

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF FULTON COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA**

DONNA CURLING, an individual; )  
)  
DONNA PRICE, an individual; and )  
)  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FOUNDATION, )  
INC., a non-profit corporation organized )  
and existing under Colorado law; )  
)  
Plaintiffs, )

v. )

CIVIL ACTION  
FILE NO.:

BRIAN P. KEMP, in his official capacity )  
as Secretary of State of Georgia; )  
)  
RICHARD BARRON, in his official )  
capacity as Director of the Fulton County )  
Board of Elections and Registration; )  
)  
MAXINE DANIELS, in her official )  
capacity as Director of Voter Registrations )  
and Elections for DeKalb County; and )  
)  
JANINE EVELER, in her official )  
capacity as Director of the Cobb County )  
Board of Elections and Registration; )  
)  
Defendants. )

**VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR  
DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF AND WRIT OF MANDAMUS**

COME NOW the Plaintiffs, above-named, and show this Honorable Court the following  
for their Complaint:

**INTRODUCTION**

1.

Plaintiffs are electors of the State of Georgia, and an association that includes among its  
members electors of the State of Georgia, whose concerns about the integrity, credibility,

security, and reliability of the electoral process lead them to oppose the use of Georgia’s uncertified, unsafe, and inaccurate Direct Recording Electronic (“DRE”) voting equipment and its related voting system (“Georgia’s DRE-Based Voting System”) in the imminent June 20, 2017, runoff (the “Runoff”) for the 2017 Special Election in Georgia’s Sixth Congressional District.

### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

2.

This case arises under the Constitution and the laws of the State of Georgia. This Court has jurisdiction based upon O.C.G.A. §§ 9-4-1 to -10 to grant declaratory relief; based upon O.C.G.A. §§ 9-5-1 to -11 to grant injunctive relief; and based upon O.C.G.A. §§ 9-6-20 to -28 to grant relief by way of issuing the writ of mandamus.

3.

Venue in this Court is proper under O.C.G.A. § 9-10-30 because Fulton County is the county of residence of at least one of the Defendants against whom substantial equitable relief is prayed.

### **PLAINTIFFS**

4.

Plaintiff DONNA CURLING (“Curling”) is an elector of the State of Georgia, and a resident of Fulton County, Georgia, and of the Sixth Congressional District of the State of Georgia. Curling is the Legislative Liaison of Georgians for Verified Voting and a member of Rocky Mountain Foundation, Inc. Curling joined as a signer of the May 10, 2017, letter to the Georgia Secretary of State requesting a reexamination of Georgia’s DRE-Based Voting System. Curling intends to vote in the Runoff. Curling has direct individual standing to bring the claims asserted in this complaint.

5.

Plaintiff DONNA PRICE (“Price”) is an elector of the State of Georgia, and a resident of DeKalb County, Georgia. Price is the Director of Georgians for Verified Voting and a member of Rocky Mountain Foundation, Inc. Price joined as a signer of the May 10, 2017, letter to the Georgia Secretary of State requesting a reexamination of Georgia’s DRE-Based Voting System. Price has direct individual standing to bring the claims asserted in this complaint.

6.

Plaintiff ROCKY MOUNTAIN FOUNDATION, INC. (“RMF”), is a foreign non-profit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Colorado. RMF’s purpose is to advance the constitutional liberties and individual rights of citizens, with one emphasis on elections, by, among other things, engaging in and supporting litigation. RMF is a membership organization whose membership includes Curling, Price, and other electors of the State of Georgia who are residents of, variously, Fulton County, Cobb County, DeKalb County, and the Sixth Congressional District of the State of Georgia. Several of RMF’s Georgia elector members intend to vote in the Runoff.

7.

Plaintiff RMF has associational standing to bring this complaint on behalf of RMF’s individual Georgia elector members because those members would otherwise have standing to sue in their own right; because the interests RMF seeks to protect are germane to RMF’s purpose; and because neither the claims asserted nor the relief requested herein requires the participation in the lawsuit of RMF’s individual Georgia elector members.

## **DEFENDANTS**

8.

Defendant BRIAN P. KEMP (“Kemp”) is the Secretary of State of Georgia, in which official capacity he is responsible for the orderly and accurate administration of the electoral processes of the State of Georgia, which includes the public duty to conduct reexamination of voting systems when required by O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(b).

9.

Defendant RICHARD BARRON (“Barron”) is the Director of the Fulton County Board of Elections and Registration, in which official capacity he is responsible for conducting the Runoff in Fulton County.

10.

Defendant MAXINE DANIELS (“Daniels”) is the Director of Voter Registrations and Elections for DeKalb County, in which official capacity she is responsible for conducting the Runoff in DeKalb County.

11.

Defendant JANINE EVELER (“Eveler”) is the Director of the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration, in which official capacity she is responsible for conducting the Runoff in Cobb County.

## **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

12.

On June 20, 2017, the Runoff in the Special Election for Georgia’s Sixth Congressional District will be held to replace the previous incumbent, Congressman Tom Price. Advance voting in the Runoff begins on May 30, 2017, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 21-2-385(d).

13.

Georgia's Sixth Congressional District spans portions of Fulton, Cobb, and DeKalb Counties.

14.

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(c) prohibits the use of any kind of DRE voting system not approved by the Secretary of State at any primary or election.

15.

Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System, as currently in use in Georgia counties and reportedly approved by the Secretary of State, consists of the following configuration of components and related firmware and software:

- Optical Scan: AccuVote OS 1.94W
- Touch Screen: R6 – Ballot Station 4.5.2! and TSx – Ballot Station 4.5.2!
- ExpressPoll: ExpressPoll 4000 and 5000; Express Poll 2.1.2 and Security Key 4.5
- Election Management System: GEMS 1.18.22G, GEMS 1.18.22G!
- Honeywell barcode scanner: MK1690-38-12-ISI, used with ExpressPoll pollbooks

(the foregoing, including any additional modifications thereto adopted and approved by Georgia's Secretary of State, "Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System").

16.

To conduct the Runoff in Fulton County, Defendant Barron presently intends to use, and unless enjoined by this Court will use, Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System, including for advance voting beginning on May 30, 2017.

17.

To conduct the Runoff in DeKalb County, Defendant Daniels presently intends to use, and unless enjoined by this Court will use, Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System, including for advance voting beginning on May 30, 2017.

18.

To conduct the Runoff in Cobb County, Defendant Eveler presently intends to use, and unless enjoined by this Court will use, Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System, including for advance voting beginning on May 30, 2017.

19.

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(a) grants ten or more concerned electors the right to require the Secretary of State "at any time" to conduct a reexamination of a previously examined and approved DRE voting system. Specifically, O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(a) reads as follows:

(a) Any person or organization owning, manufacturing, or selling, or being interested in the manufacture or sale of, any direct recording electronic voting system may request the Secretary of State to examine the system. Any ten or more electors of this state may, at any time, request the Secretary of State to reexamine any such system previously examined and approved by him or her. Before any such examination or reexamination, the person, persons, or organization requesting such examination or reexamination shall pay to the Secretary of State the reasonable expenses of such examination. The Secretary of State may, at any time, in his or her discretion, reexamine any such system.

20.

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(b) provides that, upon receiving such a request for reexamination from ten or more electors, the Secretary of State has a duty to reexamine the DRE voting system.

The statute reads as follows:

(b) The Secretary of State shall thereupon examine or reexamine such direct recording electronic voting system and shall make and file in his or her office a report, attested by his or her signature and the seal of his or her office, stating whether, in his or her opinion, the kind of system so examined can be safely and accurately used by electors at primaries and elections as provided in this chapter. If this report states that the system can be so used, the system shall be deemed approved; and systems of its kind may be adopted for use at primaries and elections as provided in this chapter.

21.

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(c) provides that, if reexamination shows that a DRE voting system “*can no longer be safely or accurately used*” then the approval of that system “*shall immediately be revoked by the Secretary of State; and no such system shall thereafter ... be used in this state.*” The statute reads as follows:

(c) No kind of direct recording electronic voting system not so approved shall be used at any primary or election and if, upon the reexamination of any such system previously approved, it shall appear that the system so reexamined can no longer be safely or accurately used by electors at primaries or elections as provided in this chapter because of any problem concerning its ability to accurately record or tabulate votes, the approval of the same shall immediately be revoked by the Secretary of State; and no such system shall thereafter be purchased for use or be used in this state.

22.

Georgia’s election laws contemplate that elections normally required to be conducted using voting equipment may instead be conducted using paper ballots if circumstances so require.

