should not be allowed as these unduly burden lower income and elderly citizens. Alternatives are available and used in many states.

10. A higher priority needs to be given to poll worker training and competency. In our state of Ohio, the average age of poll workers is in the 70's! Many poll workers are dedicated public servants who do wonderful jobs, but it is also true that many problems are caused by mistakes made by poll workers. Consideration should be given to requiring states to have two shifts of poll workers on election day, thereby making it much easier to recruit poll workers.

11. States should not be allowed to have very restrictive regulations. For example, in my state of Ohio, votes are not counted when a correctly registered and eligible voter votes in the wrong precinct. Many such voters are correctly re-directed by poll workers to their correct precinct. A few such voters insist on voting in the wrong precinct. However, a

significant number of such voters are not re-directed and are allowed to vote provisionally in the wrong precinct, but then the vote is not counted. This latter category needs remedy by allowing votes to count as long as the voter votes in the correct county. Another answer would be to make people universally registered based on their Social security number and making sure this is verified to the correct precinct later.

Sincerely, Holly Denlinger hlingbrook@aol.com

"Alan Dechert" <alan@openvotingconsortium.org>
12/08/2008 04:16 PM

To
HAVAinfo@eac.gov
cc

Subject
Testimony from Open Voting Consortium

Dear Commissioners:

The principles of self governance require that the voting system belong to the people. There is no place for trade secrets anywhere in the system. This means open source code must replace proprietary code in use today.

It is imperative that you vigorously pursue policies that encourage if not require complete transparency and public ownership of the system.

Alan Dechert
President, Open Voting Consortium
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916-772-5360
cell 916-792-1784

"Nancy Bedell" <nbedell@comcast.net>

12/08/2008 03:58 PM

To
HAVAinfo@eac.gov
cc

Subject
December 8 Public Meeting Testimony

Dear Election Assistance Committee:

Thank you for requesting input on election administration as you continue to study and improve elections in the US.

From our Michigan study of election issues and administration I recommend the following:

1. Ban all DRE voting equipment from elections in the USA. All voting equipment is unreliable and hack able. We cannot know what is going on in the equipment even with pre-election testing. The best solution would be to count votes by hand as Canada and several other democracies do. Only when all voters use paper ballots can we do audits and recounts that has any validity.
2. Study and implement universal voter registration. Many other countries require the federal government to get and maintain voter registration. Voters can opt out if they wish, but most would opt in. Only a few portions of the total information held by Social Security or other federal lists should be used for this purpose preventing privacy issues. Having voter registration taken out of private hands and making the change of address process more simplified would prevent many of the problems that still persist with voter registration , misunderstanding about use of provisional ballots when different documents have different voter addresses.
3. Proclaim Election day a national holiday. This would allow all citizens to participate more fully in this core process of democracy as poll workers, challengers, aids to voters, etc. If we believe in democracy wholeheartedly then citizens of all economic background should be able to participate fully.
4. If early voting is mandated make sure that chain of custody issues are not overlooked. Ballots which have been tabulated must be secure at all times to avoid fraud.

5. As long as electronic tabulators are used in voting mandate an election night audit of one randomly selected race to attain some assurance of accuracy of the equipment. If serious anomalies are found the audit process should escalate appropriately as statisticians advise. Use as standard the National Audit Summit's "Principles and Best Practices for Post-Election Audits" 2008 found at www.electionaudits.org and sponsored by Brennan Center for Justice, Common Cause and other state organizations studying and promoting election audits.

Thank you for soliciting input from citizen activists and professionals.

Nancy Bedell

--

Nancy Bedell <nbedell@comcast.net>
4508 Winged Foot Dr., S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616.285.4792

"Blake, Lou Ann" <LBlake@nfb.org>

12/08/2008 02:35 PM

To

HAVAinfo@eac.gov

cc

"Riccobono, Mark" <MRiccobono@nfb.org>, "Pare, John" <JPare@nfb.org>, "McCarthy, Jim" <JMcCarthy@nfb.org>, "Morman, Ed" <EMorman@nfb.org>

Subject

December 8 public meeting testimony

December 8, 2008

Chair Rosemary E. Rodriguez
Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Sent via e-mail to HAVAinfo@eac.gov

Dear Chairwoman Rodriguez:

Thank you for soliciting public comments in advance of the Election Assistance Commission's December 8th public meeting concerning the 2008 Election Day Survey and voting system performance. As the nation's largest membership organization of blind persons in the United States, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is committed to ensuring that our federal, state, and local elections are accessible to all citizens.

