

## **Voting Equipment Task Force**

**Minutes of August 6, 2015**

**The members of the Voting Equipment Task Force met on August 6, 2015, at 2:00 pm in the Governor's State Room at the State House.**

**Voting Equipment Task Force Members present:**

**Secretary of State Nellie M. Gorbea, Chairperson**

**Melissa Long, RI Department of State**

**Rob Rock, RI Department of State**

**Christopher Fowler, RI Department of State**

**Bob Rapoza, Board of Elections**

**Bob Cooper, Governor's Commission on Disabilities**

**Joseph McNamara, RI Democratic Party**

**James Spooner, Moderate Party of RI**

**Ken McGill, City of Pawtucket**

**Renay Omisore, City of Providence**

**Steven Sepe, City of Cranston**

**Dale Holberton, Town of South Kingstown**

**Louise Phaneuf, Town of Burrillville**

**Kathleen Connell, AARP Rhode Island**

**John Marion, Common Cause Rhode Island**

**Pilar McCloud, NAACP-Providence**

**Jane Koster, League of Women Voters**

**Voting Equipment Task Force Members absent:**

**Janet Ruggiero, Town of North Providence**

**Rick O'Neill, City of Newport**

**Jose Batista, RI Latino Civic Fund**

**Brandon Bell, RI Republican Party**

**Channavy Chhay, Center for Southeast Asians**

**Drew Milligan, Providence Millennial Taskforce**

**Travis Escobar, Providence Millennial Taskforce**

**Tim Howe, Rhode Island Military Organization**

**Staff present:**

**Steve Gerencser, Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff**

**Gonzalo Cuervo, Senior Advisor & Director of Communications**

**Jason Martiesian, Director of Legislative Affairs**

**Guests:**

**Paul Caranci, Democracy Live, Inc.**

**Kate Bowden, RI Disability Law Center**

**Lindsay Ferranti, House Policy Director**

**Elena Saltzman, Fellow, RI Department of State**

**Will Norton-Bliss, Fellow, RI Department of State**

**Ysalia Rodriguez, RI Department of State**

**Dawn Piers, Town of South Kingstown**

**Davon Williams, NAACP Youth Organization**

**Jacqueline Schulz, Town of Portsmouth**

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Secretary Gorbea calls the meeting to order at 2:06 pm and recognizes the 50th anniversary of the federal Voting Rights Act.**

## **II. ROLL CALL**

**Eight members are absent.**

## **III. MINUTES**

**The Task Force will vote on the minutes for the July 30th meeting and the August 6th meeting minutes at next week's meeting.**

## **IV. VOTING EQUIPMENT OVERVIEW**

**Department of State staff provides an overview of Rhode Island's standards for voting equipment and describes all components of a voting system.**

## **V. DISCUSSION**

**Task Force members discuss potential minimum requirements for Rhode Island's Request for Proposal (RFP) for voting equipment.**

**Suggestions for minimum requirements to be included in RFP are:**

- Ability to tabulate under-votes and blank votes, in addition to results for each candidate**

- **Inclusion of an Application Program Interface (API) for election results**
- **Sip-and-puff method of voting included in accessible ballot-marking devices**
- **Capacity for handling languages in addition to English and Spanish**
- **Ballots that can be marked with blue or black ink, rather than pencil or special ballot markers**
- **Ballot-on-demand printer capabilities**
- **Precinct scanners that are able to read every ballot style in the state, not just the ballot style for the precinct in which the device is used**
- **Optical scan devices that are able to read ballots with multiple pages.**
- **Battery backups built into voting devices**
- **Highly customizable ballots**
- **Precinct scanners that can identify to a voter which race is over-voted**
- **Precinct scanners that display number of votes cast, not number of ballot sheets**

**Suggestions for information to be requested from vendors in RFP are:**

- **Temperature requirements for storing and operating voting equipment and if machines generate heat**
- **Ballot box materials that avoid frequent static electricity generated by current ballot boxes**
- **A switch light or other device that notifies officials if there are any**

**ballots left inside the ballot box**

**Task Force members briefly discuss whether new voting booths are needed. The state currently owns 4,500 voting booths in good condition. Members also discuss a recently passed statute that allows referenda question language to be pasted onto voting booth side panels and whether other existing voting booths had bigger panel walls. Department of State agrees to look into whether other voting booths have larger side panels that can accommodate referenda question language being pasted onto voting booth sides and still be easily read.**

**Task Force ends discussion.**

**No votes were taken.**

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**RI Disability Law Center notes that AutoMARK ballot-marking devices provide ballot verification for voters with disabilities and requests that this feature is kept in new accessible voting equipment.**

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting adjourns at 3:30 pm.**

**Handouts:**

**The following documents were distributed at the Task Force meeting:**

- **Minutes from July 30, 2015 meeting**
- **PowerPoint presentation of voting system components**