First, O.C.G.A. § 21-2-334 (emphasis added) provides as follows:

**§ 21-2-334. Voting by ballot**

If a method of nomination or election for any candidate or office, or of voting on any question is prescribed by law, in which the use of voting machines is not possible or practicable, or in case, at any primary or election, the number of candidates seeking nomination or nominated for any office renders the use of voting machines for such office at such primary or election impracticable, or if, for any other reason, at any primary or election the use of voting machines wholly or in part is not practicable, the superintendent may arrange to have the voting for such candidates or offices or for such questions conducted by paper ballots. In such cases, paper ballots shall be printed for such candidates, offices, or questions, and the primary or election shall be conducted by the poll officers, and the ballots shall be counted and return thereof made in the manner required by law for such nominations, offices, or questions, insofar as paper ballots are used.

Second, O.C.G.A. § 21-2-281 provides as follows:

***§ 21-2-281. Use of paper ballots where use of voting equipment impossible or impracticable***

In any primary or election in which the use of voting equipment is impossible or impracticable, for the reasons set out in Code Section 21-2-334, the primary or election may be conducted by paper ballot in the manner provided in Code Section 21-2-334.

23.

O.C.G.A. § 21-2, Article 11, Part 2, provides the detailed procedures that are required to be used in precincts that conduct primaries and elections using paper ballots.

**Widely Known, Severe Safety and Accuracy Problems Plague Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System**

24.

Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System is subject to widely known safety and accuracy concerns in at least the following areas:

25.

*First*, numerous critical security vulnerabilities and deficiencies have been recently identified at the State's Center for Election Systems ("CES"). CES is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the voting systems and developing and implementing security procedures for the election management software installed in all county election offices and voting systems. CES also is responsible for programming these systems and accessing and validating the software on these systems. A security breach at the Center could have dire security consequences for the integrity of the technology and all elections carried out in Georgia. CES's cybersecurity was reviewed as a result of a remote electronic intrusion into the voter registration database in March 2017. Security vulnerabilities were reported in an incident report. (Attached as *Exhibit 2*, at 7–12.)



26.

Second, on May 24, 2017 sixteen computer scientists wrote Defendant Kemp expressing profound concerns about the lack of verifiability and poor security of Georgia’s DRE-Based Voting System. (Attached as **Exhibit 3**.) The computer scientists reiterated cybersecurity concerns that they had expressed in a similar letter sent on March 15, 2017, following the remote electronic intrusion into the Georgia voter registration database in March 2017. (**Exhibit 1**, at 7–9.) The computer scientists urged Defendant Kemp to treat the breach at CES “as a national security issue with all seriousness and intensity.” (Ex.3, at 1.) They stated that “a truly comprehensive, thorough and meaningful forensic computer security investigation likely would not be completed in just a few weeks.” (Id.) They warned that the error that occurred in Fulton County on election night could indicate a corrupted database that must be investigated. The computer scientists urged the use of paper ballots. (Id. at 2.)

27.

Third, failures in Georgia’s DRE-Based Voting System caused improper memory cards to be uploaded into the election database during the April 18, 2017, Special Election for the Sixth Congressional District. Defendant Barron told the Fulton County Board of Commissioners that the system did not prevent the uploading of improper election memory cards and data and only generated an unintelligible error message when an attempt was made to export the results from the Election Management System (GEMS) into the Election-Night Reporting system (a separate application from the voting system itself). (**Exhibit 4**.) Federal voting system standards require controls that prevent the introduction of improper memory cards. Unconventional procedures, including deleting precinct voting results in the database, reportedly were used to correct this error, but the corrections themselves lacked a verifiable audit trail. It was reported in the press

that Kemp initiated an investigation of the April 18 Fulton County system failure. On information and belief, that investigation has not been completed. Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System should not be considered for use while last month's failures are still under investigation and analysis. A system with such deficiencies cannot be safely and accurately used in the upcoming Runoff.

28.

Fourth, Fulton County transmits ballot data from touchscreen machine memory cards to the GEMS tabulation server (*i.e.*, the Election Management System used in Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System) via modem in an unauthorized configuration that, on information and belief, does not use adequate encryption. At one point in time, the system encryption key was in the public domain, rendering the encryption useless, and it is unclear whether a new encryption key has now been implemented. (Ex. 1, at 3, ¶ 9.) Voting systems standards require that security of data transmission be assured. The lack of security in transmission exposes the system to, and invites, attack.

29.

Fifth, the physical security of DRE voting equipment used in Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System has been inadequate during pre- and post-election machine storage, leaving the machines vulnerable to attack and compromise.

30.

Sixth, as noted in the Elector Group's letter of May 17, 2017, (Ex. 2, at 4), Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System appears not to meet fundamental voting system standards for federal certification, including mandatory audit capacity standards required by the Help America Vote Act, 52 U.S.C. § 21081. The DRE voting equipment used in Georgia's DRE-Based Voting

System provides no audit trail or verifiable record that can be used to recover from a malicious attack, human error, or software failure. Any such failure is difficult or impossible to detect, unlike errors in a paper ballot system, in which problems can be isolated and manually corrected.

31.

Seventh, the Elector Group's letters of May 10, 2017, (Ex.1), and of May 17, 2017, (Ex. 2), both detail numerous other significant security and accuracy concerns that preclude Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System from being used safely and accurately in the June 20 Runoff.

32.

Eighth, Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System is fifteen years old, relies upon a back-end database that is not industrial-strength, and runs on an operating system that is currently past its support life. Such a relatively old configuration is inherently vulnerable to hacking, errors, and other mischief.

**Electors Have Requested Reexamination of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System**

33.

On May 10, 2017, eleven Georgia electors ("Elector Group"), including members of Plaintiff RMF, filed a request with Defendant Kemp for a reexamination of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System to determine whether the equipment can be safely and accurately used in the Runoff. (Ex. 1.)

34.

The Elector Group's May 10 letter provided a list of 12 specific issues that cause Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System to fail the requirements for safe and accurate use.

35.

On May 17, 2017, the Elector Group sent a second letter to Defendant Kemp expressing additional concerns, and detailing system deficiencies that cause Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System to fail mandated requirements for safe and accurate use. (Ex. 2.)

36.

The May 10 and May 17 letters from the Elector Group to Defendant Kemp explain how Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System is known to be vulnerable to undetectable malfunctions and malicious manipulation that cannot be corrected.

37.

Plaintiffs Curling and Prince notified Defendant Kemp that they wished to add their signatures to the May 10 and May 17 requests and join the Elector Group.

38.

To date, Defendant Kemp has not responded to the Elector Group's request for reexamination of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System.

39.

The kind of diligent reexamination, forensic analysis, and significant mitigation measures likely to be necessary in order to permit Defendant Kemp to determine properly whether Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System can be safely and accurately used would require months of expert work, making the use of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System in the upcoming Runoff impracticable, if not impossible.

**Irreparable Harm / Inadequate Remedy at Law**

40.

Georgia electors who cast their votes in person in the Runoff during the advance voting period (from May 30 to June 16, 2017) will be required to cast their votes using Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System.

41.

Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System cannot be used safely and accurately by electors voting in the Runoff because Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System is demonstrably vulnerable to undetectable malfunctions and malicious manipulation that cannot be corrected.

42.

Each of Plaintiff Curling and the Georgia elector members of Plaintiff RMF who reside in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District will be irreparably harmed in the exercise of their constitutional, fundamental right to vote in the Runoff if they are required to cast their own individual votes on Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System, which is unsafe and inaccurate by virtue of being demonstrably vulnerable to undetectable malfunctions and malicious manipulation that cannot be corrected.

43.

Each of Plaintiff Curling and the Georgia elector members of Plaintiff RMF who reside in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District will be irreparably harmed in the exercise of their constitutional, fundamental right to vote in the Runoff if their votes are tabulated together with the votes of *other* voters that may be cast on Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System, which is unsafe and inaccurate by virtue of being demonstrably vulnerable to undetectable malfunctions and malicious manipulation that cannot be corrected.

44.

These harms to Plaintiff Curling and the Georgia elector members of Plaintiff RMF who reside in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District from Defendants' use of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System are imminent because advance voting begins on May 30, 2017, and will continue daily until June 16, 2017.

45.

Plaintiff Curling and the Georgia elector members of Plaintiff RMF who reside in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District cannot be adequately compensated for these harms in an action at law for money damages.

**COUNT ONE**

**(Against All Defendants)**

**Declaratory Judgment**

**O.C.G.A. § 9-4-2**

**Widely Known, Severe Safety and Accuracy Issues Make it Impracticable to Use Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System in the Runoff**

46.

The allegations of paragraphs 1 through 45 above are hereby incorporated as the allegations of this paragraph 46 of Count One of this complaint.

47.

Because of the foregoing severe safety and accuracy concerns, Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System cannot be used safely and accurately.

48.

The foregoing severe safety and accuracy concerns related to Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System cannot be remedied in the short time remaining before the Runoff.

49.

