



ILLINOIS BALLOT INTEGRITY PROJECT SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY CHAPTER

635 Chicago Ave • Suite 127 • Evanston • IL • 60202

Phone: (847) 644-2654 • FAX: (847) 556-0363 • email: mail@protectthevote.us

www.ballot-integrity.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Bob Wilson – (847) 644-2654

ILLINOIS BALLOT INTEGRITY PROJECT OPPOSES SEQUOIA CERTIFICATION BY STATE

October 16, 2005. The Illinois Ballot Integrity Project (IBIP) will present its views opposing the proposed certification of Sequoia Voting Systems AVC Edge® Touch Screen Direct Reporting Electronic (DRE) devices by the Illinois Board of Elections when the Board convenes its regular monthly meeting on Monday, October 17th. The Board previously gave provisional approval to the system on September 19th by a vote of 8-0.

“We believe that the Board’s action on September 19th was precipitous at best,” said Bob Wilson, chairperson of the Suburban Cook County Chapter of IBIP, adding, “Absent federal certification, it seems premature to consider certifying this equipment for Illinois.”

IBIP’s investigation of the Sequoia Touch Screen unit shows that it does not comply with the 2002 Voting Systems Standards as required by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), the Federal Election Commission (FEC), the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) or the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED). Thus far, Sequoia voting system components, including the Touch Screen unit, are only certified as compliant with much older 1990 standards which were replaced by HAVA in 2002.

At issue in Cook County and the City of Chicago are contracts with Sequoia Voting Systems, Inc. of Oakland, California, which total approximately \$50 million for the purchase of touch screen voting terminals, Optech Insight® optical scanners, software, central tabulating systems, servers and associated peripherals and maintenance. Both the City and the County plan to apply for federal grants to pay for the systems and components.

“The rush to certification is driven by the federal grant deadline which requires that voting systems be certified by January 1, 2006, and the logistics of delivering, installing and testing systems before the March 26, 2006 primary elections,” said Wilson. “Sequoia submitted the lowest bid by quoting prices for systems that don’t meet federal standards, and months after the contracts were signed they have yet to receive proper certification,” he continued.

In addition, the touch screen units proposed by Sequoia would print a paper record, supposedly to meet HAVA standards. However, that record will purport to display the voter’s choices in the form of a barcode. This violates the Illinois Election Code which requires that the paper record “. . . be printed in a clear, readily readable format that can be easily reviewed by the voter for completeness and accuracy.”

“It’s obvious that the vast majority of Illinois voters wouldn’t be able to easily read a barcode and review it for ‘completeness and accuracy’” said Roy Lipscomb, another IBIP member who has investigated this component of the system.

The Illinois Ballot Integrity Project is a non-partisan public interest group that seeks to protect American democracy by promoting election transparency and counting every vote.

###