

Voting Modernization Board Meeting
Testimony of Kim Alexander, President, California Voter Foundation
March 15, 2019

CVF appreciates the extensive investment of time and talent and energy that has gone into the Voting Systems for All People project and the promise of an alternative voting model that is publicly-owned and meets a range of voters' voting needs.

This is a very important project, to develop a publicly-owned voting system, which can promote public trust and confidence in elections.

One feature of the VSAP project that has been widely anticipated is that the source code utilized in this system will be publicly disclosed. Election security advocates are eager to learn what the county's plans are for doing so.

The VSAP project also represents the largest investment in any voting system of public dollars ever made in California and likely anywhere in the United States.

Given that this is an enormous investment of public dollars, the state should ensure it gets out of it what it sought when California enacted legislation in 2013 to enable Los Angeles to build and deploy a publicly-owned voting system.

Senate Bill 360 of 2013 was the vehicle that facilitated the development and certification of the VSAP voting system. SB 360's intent language states that:

- The Secretary of State study and encourage the development of voting systems that use nonproprietary source code
- California receive the benefits of the publicly funded development of a nonproprietary voting system in the state, and:
- A local jurisdiction may use available public funds to research and develop a nonproprietary voting system that uses disclosed source codes,

The provisions of the Voting Modernization Board and Voting Modernization Finance Committee were also amended through SB 360 to specifically authorize:

(A) Research and development of a new voting system that has not been certified or conditionally approved by the Secretary of State and uses only nonproprietary software and firmware with **disclosed source code**except for unmodified commercial off-the-shelf software and firmware, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 19209.

Therefore, we urge Voting Modernization Board to allow the release of public dollars to Los Angeles County for the purpose of funding a publicly owned, nonproprietary voting system on the condition that the county will publicly disclose the voting system's source code and provide a timeline to the public for doing so.

I would also like to highlight to this board some important developments in the open source voting technology space - the Dept. of Defense's DARPA branch announced yesterday that it is investing \$10 million to develop an open source voting system. In addition, San Francisco County is moving forward with open source voting system plans.

Such projects and perhaps others could potentially benefit from the public disclosure of Los Angeles' voting system technology and further the investment of public dollars to support the development of an alternative approach to vendor, market-based proprietary voting systems which are nontransparent and are produced by private companies about which we know very little.

California mitigates the risks of the use of such technology by requiring voter-verified paper ballots and post-election audits. But promoting an alternative business model that gives counties more choices which include systems that utilize disclosed source and open source platforms will go a long way toward expanding voter confidence in the reliability of our voting systems and the election results they produce.