Because the foregoing severe safety and accuracy concerns related to Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System are widely known, the risk that the accurate tabulation of votes cast in the Runoff could be compromised by undetectable malfunctions and by malicious actors with knowledge of the system's vulnerabilities is real and unacceptably high; as a result, the public can have no confidence in the integrity of any results produced by Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System.

50.

Under the circumstances, the use of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System to conduct the Runoff is "impracticable" as that term is used in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-281; and "not practicable" as that term is used in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-334.

51.

This Court has the power "to declare rights and other legal relations of any interested party petitioning for the declaration, whether or not further relief is or could be prayed, in any civil case in which it appears to the court that the ends of justice require that the declaration should be made." O.C.G.A. § 9-4-2(b). The purpose of the Court's power to issue declaratory judgments is "to settle and afford relief from uncertainty and insecurity with respect to rights, status, and other legal relations." O.C.G.A. § 9-4-1.

52.

Because the ends of justice require it, Plaintiffs are entitled to a declaration from this Court that the use of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System to conduct the Runoff is "impracticable" within the meaning of that term as used in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-281; and "not practicable" within the meaning of that term as used in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-334.

**COUNT TWO**

**(Against Defendants Barron, Daniels, and Eveler)**

**Temporary, Interlocutory, and Permanent Injunction  
O.C.G.A. § 9-4-3, O.C.G.A. § 9-4-2, and O.C.G.A. § 9-11-65**

**Enjoining Use of Georgia’s DRE-Based Voting System in the Runoff**

53.

The allegations of paragraphs 1 through 52 above are hereby incorporated as the allegations of this paragraph 53 of Count Two of this complaint.

54.

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2 provides that,

[I]f, upon reexamination of any such system previously approved, it shall appear that the system so reexamined can no longer be safely or accurately used by electors at primaries or elections as provided in this chapter because of any problem concerning its ability to accurately record or tabulate votes, the approval of the same shall immediately be revoked by the Secretary of State; and no such system shall thereafter be purchased for use or be used in this state.

55.

O.C.G.A. § 9-4-3 provides that, “The court, in order to maintain the status quo pending the adjudication of the questions or to preserve equitable rights, may grant injunction and other interlocutory extraordinary relief in substantially the manner and under the same rules applicable in equity cases.”

56.

Because Georgia’s DRE-Based Voting System demonstrably cannot be safely and accurately used by electors at primaries and elections, preservation of Plaintiffs’ equitable rights requires that Defendants Barron, Daniels, and Eveler should be enjoined from using Georgia’s



DRE-Based Voting System to conduct the Runoff pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 9-4-3, O.C.G.A. § 9-4-2, and O.C.G.A. § 9-11-65.

57.

The balance of equities favors the entry of a preliminary and permanent injunction enjoining Defendants Barron, Daniels, and Eveler from using Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System to conduct the Runoff because the harm to Plaintiffs of allowing the Runoff to be conducted using an unsafe and inaccurate voting system is irreparable, whereas there is no harm at all to Defendants Barron, Daniels, and Eveler of requiring them to conduct the Runoff using paper ballots, as Georgia's election law already permits them to do.

### **COUNT THREE**

**(Against Defendant Kemp)**

**Writ of Mandamus**

**O.C.G.A. § 9-4-3 and O.C.G.A. § 9-4-2; O.C.G.A. § 9-6-20**

**Requiring Exercise of the Public Duty to Reexamine Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System  
Established By O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(b)**

58.

The allegations of paragraphs 1 through 57 above are hereby incorporated as the allegations of this paragraph 58 of Count Three of this complaint.

59.

O.G.C.A § 21-2-379.2(a) creates a public right exerciseable by ten or more electors, which was exercised by the Elector Group, to request Defendant Kemp to conduct a reexamination of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System.

60.

O.G.C.A § 21-2-379.2(b) imposes an official, public duty on Defendant Kemp to respond to the Elector Group's request for reexamination by advising the Elector Group about

any required payment and by taking necessary steps to conduct the requested reexamination of the equipment.

61.

Defendant Kemp has not exercised his official, public duty to respond to the Elector Group's reexamination request or to conduct the requested, required reexamination of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System.

62.

Plaintiffs, who are interested in having the laws executed and Defendant Kemp's official, public duty imposed by O.G.C.A § 21-2-379.2(b) enforced, are entitled to a writ of mandamus to compel a due performance, as provided for by O.C.G.A. § 9-6-24 which reads:

**§ 9-6-24. No special interest necessary for plaintiff to enforce public right**

Where the question is one of public right and the object is to procure the enforcement of a public duty, no legal or special interest need be shown, but it shall be sufficient that a plaintiff is interested in having the laws executed and the duty in question enforced.

63.

The Court has full and complete power to issue a writ of mandamus under O.C.G.A. § 9-6-20, which reads:

**§ 9-6-20. Enforcement of official duty; inadequacy of legal remedy**

All official duties should be faithfully performed; and whenever, from any cause, a defect of legal justice would ensue from a failure to perform or from improper performance, the writ of mandamus may issue to compel a due performance, if there is no other specific legal remedy for the legal rights.

Apart from this Court's issuance of the writ of mandamus, Plaintiffs have no other legal remedy to compel enforcement of Defendant Kemp's official, public duty to conduct the reexamination required by O.G.C.A § 21-2-379.2(b).

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully pray that:

- a) This Court issue a writ of mandamus requiring Defendant Kemp to comply with his public duty under O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(b) to reexamine Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System and thereafter to make and file in his office the report and attestation required by O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.2(b) stating whether, in his opinion, Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System can be safely and accurately used by electors at primaries and elections;
- b) This Court enter a declaratory judgment finding and declaring that substantial unaddressed public concerns about the safety and accuracy of Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System used by Barron, Daniels, and Eveler render their use of the system at the Runoff "not practicable" within the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 21-2-334 and "impracticable" within the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 21-2-281;
- c) This Court enter a preliminary and permanent injunction restraining and enjoining Defendants Barron, Daniels, and Eveler from using Georgia's DRE-Based Voting System to conduct the Runoff and requiring them instead to comply with O.C.G.A. § 21-2-334 and O.C.G.A. § 21-2-281 by conducting the Runoff using hand-counted paper ballots in the manner provided in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-334 and O.C.G.A. § 21-2, Article 11, Part 2; and
- d) Plaintiffs have such other and further relief as may be just and equitable.

Respectfully submitted this 25th day of May, 2017.

S/ Edward B. Krugman  
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Georgia Bar No. 429927  
Robert L. Ashe, III  
Georgia Bar No. 208077

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capacity as Director of the Cobb County )  
Board of Elections and Registration; )

Defendants. )

**VERIFICATION**

Personally appeared, before the undersigned officer duly authorized to administer oaths, DONNA CURLING, who, being duly sworn, deposes and says that the facts alleged in the Verified Complaint For Declaratory And Injunctive Relief And Writ Of Mandamus, except those that state legal conclusions, are true and correct to the best of her knowledge, information, and belief.

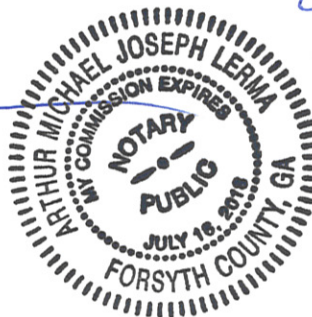
Dated this 25<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.

*Donna Curling*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DONNA CURLING

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 25<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

*My Commission Expires: 7/16/18*



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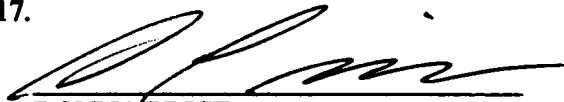
BRIAN P. KEMP, in his official capacity )  
as Secretary of State of Georgia; )  
RICHARD BARRON, in his official )  
capacity as Director of the Fulton County )  
Board of Elections and Registration; )  
MAXINE DANIELS, in her official )  
capacity as Director of Voter Registrations )  
and Elections for DeKalb County; )  
JANINE EVELER, in her official )  
capacity as Director of the Cobb County )  
Board of Elections and Registration; )

Defendants. )

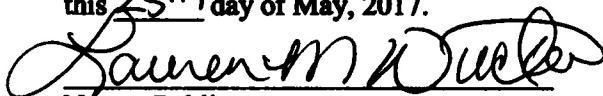
**VERIFICATION**

Personally appeared, before the undersigned officer duly authorized to administer oaths,  
DONNA PRICE, who, being duly sworn, deposes and says that the facts alleged in the Verified  
Complaint For Declaratory And Injunctive Relief And Writ Of Mandamus, except those that  
state legal conclusions, are true and correct to the best of her knowledge, information, and belief.

Dated this 25<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.

  
DONNA PRICE

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 25<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.

