



Susan Bysiewicz
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

For Immediate Release:
November 5, 2007

For more information:
Derek Slap: (860) 509-6255
Cell: (860) 573-2019

- NEWS RELEASE -

BYSIEWICZ STEPS UP SECURITY PRECAUTIONS BEFORE ELECTION

SAMPLE OF MEMORY CARDS USED IN NEW MACHINES TO BE TESTED FOR
TAMPERING; RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS DISPATCHED ACROSS THE STATE

Hartford: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz is announcing that her office has launched several initiatives in order to ensure tomorrow's municipal general election in 163 towns and cities runs smoothly.

- The Secretary of the State's office has formalized an historic partnership with the University of Connecticut's Voting Technology Research Center that will help protect the state's elections from computer hackers, and programming errors.
- In addition to the memory card testing, Secretary Bysiewicz is once again mobilizing rapid response teams which will fan out across the state and handle questions and concerns from local election officials.

This is the first general election held in Connecticut since Secretary Bysiewicz decertified the use of lever machines in July of 2007. While some municipalities have used the new machines before, this Tuesday 118 towns and cities will be using them for the first time. (See attachment for detailed list of towns).

“Tuesday marks the very end of the lever voting machine era in Connecticut,” said Bysiewicz. “Change is never easy but I’m confident voters will feel comfortable using optical scan machines – a safer, simpler, and more secure method of voting.”

The Secretary of the State’s office, in collaboration with Registrars of Voters and election officials, has been preparing the state for this change for nearly two years. The Secretary’s office has delivered voting equipment to every city and town and trained 3,000 election officials and poll workers in over 200 sessions held in more than 30 regional training centers across the state.

Still, in order to ensure the integrity of the election, Secretary Bysiewicz is taking the additional steps of testing memory cards used in the machines and reactivating rapid response teams for Election Day.

Memory cards: Under the agreement with UCONN, before the election scientists will test a sample of all memory cards used in the optical scan voting machines to ensure that each card is programmed correctly. The pre-election scans will also detect evidence of tampering, and any irregularities that might affect election results.

“I’m not a conspiracy theorist but I am compulsive when it comes to maintaining the integrity of our elections,” said Bysiewicz. “Any time you use a computer or a computer programmed memory card to collect or process election results, it’s essential that safeguards are put in place to prevent hackers or just innocent programming mistakes from affecting the election.”

Alexander A. Shvartsman, Director of UCONN’s Voting Technology Research Center said, “The pre-election and post-election testing of voting machine memory cards is a significant step in ensuring that in Connecticut the voting machines are properly programmed for election and that the machines are not electronically tampered with before and during the election. In addition to checking cards for failures, this also serves as an added deterrent for those attempting to tamper with elections by altering voting machines. With the additional checking of memory cards, Connecticut continues to be among the leading states where electronic voting security is taken very seriously.”

Rapid Response Teams: Secretary Bysiewicz is also mobilizing rapid response teams which effectively dealt with election related questions during the primary in

September. The teams will be made up of senior level staff from the Secretary of the State's office and will focus on the dozens of towns and cities which are using the optical scan machines for the first time. In addition, teams will concentrate on communities such as Hartford and Bridgeport, which have many polling precincts and dozens of voting machines. Technicians from LHS Associates, which manufactures the optical scan machines, will also be positioned at every town in Connecticut.

“We learned from the primary election that rapid response teams provide another important layer of customer service to local election officials and voters,” said Secretary Bysiewicz.

Optical scan voting is the most common form of voting technology in America today, with a majority of counties nationwide voting on optical scan machines. During the 2006 general election, optical scan technology was used in 1,752 counties nationwide and we join our New England neighbors Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island in using this technology.

-END-