



Working Together for Secure and Accurate Elections

Contact Person:

David Beirne, Executive Director
Election Technology Council
14173 NW Freeway, #239
Houston, TX 77040
Ph: 713.896.9292
Cell: 281.772.4548
e-mail: dbeirne@electiontech.org

For Immediate Release

ELECTION TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL: ITIF REPORT ECHOES INDUSTRY CONCERNS

Houston, TX – September 20, 2007 - The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) released a report this week detailing the known limitations associated with the use of paper trails in conjunction with electronic voting. The ITIF also points to the importance of physical security measures which serve as a deterrent to tampering and also serves as an important evidentiary tool in a post-election examination. The report is one of the best examinations of the entire issue of voting security to date.

“The ITIF report is a very good assessment of the market and the need for a cautious approach as the U.S. Congress considers federal legislation. If Congress begins dictating the exact form and shape of future voting systems, the American voter is going to suffer in the long run. Rather than focusing on technology design, Congress should clearly identify performance standards to allow for innovation,” said David Beirne, Executive Director of the Election Technology Council.

Although the ITIF report highlights the issues surrounding electronic voting well, the Election Technology Council feels a few important points were left out of the report that are critical for us to stress:

1. Prior to being deployed in an election, state laws require the conduct of logic and accuracy tests to verify the correct tabulation of test votes. Additionally, many states conduct post election auditing of electronic voting systems as well as parallel testing in which equipment is pulled from the field on election day and verified for its correct tabulation settings;
2. State and local officials possess the ability to conduct hash code testing to verify the operating software is the same as the one certified by the Voting System Test Laboratories. This is done by utilizing the hash codes assigned by the National Software Reference Library (NSRL). This step was introduced by the United States Election Assistance Commission requiring all voting system manufacturers to register each version of software/firmware with the NSRL;

3. With proper administrative procedures in the local polling place, the current usage of thermal “reel-to-reel” printers do not eliminate voter anonymity;

The ITIF report also recommends a preference given for those vendors who disclose source code information to the general public. The ETC feels that this is contrary to standard business practices. A better approach is through controlled disclosure of source code to parties as authorized under state law (i.e., state and federal election authorities). Disclosing source code information to any interested party would represent a potential disastrous precedent for business and greatly diminish the incentive for future market entries. “Security through obscurity” is not the mantra of the Election Technology Council as software is currently available for review as required under state law.

The overall challenges facing the voting system industry are illustrated well and steps should be taken to balance the existing concerns of all parties. Although other technologies may be developed and marketed, the customers (i.e., state and local governments) will only be interested in purchasing new technologies if the following fundamentals are illustrated:

1. The technology is not complicated and possesses a relative ease of use for both voters and poll workers alike;
2. The technology meets state and federal requirements;
3. The technology is not solely dependent upon the vendor;
4. The technology is not cost prohibitive;

When bringing a product to the marketplace, it is often the cost prohibitive nature of technology and its complexity or perceived complexity which can be a limiting factor in the acceptance of innovative technologies.

Copies of the ITIF report are available from their website, www.itif.org.

About the Election Technology Council (www.electiontech.org)

The Election Technology Council (ETC) consists of companies that offer voting system technology hardware products, software and services to support the electoral process. The ETC represents manufacturers of the voting equipment used by over 90% of the population in the United States. These companies have organized as an industry trade association to work together to address common issues facing the industry. Membership in the ETC is open to any company in the election systems marketplace. Current members of the Election Technology Council include Election Systems & Software, Hart InterCivic, Premier Election Solutions and Sequoia Voting Systems.

####