  
Notary Public

LAUREN M WICKER  
Notary Public  
DeKalb County  
State of Georgia  
My Commission Expires Jun 15, 2019

DONNA CURLING, an individual; )  
DONNA PRICE, an individual; )  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FOUNDATION, )  
INC., a non-profit corporation organized )  
and existing under Colorado law; )

Plaintiffs, )

v. )

CIVIL ACTION  
FILE NO.:

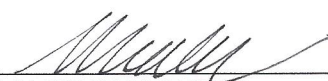
BRIAN P. KEMP, in his official capacity )  
as Secretary of State of Georgia; )  
RICHARD BARRON, in his official )  
capacity as Director of the Fulton County )  
Board of Elections and Registration; )  
MAXINE DANIELS, in her official )  
capacity as Director of Voter Registrations )  
and Elections for DeKalb County; )  
JANINE EVELER, in her official )  
capacity as Director of the Cobb County )  
Board of Elections and Registration; )

Defendants. )

**VERIFICATION**

Personally appeared, before the undersigned officer duly authorized to administer oaths,  
MARILYN MARKS, who, being duly sworn, deposes and says that the facts alleged in the  
Verified Complaint For Declaratory And Injunctive Relief And Writ Of Mandamus, except those  
that state legal conclusions, are true and correct to the best of her knowledge, information, and  
belief.

Dated this 25 day of May, 2017.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MARILYN MARKS  
Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Foundation

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 25<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

Wilta F. Sullivan  
Notary Public  
Mecklenburg County, NC

# **EXHIBIT 1**



May 10, 2017

The Honorable Brian Kemp  
214 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
(Via email [tfleming@sos.ga.gov](mailto:tfleming@sos.ga.gov))

Dear Secretary Kemp:

We write to request your prompt review of Georgia's voting system under the provisions of Georgia Code §21-2-379.2 to assess whether the current voting system "can be safely and accurately used" in the June 20 Congressional District 6 election. Georgia has a long history of voter concerns related to the unverifiable touchscreen voting system with no paper trail. Concerns have escalated because of recent unresolved security issues, as well as the heightened risk of cyber attacks in the current environment. We respectfully request that your office undertake, at a minimum, a partial review of the system to determine whether specific hardware, software, and procedures can be safely and accurately used as required by §21-2-379.2, and separately whether the system is in compliance with applicable federal and state election standards.

Given the indisputable escalation of cyber-security threats in the 15 years since the Diebold system was deployed, this examination is essential for public confidence and security of the upcoming June 20 election. Given the unprecedented national interest in the runoff election, we urge your office to undertake this work immediately. In the likely event that system security deficiencies are detected, officials should implement a paper ballot election.

To define the highest-priority areas for our requested review, we have conferred with computer scientists experts in voting system security. We are not seeking a complete "top-to-bottom" certification and laboratory system testing review prior to the conduct of the June 20 election. We are not requesting an immediate recertification of the system. Instead, we request that you initially respond to our concerns by reference to system records. Responses to our listed concerns should be readily available in your office's existing records, staff knowledge and resources, and through conferral with the Center for Election Systems at Kennesaw State University.

We are Georgia electors who believe that the national attention focused on the June 20 special election calls for increased scrutiny concerning the transparency, security, and verifiability of our voting system.

We believe that responses to our listed concerns can be answered within a few hours by knowledgeable staff of your office and the Center for Election Systems. The cost of this reexamination should be modest, and should be borne by the state, not by private citizens. We respectfully request that you charge only de minimis amounts or waive the requirement that requesting citizens bear the cost of this essential examination conducted for the benefit of all Georgia voters.

The priority areas related to ***safety and accuracy*** of the system listed below must be satisfactorially addressed in a publicly available report prior to the June 20 election.

Priority areas related to ***safety and accuracy*** of the system include:

1. March 15 Computer Scientist Inquiry

Leading voting system computer scientists expressed their concerns about Georgia's system and urged you to move the state forward to a system of paper ballots in their March 15 letter attached as Exhibit A. It is our understanding that no response was received from your office. Please address the concerns raised in the letter by disclosing the conclusions made by your office and any mitigating actions taken or planned.

2. Database design

The attached research, *GEMS Tabulation Database Design Issues in Relation to Voting Systems Certification Standards* by Thomas P. Ryan and Candice Hoke (Exhibit B), presents architecture flaws in the GEMS database design that create unacceptable risks of inaccurate tabulation and reporting. What mitigation has been employed to address these vulnerabilities, and how have any mitigation efforts been tested for adequacy?

3. Malicious attack code threat

The attached research, *Security Analysis of the Diebold AccuVote-TS Voting Machine* by Ariel J. Feldman, J. Alex Halderman, and Edward W. Felten (Exhibit C), presents detailed and important security weaknesses in the Diebold system. Section 2.2 explains various ways that attack code could be installed. The referenced work is also summarized in these two video recordings—one from a Congressional hearing (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBqGzgxcfAk>) and one in a laboratory setting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZws98jw67g>). Have the security weaknesses presented in these videos been mitigated to ensure that the machines can be used “safely and accurately” without realistic security attacks? If so, please provide a description and date of the mitigation efforts.

4. Security of electronic transmission of votes and results  
Votes and results are transmitted via modem from PCMCIA TS memory cards to GEMS servers. Are these election night transmissions of memory card data secured through cryptographic means to prevent interception and possible alteration on their way to the GEMS servers? If so, please provide a description and effective date.
5. Memory card security  
What system software protections prevent the introduction of substituted or modified TS PCMCIA cards prior to TSx uploading to the GEMS server? What system controls are in place to ensure that all precinct cards have been collected and successfully uploaded? What measures prevent forged or maliciously programmed voter access or supervisor cards from transmitting malware to the voting machines?
6. Accessibility of audit logs  
In compliance with VVSG2002 2.2.4.2 and 2.2.5, are cast vote records, TS and TSx audit logs, OS audit logs, and GEMS audit logs readily exportable in human-readable format reports to permit officials, observers, and members of the public to timely review and verify against reported totals? Do current procedures require review of such audit logs for signs of irregularities or system errors?
7. Internet exposure  
What specific guidelines and required processes prevent connecting TS or TSx voting machines or the GEMS servers to the Internet either directly or through the use of removable media (such as flash memory cards) that have been exposed or connected to the Internet?
8. Uploading protocols  
What specific guidelines, required processes, and/or software mechanisms are in place to prevent improper election data, including cast votes, from being uploaded to the GEMS servers either because of human error or software or hardware failures?
9. Encryption key disclosure  
Was the system upgraded and secured against malicious use of the encryption key after it was erroneously published on the Internet? If so, please disclose the date and version numbers of software upgrades or repairs that address the system security issues presented by the widespread knowledge of the system encryption key.

10. ExpressPollbook software flaws

At the April 22 meeting, the Fulton County Election Board discussed pollbook software errors that caused voters to be sent to improper precincts during the April 18 election. Please explain the source of the software problems and what mitigation steps have been taken to protect the June 20 election from this software issue's harmful impacts and potential voter disenfranchisement.

11. Physical security of voting machines (DREs)

How are DREs protected from intrusion when not in use, including storage before and after they are delivered to the polling place and during warehouse storage after the election? Given the large number of machines, polling locations, and ease of concealing physical intrusion into the machines, we are concerned that it is impractical to ensure that machines are protected from intrusions that can implant malware. Please reference Exhibit C, section 2.2.1.

12. Compliance with certification standards

Is the system as currently configured and used certified under federal standards? What standards of certification are required for this specific system configuration under current Georgia law? Is the state certification documentation current?

We are concerned that the system cannot be used safely and accurately, particularly if deficiencies are identified in any of the above controls. As noted in the *Security Analysis of the Diebold AccuVote-TS Voting Machine*, Section 5.4 in Exhibit C, even if the current system configuration is certified to VVSG2002 standards, such certification **does not imply that the system can be “safely and accurately used”** as §21-2-379.2(c) requires.

The above list of priority areas is not comprehensive. As we continue to confer with voting system computer scientists, we may amend this letter to add other urgent concerns or remove any less urgent concerns.

We do not seek any proprietary information or security details that would compromise the security of the voting system. Instead, we request a description of the type of review undertaken and a general description of any mitigation adopted that would assure the public that the system is free from previously disclosed security risks.

The software versions we understand to be in current use are listed on Exhibit D. Please inform us if our understanding is inaccurate, and please supply a list of currently installed software.

We also request a copy of the most recent certification documentation for the current voting system and its compliance with applicable Georgia law and election rules.

