

A New Threat to the Integrity of Our Elections: The Introduction of Internet Voting

2366 Eastlake Ave. East

Suite 311

Seattle, WA 98102

o. 206.723.1941

f. 206.260.3031

48 North Pleasant St.

Suite 304

Amherst, MA 01002

o. 413.253.2700

f. 413.253.2702

www.voteraction.org

Voter Action, and other major election integrity organizations, have joined leading computer scientists in expressing deep concern about the threat posed to our democracy by the introduction of an Internet voting system that creates serious election vulnerabilities. We believe there are safer and more secure ways to address the issues facing military and overseas voting without undermining the integrity of the very votes that we are hoping to protect.

Internet voting is unreliable. With Internet voting, it would be impossible to ensure the accurate counting of votes as cast. Given the absence of any voter-marked paper ballots, an Internet voting system would prevent any meaningful recount or audit from being conducted. The recent recount of the 2008 US Senate contest in Minnesota between Democratic candidate Al Franken and Republican candidate Norm Coleman highlights the value of a voter-marked paper ballot system where ballots reflecting voter intent can be subject to review.

Internet voting is insecure. An Internet voting system presents serious security concerns. Such security concerns led the Pentagon, in 2004, to cancel Internet voting for as many as 100,000 military and overseas voters from seven states, including Washington. There is now overwhelming evidence that electronic voting machines do not meet basic security standards. Top computer security experts across the country agree that the security risks associated with Internet voting would be exponentially greater than the current problems associated with electronic voting machines.

Internet voting undermines the secrecy of the ballot. Under proposed legislation, military and overseas voters would be issued pin numbers to access a website for casting their votes, thereby creating unique and identifiable markers on ballots cast via the Internet. Such markers could be traced back to the individual voters either by the state or by a private party hacking the system, erasing the state constitutional guarantee of absolute secrecy of the vote.

There is an alternative way to improve the voting system for military and overseas voters that does not compromise the integrity of our elections. Military and overseas voters could apply electronically for a paper ballot which they could print from a government website. This would expedite access to such ballots and would address the problem military and overseas voters face when their ballots do not arrive on time in the mail. While such voters would still need to return their ballots via the mail, the concerns around reliability, security, and ballot secrecy associated with Internet voting would not be presented

To learn more about internet voting, visit the Voter Action website at www.VoterAction.org.