

True Vote Connecticut requests that legislators vote against SB 67s Voting Technology Standards Board provisions and vote against SB 181, the full-faced ballot bill.

SB 67 would make the Voting Technology Standards Board a permanent body. We are in favor of making the VTSB permanent, yet not in this ineffective way. The Legislature got it right when it first created the VTSB in 2005, but now, in the current bill [as of 4/18/06], instead of an independent body with actual authority acting as a check and balance, SB 67 essentially mandates that the VTSB become a part of the Office of the Secretary of State.

- It gives the power to appoint board members to the very person who needs to answer to it, undermining its independence.
- It fails to require that the VTSB sign off on technologies that the Secretary certifies for purchase by the towns.
- It does not even require that the VTSB meet.
- Further, in the composition of the board, only one seat mandates the appointment of a member with technical expertise. Having technical expertise available along with people with experience running elections should be the whole point. There should be a minimum of three people with computer security expertise on this board so that there will be the robust debate necessary for true oversight. And oversight is precisely what is needed.

Frankly, the purchase of voting technology is not a normal procurement issue. There are complex technological issues that must be considered; a burden of education that must take place a two way exchange. Those with technological expertise need to learn from those who run elections, just as those who run elections need to learn from technologists about problems with security and smooth functioning of the electronic choices available. The debates around machines that record votes will be matched by equally strong debates around the database technology chosen for a statewide records of voter registration. All of these things have implications for democracy. Would we build highways and not include human engineers with expertise on highway materials, construction, and traffic flow?

SB 181 mandates a full-faced ballot for use in the State. We can expect that technology will change rapidly both because that has been the historical pattern with digital technologies and because the manufacturers have been and are under pressure all over the country to make better products because of security concerns raised about existing machines as well as price, durability, and ease of use. **It is precisely because of the changing options that True Vote believes that it is a mistake to enact a full-faced ballot requirement.**

In the fall of 2005, voters were treated to a demonstration of just three possible voting machines and a study was done on that demonstration, along with input from four focus groups. The results of that study were never made public, nor is there any indication that these results were circulated to manufacturers submitting for the second RFP. We would like to point out that as this study was based on a very limited selection of technologies,

any claims to general validity are suspect. We ought to choose machines according to standards, certifications and an open public process. A full-faced ballot mandate arbitrarily cuts off technological options that might well serve us better in the long run. It is just too soon to limit our choices in this way.

For these reasons, True Vote Connecticut urges legislators to vote against SB 67 if it is submitted without substantial revision, and SB 181 should be completely rejected.

True Vote Connecticut, a non-partisan group, has been working for the last year and a half to be sure that responsible choices are made as the State moves to acquire and deploy new voting technologies to comply with the Help America Vote Act, which was enacted by the federal government in the wake of the 2000 election. The goals of that Act are laudable to provide safe and secure voting that encourages participation by all, including voters with disabilities. However, this Act was made law and moved to implementation long before standards were set and before companies manufacturing equipment had any idea of the standards they would have to meet. All over the country citizens and concerned technologists have been trying to help sort out the issues because citizens want safe and secure elections that are free of tampering. Citizens want their votes to be counted. Politicians ought to want this as well because when anointed by proper elections, they can serve the government with authority and legitimacy.