Dr. Duncan Buell is our technical adviser and contact point for purposes of discussions with your office. You may contact him through [buell@acm.org](mailto:buell@acm.org) and 803-479-7128. Dr. Buell is the NCR Chair in Computer Science and Engineering at the University of South Carolina and a voting systems expert.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Mustaque Ahamad  
Atlanta, GA 30306

David Bader  
Atlanta, GA 30306

Ricardo Davis  
Woodstock, Georgia 30188

Richard DeMillo  
Atlanta GA 30305

Virginia Forney  
Atlanta, GA 30309

Merrick Furst  
Atlanta 30306

Adam Ghetti  
Atlanta, GA 30324

Jeff Levy  
Atlanta, GA 30306

Rhonda J. Martin  
Atlanta, GA 30305

Paul Nally  
Rydal, GA 30171

Michael S Optiz  
Marietta, GA

cc: DeKalb County Elections, H. Maxine Daniels, Director [voterreg@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:voterreg@dekalbcountyga.gov)  
Fulton County Elections, Director Richard Barron [Richard.Barron@fultoncountyga.gov](mailto:Richard.Barron@fultoncountyga.gov)  
Cobb County Election Director Janine Eveler, [info@cobbelections.org](mailto:info@cobbelections.org)

March 15, 2017

The Honorable Brian Kemp  
214 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Secretary Kemp,

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> it was reported that the Federal Bureau of Investigations is conducting a criminal investigation into an alleged cyber attack of the Kennesaw State University Center for Election Systems. According to the KSU Center for Election Systems' website, "the Secretary of State authorized KSU to create a Center for Election Systems, dedicated to assisting with the deployment of the Direct Record Electronic (DRE) voting technology and providing ongoing support."<sup>1</sup> The Center is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the voting systems and developing and implementing security procedures for the election management software installed in all county election offices and voting systems.

The Center has access to most if not all voting systems and software used in Georgia. It also is responsible for programming these systems and accessing and validating the software on these systems. It is our understanding that the Center also programs and populates with voter records the electronic poll books used in polling places statewide. A security breach at the Center could have dire security consequences for the integrity of the technology and all elections carried out in Georgia.

In order for citizens to have faith and confidence in their elections, transparency is crucial, including about events such as the KSU breach, and its extent and severity. While we understand that this investigation is ongoing and that it will take time for the full picture to emerge, we request that you be as forthcoming and transparent as possible regarding critical information about the breach and the investigation, as such leadership not only will be respected in Georgia but also emulated in other states where such a breach could occur. We expect that you are already pursuing questions such as the following, regarding the breach, and trust that you will make public the results of such inquiry:

1. Can you estimate when the attacker breached KSU's system?
2. How did the attacker breach KSU's system?
3. How was the breach discovered?
4. Which files were accessed?
5. Were any files accessed that related to software or "hashes" for the voting machines?
6. Is there any evidence that files were modified? If so, which files?
7. Had KSU begun ballot builds for the upcoming special election?
8. To whom are these attacks being attributed? Could this be an insider attack? Has the FBI identified any suspects or persons of interest?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://elections.kennesaw.edu/about/history.php>

9. Has the FBI examined removable media for the possibility of implanted malware?
10. Has the FBI examined the hash or verification program for tampering?
11. What mitigations are planned for the near- and long-term?

In any state an attack on a vendor providing software and system support with such far-reaching responsibilities would be devastating. This situation is especially fragile, because of the reliance on DRE voting machines that do not provide an independent paper record of verified voter intent. KSU has instead sought to verify the validity of the software on the voting machines by running a hash program on all machines before and after elections in an effort to confirm that the software has not been altered. However, if KSU's election programming were compromised, it is also possible that the verification program could have been modified to affirm that the software is correct, even if it were not. This is a risk of using software to check the correctness of software.

Of course all Georgia elections are important. This month and next include special elections as well. If these upcoming elections are to be run on DREs and e-pollbooks that are maintained and programmed by KSU while the KSU Center for Election Systems is itself the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation, it can raise deep concerns. And today's cyber risk climate is not likely to improve any time soon.

We urge you to provide Georgia's citizens with information they need to confirm before going to vote that their name will appear correctly on the voter rolls, as well as back-up printed voter lists in case anomalies appear. Most importantly, we urge you to act with all haste to move Georgia to a system of voter-verified paper ballots and to conduct post-election manual audits of election results going forward to provide integrity and transparency to all of Georgia's elections. We would be strongly supportive of such efforts and would be willing to help in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard DeMillo  
Charlotte B. and Roger C. Warren Professor of Computing  
Georgia Tech

Dr. Andrew W. Appel  
Eugene Higgins Professor of Computer  
Science,  
Princeton University

Dr. Duncan Buell  
Professor, Department of Computer Science  
& Engineering, NCR Chair of Computer  
Science & Engineering,  
University of South Carolina

Dr. Larry Diamond  
Senior Fellow, Hoover Institute and  
Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University

Dr. David L. Dill  
Professor of Computer Science,  
Stanford University

Dr. Michael Fischer

Dr. J. Alex Halderman



Professor of Computer Science,  
Yale University

Professor, Computer Science and Engineering  
Director, Center for Computer Security and  
Society  
University of Michigan

Dr. Joseph Lorenzo Hall  
Chief Technologist,  
Center for Democracy & Technology

Candice Hoke  
Co-Director, Center for Cybersecurity &  
Privacy Protection and Professor of Law,  
Cleveland State University

Harri Hursti  
Chief Technology Officer and co-founder,  
Zyptonite, and founding partner, Nordic  
Innovation Labs.

Dr. David Jefferson  
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Dr. Douglas W. Jones  
Department of Computer Science  
University of Iowa

Dr. Joseph Kiniry  
Principal Investigator, Galois  
Principled CEO and Chief Scientist,  
Free & Fair

Dr. Justin Moore  
Software Engineer, Google

Dr. Peter G. Neumann  
Senior Principal Scientist, SRI International  
Computer Science Lab, and moderator of the  
ACM Risks Forum

Dr. Ronald L. Rivest  
MIT Institute Professor

Dr. John E. Savage  
An Wang Professor of Computer Science,  
Brown University

Bruce Schneier  
Fellow and lecturer  
Harvard Kennedy School of Government

Dr. Barbara Simons  
IBM Research (retired),  
former President Association for Computing  
Machinery (ACM)

Dr. Philip Stark  
Associate Dean, Division of Mathematics and  
Physical Sciences,  
University of California, Berkeley

Dr. Vanessa Teague  
Department of Computing & Information  
systems, University of Melbourne

Affiliations are for identification purposes only, they do not imply institutional endorsements.

# GEMS Tabulation Database Design Issues in Relation to Voting Systems Certification Standards

Thomas P. Ryan<sup>1</sup> and Candice Hoke<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*This paper analyzes the Diebold Election Systems, Inc. election management software (GEMS) using publicly accessible postings of GEMS election databases. It finds that the GEMS architecture fails to conform to fundamental database design principles and software industry standards for ensuring accurate data. Thus, in election tabulations, aspects of the GEMS design can lead to, or fail to protect against, erroneous reporting of election results. Further, GEMS's dependence on Microsoft's JET technology introduces additional risks to data accuracy and security.*

*Despite these technical and systemic deficiencies, GEMS received approval as complying with Federal Voting System 2002 standards. Questions then arise concerning the adequacy of the 2002 and 2005 regulatory standards. The paper concludes that the standards structurally encourage and reward election system vendors for using less exacting database design standards.*

With unprecedented Federal funding available to States under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA),<sup>3</sup> election administration has become highly reliant on computer technologies. While some continue to praise the new voting and tabulation technologies as a significant advance, the augmented computerization has introduced new possibilities for wide-impact election operational errors and may have opened new avenues for tampering with election results. Previous vulnerability analyses have focused on a direct-recording electronic (DRE) voting machine,<sup>4</sup> a paper ballot optical scanning device,<sup>5</sup>

computerized vote-tallying,<sup>6</sup> and a pilot test of internet voting.<sup>7</sup> But the systemic design features of currently utilized election tabulation databases have yet to be closely examined.

This paper analyzes the Diebold Election Systems, Inc. (DESI) election management software named Global Election Management System ("GEMS") using publicly accessible postings of GEMS election databases.<sup>8</sup> It finds that the GEMS architecture violates fundamental design principles and software industry standards for ensuring accurate data. When utilized for election tabulations, the GEMS design can lead to data errors, which in turn create a serious risk for generating erroneous election results. GEMS architectural design plus its use of Microsoft's JET technology,<sup>9</sup> introduces significant risk of data errors in elections administered using GEMS.

Either of these design aspects would be worrisome. For the GEMS database (DB) to have been structured with fundamental flaws at the levels of both system architecture and system technology, and yet still obtain Federal and State certification, raises questions concerning the adequacy of the existing regulatory standards. Thus the paper turns to ask what the relationship is between the regulatory standards and the technical database flaws. It argues the regulatory standards structurally encourage low DB design standards rather than promoting the use of tabulation system architecture that meet widely recognized industry standards for data accuracy and reliability.

