



New Yorkers for Verified Voting

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April 15, 2009

An Open Letter to Vendors of Voting Equipment for New York

To: Mr. Jack A. Blaine, Chief Executive Officer of Sequoia/Dominion Voting Systems *and*
Mr. Aldo Tesi, Chief Executive Officer and President of Elections Systems and Software (ES&S)

From: New Yorkers for Verified Voting, Dr. Wanda Warren Berry, Director

The New York State Board of Elections announced last week that your companies must submit your voting systems in their final form for certification testing by the end of this month. We are writing to focus your attention on the growing ill-will that many New Yorkers feel toward the voting machines your companies have offered for use in New York. Reports of failures of your companies' equipment and service from around the world have understandably increased voter skepticism about the forthcoming change in New York. [A review of the *Daily Voting News* during recent months will offer some examples justifying our concern. See www.votersunite.org or www.nyvv.org.]

In the case of the Sequoia-Dominion Image-Cast, the problem of creating enthusiasm for the change from New York's lever voting machines to the paper ballot-scanner system has been aggravated by, for example, the egregious "slot" that would have allowed insertion of ballots directly into the ballot box. While we have been assured that there will be a permanent "fix" of this problem, this obvious fault continues to raise questions about Sequoia's understanding of election security. In addition, many New York counties had serious problems during the first deployment of the ballot-marking devices last Fall. Some report that Sequoia never responded to their calls for assistance.

With regard to the ES&S system, the fact that the company pulled out of the proposed "pilot" use of the system in Erie County this Spring has enabled critics of the move toward paper ballot-scanner systems to say the company is unwilling to allow use of the scanner in a situation where there would have been a 100% hand-count to verify the scanner count. This withdrawal has enabled some to surmise that ES&S expects the same kinds of problems it encountered elsewhere in providing adequate service when the systems were first deployed.

With regard to both systems currently in the certification process in New York, citizens are outraged over the proposed increase in costs over the original contract. The present economic crisis together with negative experiences with the machines during demonstrations and first deployments is making New Yorkers increasingly impatient with the move toward new voting equipment.

To encourage citizen confidence, we believe your companies need to

- Announce plans to improve the quality of your equipment. Quality voting equipment requires security, accuracy, and accessibility as well as workability for the average pollworker.
- Announce plans to guarantee adequate staff to support first deployments of the new equipment.
- Negotiate supportive policies for software licensing fees, especially for the small counties.
- Promise adherence to the original prices established when contracts were first negotiated.
- Announce a provision for "open-source" software.

New Yorkers for Verified Voting has supported paper ballot-ballot marker-ballot scanner systems out of our commitment to a verifiable, accessible, accurate and auditable system based on voter-marked paper ballots. However, we are thus far disappointed in the willingness of vendors to guarantee quality equipment, service, and reasonable pricing.

We ask you to publish your plans about these matters as soon as possible. The public needs assurance of your commitment to providing equipment and service that will support democracy at prices manageable in today's economy.

cc. NY State Board of Elections
Ms. Michelle M. Shafer, Vice President, Communication and External Affairs, Sequoia
Mr. Gary Crump, Chief Operating Officer, ES&S