SAN FRANCISCO ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Commission Policy on Transparency and Security in Voting Systems

Commission general policy statement regarding transparency in voting systems technologies as well as providing for voting systems security

Whereas California Secretary of State Debra Bowen has expressed strong support for a move towards open source election software;

Whereas members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors have recently raised concerns about ratifying a contract for voting machines which did not allow for open source software;

Pursuant to Section 13.105.5, San Francisco Charter which authorizes the Election Commission to establish general policies for the Elections Department, the Elections Commission establishes the following general policies;

First, the Elections Commission endorses the policy of using voting system technologies and software that maximize voting system security while at the same time providing the maximum level of transparency possible to assure voters that their votes will be counted as cast.

Specifically, to ensure the integrity of our elections and to increase public confidence in our government, the Commission endorses the policy that the Department of Elections should make reasonable efforts to select and use voting systems technology, including hardware and software, that at a minimum, is publicly disclosed.

In this context, public disclosure means that members of the public should have at least the right to inspect, test, and comment on such technology in a procurement process and as configured for a specific election independent of the San Francisco Department of Elections or other government agency of the City and County of San Francisco,

Second, the Commission adopts as policy that the Election Department shall endeavor in contracting to prioritize and select if possible, voting systems and vendors which provide the maximum level of security and transparency possible consistent with the principles of public disclosure. This policy will enable the citizenry to understand the methodology involved in the election process, in a manner consistent with ensuring secret ballot protection and voting system security.