This paper proceeds by briefly reviewing the DB design principles of the First and Second Normal Forms. In part II, the paper examines the GEMS DB in light of these fundamental design principles, concluding that GEMS does not satisfy even the most

<sup>1</sup> J.D., 2007; Technical Staff, Center for Election Integrity, Cleveland State University.

<sup>2</sup> Director, Center for Election Integrity and Associate Professor of Law, Cleveland State University. This paper was submitted to EVT/USENIX on April 23, 2007, accepted for publication on June 1, 2007, and will be presented at the EVT '07 Conference on August 6, 2007. A longer version will be available by August 1, 2007 (posted in the Working Papers section, Center for Election Integrity website, [www.urban.csuohio.edu/cei/](http://www.urban.csuohio.edu/cei/)) that is styled for the nontechnical audience. The Center initiated the Collaborative Public Audit of the November 2006 election in Cuyahoga County cited here, and its staff provided technical analysis for the audit.

<sup>3</sup> 42 U.S.C. §§ 15301 – 15545 (2006).

<sup>4</sup> Ariel J. Feldman et al., *Security Analysis of the Diebold AccuVote-TS Voting Machine*, (Sept. 13, 2006), at <http://itpolicy.princeton.edu/voting/ts-paper.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Hursti, Hari, *Critical Security Issues with Diebold Optical Scan Design*, (July 4, 2005), at <http://www.blackboxvoting.org/BBVreport.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Saltman, Roy G., *Accuracy, Integrity, and Security in Computerized Vote-Tallying*, NBS Special Publication 500-158, (August 1988), <http://www.itl.nist.gov/lab/specpubs/500-158.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> David Jefferson, Ari D. Rubin, Barbara Simons, David A. Wagner, *A Security Analysis of the Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment (SERVE)*, at <http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~daw/papers/serverreport.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.equalccw.com/dieboldtestnotes.html> and <http://www.bbvforums.org/forums/messages/2197/44189.html> This paper's GEMS assessment is perforce limited to examples of the end product but the design flaws are discernible at this level.

basic, essential precepts of the First Normal Form. Further, its use of JET technology renders GEMS susceptible to additional difficulties. Part III critically evaluates the federal regulatory structure and standards for certifying election management software. It concludes that the federal standards produce the unintended and injurious consequence of rewarding poor database designs with lower vendor research and development costs, and faster movement through less intensive certification reviews than if the DB design were more sophisticated.<sup>10</sup>

## I. Database Design Fundamentals

Any successful database (DB) must accurately and precisely store data without mixing values or losing information--an obvious essential in managing election results data. To diminish the incidence of anomalies which reduce the accuracy of DB contents, computer science and engineering have established fundamental DB design precepts, including "normalization."<sup>11</sup>

Normalization is a methodology of DB design that creates proper relations, removes redundant data, promotes efficient use of disk space,<sup>12</sup> and reduces the likelihood that accessing and manipulating data will result in anomalies. Normal form classification uses consecutive, progressive numerical titles (e.g., 1NF) to describe in shorthand whether a particular DB has satisfied the fundamental design precepts. If a DB design has not been normalized, the DB has been designed in a manner that fails to prevent avoidable errors and data corruption.<sup>13</sup> For example, when the DB design causes storage of specific data in multiple locations or tables, updates to that data can cause anomalies to occur. Failure to update the specific data in every location virtually simultaneously causes inconsistencies in the data between the two locations (an update anomaly). Normalized DBs also create correct dependencies<sup>14</sup> among data sets. Incorrect

dependencies can create errors when data is added or deleted from the DB.

### A. Normal Forms

#### 1. First Normal Form (1NF)

As Edgar Codd has outlined,<sup>15</sup> satisfaction of the first Normal Form requires a DB design to (a) eliminate repeating groups in individual tables (atomicity);<sup>16</sup> (b) identify each set of related data with a primary key;<sup>17</sup> and (c) create a separate table for each set of related data.<sup>18</sup>

Violations of the first Normal Form (1NF) include the flaws of repeating groups, the absence of unique identifiers, the inclusion of multiple meaningful values in a single field, and the inclusion of multiple columns representing the same type of atomic data. Data corruption is highly probable if any of these violations are found within the DB design.

#### 2. Second Normal Form (2NF)

The overarching purpose of the Second Normal Form (2NF) is to reduce the amount of redundant and duplicate entries within a DB. A DB table satisfies 2NF if (a) it conforms to 1NF and (b) each non-primary key element is dependent upon the primary key.<sup>19</sup> DB satisfaction of 2NF means tables with repeating information separate the repeating data and reference those records through the use of "integrity constraints." Integrity constraints provide a method to ensure data entry changes or updates do not result in a loss of data consistency.<sup>20</sup> The most common tool deployed is known as a foreign key

The first and second Normal Forms contain the most fundamental design principles for efficient and accurate DBs. Any DB that fails to satisfy the first two Normal Forms will suffer various failures upon deployment.

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<sup>10</sup>The term "database" within this paper is limited to a modern relational database. Owing to limitations where proprietary software is protected from certain types of evaluative reviews the examination of GEMS DB design and implementation issues is not comprehensive. Instead, the paper seeks to serve as a starting point for future computer science, industry, and regulatory public policy analyses.

<sup>11</sup> Edgar F. Codd, *Normalized Data Base Structure: A Brief Tutorial*, Proceedings of 1971 ACM-SIGFIDET Workshop on Data Description, Access and Control, 1-21 (November 11-12, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> Ponniah, Paulraj, *Database Design and Development*, at 308-9 (3d ed. 2003).

<sup>13</sup>"Data corruption" as used in this paper and in computer science indicates a departure from the original or from what is pure or correct; the term need not import malevolent intent or an operator's deliberate intrusion to modify stored values.

<sup>14</sup> Dependencies are relationships between data, where one value depends on another. To credit the correct number of votes to candidate Joe Smith, one table may specify an identifier as '1234',

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and then the identifier 1234 is defined in a separate table to be Joe Smith

<sup>15</sup> Codd, Edgar F., *A Relational Model of Data for Large Shared Data Banks*, 13 (6) Comm. of the ACM 13, 377-87 (June 1970) at <http://www.acm.org/classics/nov95/toc.html>.

<sup>16</sup> A repeating group is one that is not atomic, that is, holds more than one meaningful entry per data block.

<sup>17</sup> A primary key is a unique identifier; most commonly the table will start with the integer 1 and increase entry by a factor of one, e.g. 1,2,3,4, etc.

<sup>18</sup> Related data is data with such a strong relationship that it should not be separated. A common example is the elements of an individuals address. (i.e. Street number, street, city, state, zip).

<sup>19</sup> See Codd, note 12.

<sup>20</sup> Abraham Silberschatz et al., *Database System Concepts*, 193 (3d ed. 1999).

## II. GEMS Database Design Flaws

This paper's analysis of the GEMS DB design is based on review of publicly available GEMS election DBs that are publicly accessible via the internet.<sup>21</sup>

### A. System Architecture Design Flaws

Analysis of the GEMS DB architecture<sup>22</sup> demonstrates that it violates both 1NF and 2NF.

#### 1. Violations of 1NF

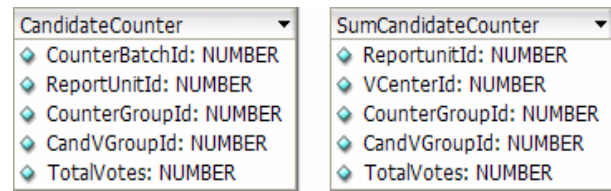
The GEMS DB design violates fundamental principles of DB architecture for it fails to conform to several 1NF principles. Consequently, GEMS is susceptible to the common errors and anomalies that 1NF seeks to eliminate. Most troubling, nonconformity with 1NF can cause erroneous data to be entered into the DB through normal operation of the system. System failures can then occur without an operator knowing or having any indication that the system is failing because the DB lacks essential design constraints in place to prevent invalid data.

**First 1NF Violation:** GEMS's Race table violates 1NF because it has multiple columns representing the same type of atomic data. The Race table is structured for two columns to contain the same type of atomic data, VGroup1Id and VGroup2Id, but the purpose of having two columns cannot be distinguished from examining the table alone. Through normal operation, the GEMS design creates unnecessary processing and uses DB storage inefficiently. GEMS thus violates one of the main purposes of the 1NF: eliminating duplicative columns from the DB.<sup>23</sup>

**Second 1NF Violation:** GEMS includes multiple meaningful values within a single field as demonstrated by the VCenter table of GEMS. The VCenter table holds information regarding polling locations but because of the column "Label," the VCenter table violates 1NF: multiple meaningful values are held within the same field. Combining data in this manner makes it difficult to query voting locations and allows for numerous entries for the same polling location.