Under our grant provided by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, the NFB has conducted projects to assist blind voters in exercising their right to cast a private and independent ballot, as well as to evaluate the voting experience of blind voters during the 2008 national election. On November 4, 2008, the NFB conducted Project VIP (Voting Independently and Privately), a toll-free hotline that blind voters across the United States called when they experienced problems in casting an independent and private ballot.

The calls received on the Project VIP hotline fell into four general categories: an accessible voting machine was either not present at the polling place or it was present but not set up; technical difficulties with the accessible machine were not resolved and the blind voter had to have sighted assistance to cast their vote; technical difficulties with the

accessible machine were resolved and the blind voter was able to cast a private and independent ballot; and, the poll workers did not know how to operate the accessible machine, and, as a result, the blind voter had to have sighted assistance to cast their ballot. A majority of the calls to the Project VIP hotline, representing thirty-five percent of the total calls, were from blind voters who ultimately had to use sighted assistance to cast their ballot because the poll workers did not know how to operate the accessible voting machine. The second most frequently encountered problem, representing thirty-two percent of the total calls, was technical issues with the accessible voting machine that were not resolved, forcing the blind voter to use sighted assistance to cast their ballot. Approximately twelve percent of the calls were from blind voters who were unable to vote privately and independently because either there was no accessible machine in the polling place or because the accessible machine was not set up. Thus a total of seventy-nine percent of the calls to the Project VIP hotline were from voters who were unable to vote privately and independently.

Following the November 4, 2008, national election, a nationwide random sample telephone survey was conducted for the NFB by the firm of Hollander, Cohen, and McBride to assess the incidence of voting among blind people of voting age and their experience voting in this election. To obtain statistically accurate data, a total of five hundred surveys of blind individuals aged eighteen or older were completed. Preliminary data from this recently completed survey indicate that ninety percent of eligible blind individuals voted in the November 4, 2008, election. The data also indicates that seventy-two percent of blind individuals who voted were very satisfied with their experience. Five percent of the blind voters surveyed reported being somewhat dissatisfied with their experience and three percent reported being very dissatisfied with their experience. The final survey data will be made available to all interested parties in early 2009.

The results of the NFB's national telephone survey indicate that a majority of voting eligible blind Americans exercised their right to cast their vote privately and independently, as guaranteed by HAVA, on November 4, 2008. It may also be concluded from our survey and Project VIP data that a majority of states are in compliance with the HAVA requirement that at least one accessible voting machine be available at each polling place for federal elections. While the vast majority of blind voters were satisfied with their voting experience, some voters, as evidenced by the Project VIP hotline, encountered problems, such as malfunctioning machines and poorly trained poll workers. The NFB urges the EAC to take the necessary steps to ensure that poll workers are sufficiently trained in the operation of accessible voting machines and that sufficient technical support is available at the polling place to efficiently resolve technical issues so that no blind American is denied the right to cast their vote privately and independently.

Sincerely,

Lou Ann Blake
HAVA Project Manager
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

"leev2@juno.com" <leev2@juno.com>

12/08/2008 02:37 PM

To

HAVAINfo@eac.gov

cc

Subject

December 8 public meeting testimony

To: US Election Assistance Commission

From: Valerie Lee

7510 Arundel Rd.

Dayton, OH 45426

(937) 837-5483

RE: Concerns with respect to our election process

Having been very involved with the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, I would like to comment on ways that I see as impediments to a fair and orderly election process in the United States.

a) It worked to my advantage when "no excuse" absentee voter laws were passed in the state of Ohio. Since I was totally opposed to electronic voting machines, it allowed me a method to submit a paper ballot and I could vote at my leisure instead of trying to organize my life around a one date opportunity to exercise my right to vote.

b) Along the same line, I think early voting encourages citizens to participate in the voting process. It would also be helpful if people could register and vote at the same time.

c) Having multiple places to vote (such as grocery stores, shopping centers, etc.) would also increase voter participation. I was pleased to see that system in operation while visiting in the state of Nevada during an election.

d) That leads to a recommendation for a uniform system of voter registration and voting instead of systems in one state that appear to encourage voter suppression and much more liberal laws in other states where citizens are more likely to participate in the process. Voter ID requirement, in particular, should be uniform and not discriminatory against minorities and the elderly.

e) After the '04 presidential election, I became much more aware of how effectively the person in the position of Secretary of State can influence the voting process. That position should never be held by a person who also serves as the chair of a candidate's election as was the case with Ken Blackwell in Ohio.

f) Areas of the city with high voter turnout should not be penalized by insufficient number of voting machines and precinct staffing when persons in other parts of the city can vote with ease.

I appreciate your review of the election process and I hope your efforts will result in some positive changes so all who are eligible to vote will be active participants in this treasured right and responsibility as citizens of the US.