

Alternative Voting Technologies Task Force
Report to LWVSC Board and Reauthorization Request
March 9, 2013

On March 12, 2011, the Board of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina authorized the creation of an Alternative Voting Technologies Task Force. During the next two years the task force was charged to examine available information and periodically share collected information with LWVSC members, utilizing the SC Voter and statewide meetings, such as Convention and Council.

This report is presented to the Board of the LWVSC at the conclusion of the two-year authorization of this task force.

Task Force Activities

An email list was created and all League members were invited to participate. News articles pertaining to voting technologies were shared with this list.

The following articles have appeared in the SC Voter:

- South Carolina's Voting Machines II: Auditing the Voting Machines (Spring 2011)
- Voting Equipment: An Overview (Fall 2011)
- South Carolina's Voting Machines: A Post-Election Status Report (Winter 2011)
- Election Verification in South Carolina (Spring 2012)
- Ensuring the Future Integrity of the Vote (Spring 2012)
- League Meets with Legislative Audit Council (Summer 2012)
- A Full and Frank Exchange of Views (A description of our meeting with the Elections Systems and Software executives, Spring 2013)
- What Happened on Election Day in Richland County (Spring 2013)

A panel, *Making Every Vote Count: Ensuring the Integrity of Our State's Voting System*, was included in the Convention program (2011). Participants were The Honorable Joseph Neal (S. C. House of Representatives, Dist 70), Mr. Frank Heindel, Dr. Duncan Buell and Dr. Eleanor Hare.

In April, Dr Buell was invited to testify to a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee by Sen. Chip Campsen.

In June 2012, representatives of our League met with the South Carolina General Assembly Legislative Audit Council (LAT) to discuss voting systems. A document summarizing League activity on voting machines since 2005 was prepared for the LAT and is available on our web site at

<http://lwvsc.org/files/lacpresentation20120628.pdf>.

A representative of Clear Ballot, a Massachusetts company specializing in accurate ballot counting and auditing, met with the task force co-chairs and other League members when they visited South Carolina.

In response to problems in Richland County in the November 2012 General Election, Dr. Buell was invited to provide a quantitative analysis of the election data derived from the voting system.

In December 2012, League members met with executives of Elections System & Software to observe a beta version of their next generation of voting machine, the ExpressVote.

In January 2013, League members met with staff of the SC State Election Commission to discuss problems in the 2012 General Election, ways of increasing voter registration and status of any search for new equipment. A report of this meeting will be available soon.

Assessment of the Current Situation

After the problems in Richland County in the 2012 General Election, the SC legislature may move quickly to replace the current technology. Some counties have been having difficulty with long waits for repairs to their iVotronics and, because ES&S no longer manufactures their iVotronics, future maintenance problems will occur. (*Editorial comment:* Future contracts with manufacturers should specify a period of time that the manufacturer commits to continue manufacture of the purchased machines.)

The new ES&S voting machine, the ExpressVote, has major problems, beginning with the fact that the voter cannot verify the ballot information that will be counted by examining the ballot. The voter may think that s/he is seeing a list of names that will be counted, but it is the barcode, not the list, that is read by the scanner that counts the vote.

Duncan Buell regularly attends meetings of the computer community concerned with voting technology. The technology that is being presented is centered around the use of off-the-shelf computers and other components, called commodity hardware. A printed ballot, which can be audited and recounted, becomes the official record of the voter's intent. This approach is very much cheaper than buying special-purpose hardware, such as the iVotornic.

Task Force Request for Reauthorization

During the two years of its existence, the Task Force has provided the organizational structure to study existing technology and continue to inform members of developments as we become aware of them. The existence of the Task Force has facilitated interaction between the League and other entities as we were invited to

meet with manufacturers (ES&S, Clear Ballot) and with the Legislative Audit Council. Dr. Buell, co-chair of the Task Force, has been consulted regularly by Richland County legislators interested in the integrity of elections.

The organization of the Task Force allows the League to target discussion to those members who have expressed an interest in this issue, to interact with other entities such as the SEC and voting machine manufacturers, to coordinate our interaction with the media, and to respond quickly to activity toward selecting a new technology.

The co-chairs of the Task Force request reauthorization for another two years.

Submitted by Duncan Buell and Eleanor Hare