**Third 1NF Violation:** Several GEMS tables lack a unique identifier, a failure demonstrated by review of Figure 1. Within the two Counter tables, the third

and forth entries of both Counter tables are indistinguishable from one another other than by their position in the table.



CandidateCounter	SumCandidateCounter
CounterBatchId: NUMBER	ReportunitId: NUMBER
ReportUnitId: NUMBER	VCenterId: NUMBER
CounterGroupId: NUMBER	CounterGroupId: NUMBER
CandVGroupId: NUMBER	CandVGroupId: NUMBER
TotalVotes: NUMBER	TotalVotes: NUMBER

Figure 1: GEMS tables CandidateCounter and SumCandidateCounter

These tables additionally attempt to avoid data duplication via deployment of MS Access-specific functions, a strategy which has proved to be unreliable.<sup>24</sup>

**Other 1NF Violations** The design of a number of other GEMS tables crucial to producing accurate election results reports violate 1NF principles, with flaws similar to those inventoried above.<sup>25</sup>

#### 2. Violations of 2NF

The GEMS DB design reveals little if no attempt to conform to 2NF principles. GEMS lacks data constraints that ensure data integrity,<sup>26</sup> and omits referential constraints that ensure data consistency.<sup>27</sup> GEMS also replicates the same data throughout numerous locations and tables.

The most troubling violation of the 2NF involves the duplication of data between two tables holding vote tallies. In Figure 1, for instance, both CandidateCounter and SumCandidateCounter tables hold total vote data for a candidate -- which is identified by the CandVGroupID column. This dual depositing scheme for election results data can easily generate update anomalies — otherwise known as inconsistencies in election results data for a given candidate and race. After an update anomaly has occurred, it is impossible to rectify the inconsistency without identifying when the anomaly occurred, or starting again from the beginning point when data processing began. If an election ended and the tables held different numbers in each table, the question

<sup>21</sup> See note 8 above.

<sup>22</sup> DESI's GEMS software includes components for electronic ballot creation and other tasks but this paper restricts its scope to the GEMS database design for interacting with JET to manage election tabulations and the reporting of results.

<sup>23</sup> Kent, W., *A Simple Guide to Five Normal Forms in Relational Database Theory*, 26 Comm. of the ACM 120-25 (1983).

<sup>25</sup> The longer version of the paper contains this discussion. See note 2, above.

<sup>26</sup> Data integrity constraints ensure the data type allowed is the correct one for the field, such as only allowing positive integers for a vote total field.

<sup>27</sup> Foreign keys are not utilized correctly, if at all.

becomes which vote total should be accepted as the correct value.<sup>28</sup>

Eliminating the opportunity for these types of anomalies is precisely the objective of 2NF. GEMS’s design thus violates 2NF in tables essential to producing accurate and consistent election results reports.

Additional exemplars of GEMS’ departures from 2NF can be identified. DB architects use data integrity constraints to ensure the type of data is correct for a given field. These limits ensure a program cannot input letters where numbers are expected or a negative number where only positive numbers should be allowed. The SumCandidateCounter table (see *Figure 1*), holding vote tally information, violates 2NF in allowing negative values to be entered into the table.

VCenterId is the polling location where votes were registered, and thus should always have a positive value associated with it.<sup>29</sup> A table that permits incorrect negative values, such as *Figure 2*, vitiates one identifier of DB corruption.

Reportunit Id	VCenter Id	Counter GroupId	CandV GroupId	Total Votes
829	-1	0	1	246
829	-1	0	2	45
829	-1	0	3	231
829	-1	0	4	51
829	-1	0	5	252
829	-1	0	6	56
829	-1	0	7	230
829	-1	0	8	49
829	-1	0	9	231

Figure 2, Sample Data from GEMS SumCandidateCounter

Allowing negative values into the VCenter column means tracking the origin of votes cannot occur<sup>30</sup> and the value ‘-1’ might, but does not necessarily, indicate the table and/or DB is corrupted.<sup>31</sup> Placing data constraints upon the VCenter table would force the values to remain positive integers.

Integrity constraints provide the foundation for managing data that resides in several interrelated tables. The election data management code within the

<sup>28</sup> The Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Collaborative Public Audit (of the November 8, 2006 General Election) Final Report, which was issued after this paper had been drafted, mentions the inconsistent tables containing election results data as a troubling feature for the accuracy and reliability of its election data. See [http://urban.csuohio.edu/cei/public\\_monitor/cuyahoga\\_2006\\_audit\\_pt.pdf](http://urban.csuohio.edu/cei/public_monitor/cuyahoga_2006_audit_pt.pdf) at 34-36 (April 19, 2007; hereafter Cuyahoga 2006 Election Audit Report).

<sup>29</sup> The VCenter table has ids ranging from 1 to 302. There is no entry for -1.

<sup>30</sup> Votes may not be able to be tracked at all if there are duplicate entries for all values in the table.

<sup>31</sup> Repeating values, such as the value “-1,” can indicate corruption for some database engines such as Microsoft JET.

GEMS software lacks this essential foundation for data accuracy. Although the GEMS software holds some form of data management, without integrity constraints it is only a matter of time before major problems surface. While modifying the GEMS architecture to include integrity constraints would not completely solve the problem, it would assist in ensuring data accuracy.

## B. System Technology Flaws: Use of JET

Microsoft’s Joint Engine Technology (JET) is a basic DB engine<sup>32</sup> technology that is appropriate for personal computing and very small scale applications requiring DB technology. Commercially known as Microsoft Access®, JET is a file-sharing DB that can support DBs with sizes up to 2 gigabytes.<sup>33</sup> JET is often considered ideal for small DB deployments with very few concurrent user/processes,<sup>34</sup> and can also be used by custom programs to access the data through the Microsoft Data Access Components Application Programming Interface (MDAC API).

But JET’s limitations have led Microsoft (MS) to state that JET is inappropriate for systems that require data integrity, security, and transaction logs and rollbacks.<sup>35</sup>

Microsoft JET ... was not intended (or architected) for the high-stress performance required by 24x7 scenarios, ACID transactions, or unlimited users, that is, scenarios where there has to be absolute data integrity or very high concurrency.<sup>36</sup>

An election management system obviously requires both “absolute data integrity” and in many urban jurisdictions if not all, a “very high concurrency” of users. Thus, the GEMS’ architects’ choice of inexpensive JET as the DB engine places the entire election tabulation process at very high risk.

<sup>32</sup> A database engine is the underlying software that creates, retrieves, updates, and deletes information from the database.

<sup>33</sup> Luke Chung & Dan Haught, *When to Migrate from Microsoft Access to Microsoft SQL Server*, (2005) at [http://download.microsoft.com/download/5/d/0/5d026b60-e4be-42fc-a250-2d75c49172bc/when\\_to\\_Migrate\\_from\\_Access.doc](http://download.microsoft.com/download/5/d/0/5d026b60-e4be-42fc-a250-2d75c49172bc/when_to_Migrate_from_Access.doc).

<sup>34</sup> Concurrent users and processes are those attempting to use the database at the same time. In the election tabulation context, concurrent usage could include the uploading of election results from scores of DRE units operating simultaneously, or from dozens of optical scanners.

<sup>35</sup> *Microsoft Access or SQL Server: What’s Right in your Organization?*, (2005) at <http://www.microsoft.com/sql/solutions/migration/access/compare-access.msp>

<sup>36</sup> *Using Microsoft JET with IIS*, (Rev. 6.1 2007) at <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx/kb/222135>.



## 1. Capacity Limit of 2 Gigabytes

GEMS exacerbates JET's limitations and can lead to DB failure. Its 2 gigabyte limit can easily be exceeded in large turnout urban elections, especially where central count scanning is utilized.<sup>37</sup> If the capacity limit is exceeded, database corruption is highly probable.

## 2. Data Corruption During Normal Operation

As Microsoft documentation has stated:

When Microsoft JET is used in a multi-user environment, multiple client processes are using file read, write, and locking operations on a shared database. Because multiple client processes are reading and writing to the same database and because Jet does not use a transaction log (as do the more advanced database systems, such as SQL Server), *it is not possible to reliably prevent any and all database corruption.*<sup>38</sup>

Because this is a file-locking DB system,<sup>39</sup> the operating system (Windows) could function as a "user" that locks the DB file. Corruption of JET DBs can occur from hardware conflicts from peripherals,<sup>40</sup> software conflicts,<sup>41</sup> multi-user access,<sup>42</sup> and an overall poor DB design.<sup>43</sup>

## 3. Multi-User Access Limitation

Software systems that utilize a DB typically have multiple clients or users that attempt to access the data at the same time but the JET DB engine is not designed to manage such simultaneous requests.

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<sup>37</sup>A Microsoft spokesperson confirmed the Cuyahoga Audit Committee's finding that Microsoft recommended a different system for operations as large as Cuyahoga County's. See Bob Driehaus, *Audit Finds Many Faults in Cleveland's '06 Voting*, N.Y. Times Section A, Page 16 (April 20, 2007). The GEMS-JET database can be compressed and backed up but each operation introduces additional risks of database corruption.

<sup>38</sup> *How to Troubleshoot and to Repair a Damaged Access 2002 or Later Database*, (Rev. 6.1 2006) at

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb:en-us:283849>

(emphasis added); see also NY Times, note 37 above ("Scott Massey, a Microsoft spokesman, said any file-based database was subject to corruption if a connection was lost while a transfer was in progress"); and Cuyahoga 2006 Audit Report at page 67, cited in note 28 above.

<sup>39</sup> When a process is accessing the database, it prevents all other concurrent access. This "locks out" all other processes until the first process has completed its tasks.

<sup>40</sup> Hardware conflicts occur between hardware devices such as two network cards in use on one machine.

<sup>41</sup> Software conflicts occur between software programs both accessing the database.

<sup>42</sup> Multi-user access conflicts occur when multiple users are using the same program, each accessing the database concurrently.

<sup>43</sup> A poor design includes the lack of normalization described previously within this paper.

Microsoft has recommended that fewer than ten clients concurrently access the DB,<sup>44</sup> but single users have also created concurrency errors.<sup>45</sup>

In a GEMS election tabulation, Windows can be one of the processes accessing the DB. In Ohio, during election tabulations the DB is monitored by GEMS as well as a State-mandated security program, DigitalGuardian (DG). Thus, at a minimum, in Ohio GEMS is faced with mediating three potential concurrent clients of the DB. In addition to these three programs, during uploading and processing of election data, GEMS is accessing the DB at a very high rate.

Further, GEMS must mediate a large number of concurrent data requests of the DB during election tabulations. At some points, data is simultaneously being uploaded to the DB from multiple sources (for instance, 30 memory cards); snapshot election results reports are requested (generating data analysis requests from the DB); and software audit logging is occurring (both Windows events logging and GEMS audit logging).

The context of election tabulations ineluctably presents GEMS with a high rate of data concurrency and throughput -- exactly the situation Microsoft has warned can cause DB corruption in its Microsoft JET technology. GEMS cannot be an exception to JET's core deficiencies. This constellation of issues raises very serious questions on whether GEMS is capable of managing and producing accurate election tabulations and other data reports.

## 4. Microsoft Deprecation of JET Components

"Deprecation" is a term used by software companies to notify end users and software developers that a portion of a product line or Application Programming Interface (API)<sup>46</sup> will not be supported in future releases. Microsoft has decided to deprecate MS Data Access Components (MDAC); future releases of JET will not include the MDAC

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<sup>44</sup> "Jet can support up to 255 concurrent users, but performance of the file-based architecture can prevent its use for many concurrent users. In general, it is best to use Jet for 10 or fewer concurrent users." Fitzgerald, James, *Microsoft Data Engine (MSDE) for Microsoft Visual Studio 6.0: An Alternative to Jet for Building Desktop and Shared Solutions*, (2002) at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?url=/library/en-us/dnmsde/html/msdeforvs.asp>

<sup>45</sup> *Single User Concurrency Issues with ADO and JET*, (2001) at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/216925/EN-US>.

<sup>46</sup> Application Programming Interfaces allow programmers to reuse code, such as the code used to communicate to the JET database engine. APIs allow programmers to use the functionality of established code, such as the JET engine, without "reinventing the wheel."

components.<sup>47</sup> The GEMS software utilizes MDAC to communicate with the JET DB engine.<sup>48</sup>

It remains unclear whether DESI was marketing GEMS after MS published the deprecation notice yet omitted disclosure of the point and its consequences to prospective purchasers, election administrative jurisdictions. Software that utilizes the JET MDAC components, such as GEMS, will likely need to be re-written to utilize a different DB technology, and potentially at a high cost for any jurisdictions transitioning to a new GEMS product.

## II. Compliance with Federal Voting System Standards

Section 222(e) of HAVA declared the 2002 Voting System Standards (VSS) to be HAVA's first set of voluntary voting system technical standards. Via section 221, Congress authorized a Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC)<sup>49</sup> to develop recommendations for improvements to the Voting System Standards of 2002,<sup>50</sup> in the expansive time frame of nine months. The TGDC's 2005 prolix recommendations address voting system performance standards (Volume I) and testing standards (Volume II).<sup>51</sup> As a matter of federal law, the 2005 VSS remain voluntary rather than compulsory on VS manufacturers although some States have mandated VS equipment be certified by federally approved independent testing laboratories.

Volume I of VSS 2005 incorporates much of the early FEC standards from 2002.<sup>52</sup> The new Security section is written in highly technical language and adds some substantial overdue protections for voting systems technical security. But whatever its improvements for security and other issues, Volume I of the 2005 VSS omits a requirement that qualifying election tabulation databases must satisfy 1NF and 2NF.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Microsoft has stated "Starting with version 2.6, MDAC no longer contains Jet components. In other words, MDAC 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, and all future MDAC releases do not contain Microsoft Jet, Microsoft Jet OLE DB Provider, or the ODBC Desktop Database Drivers." Shirolkar, Prash, *Data Access Technologies Roadmap*, (2004) at [http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?url=/library/en-us/dnmdac/html/data\\_mdacroadmap.asp](http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?url=/library/en-us/dnmdac/html/data_mdacroadmap.asp)

<sup>48</sup> *GEMS User's Guide – Version 1.17.15*, (Rev. 3, 2001) available at <http://freespeech.metacolo.com/pimaupgrade.zip>.

<sup>49</sup> 42 U.S.C § 15361 (2006); the TGDC reports its recommendations to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

<sup>50</sup> 42 U.S.C § 15361(b)(2) (2006).

<sup>51</sup> Voluntary Voting System Guidelines Version 1: Initial Report, (2005) at <http://vote.nist.gov/VVSGVol1&2.pdf>. (hereinafter VSS 2005).

<sup>52</sup> The major new sections of this volume include the Human Factors section and the Security section.

<sup>53</sup> Volume I includes basic functions that an election DB must manage, including "identify contests, candidates and issues"; "define ballot formats and appropriate voting options"; "accumulate vote totals at multiple reporting levels as indicated in the system

But DB design issues fall easily within the scope of voting systems (VS) technical standards and within the TGDC expertise. If the TGDC is able to create and develop detailed standards regarding highly technical security concerns, it would appear also to possess the regulatory scope and technical resources to develop election tabulation DB design and implementation standards.

Volume II of the 2005 VSS is primarily concerned with testing standards for the "qualification" or certification process. It focuses upon the specific details for Independent Testing Authorities (ITAs, now renamed), vendors, and election officials in the qualification process. Like Volume I, Volume II also adopts and reaffirms a vast amount of the 2002 VSS testing standards. The TGDC significantly updated the standards, however, to include changes to reflect the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's process for certification of voting systems and HAVA's usability and accessibility requirements.

In its description of VS testing requirements, Volume II offers no new references regarding election tabulation DB design specifications or testing procedures. Thus, the DB testing standards remain as they were in 2002 without specific requirements or constraints on the designs for an effective and reliable DB.

Volume II lists the documentation that must be provided to the Independent Testing Authority ("ITA") before the election management software (including tabulation functions) can be qualified. In detailing the required vendor DB documentation, the VSS provides the most specific standards for DB design requirements.<sup>54</sup> This Volume II section, however, only requires substantial DB documentation to be provided to the ITA if the specifically listed DB design paradigms were utilized. Those vendors whose DB designs are not reflected in specified paradigms--and thus less likely to be soundly designed--are not required to supply the additional DB documentation. If a vendor chooses to design a DB using paradigms such as entity relationships, or security and privacy constraints, it then must submit substantial documentation to the ITA.

The upshot of this regulatory approach is that the VS vendor who offers a poorly designed tabulation DB that can still meet the minimum requirements set forth in Volume I, Section 2.2.6, can likely reach the testing/certification phase faster than the vendor seeking to market a better designed DB. Moreover,

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documentation"; "generate the post-voting reports required by Section 2.5" but omits any reference to satisfaction of fundamental DB design requirements. See Vol. I of VSS 2005, section 2.2.6 (cited in note 46). Software standards found in Volume I, section 4, similarly sidestep DB design precepts.

<sup>54</sup> VSS 2005, Volume II, section 2.5.8 (see note 46).

this low horizon vendor will experience substantially lower costs for DB design and VSS required documentation. More documentation requires a larger financial investment for the vendor.

The VSS 2005, and especially Volume II, section 2.5.8, therefore creates a disincentive for election system vendors to design DBs that adhere to sound well, established design paradigms. This incentive runs exactly counter to the overwhelming public interest in accurate and reliable election tabulations. This regulatory inversion regarding DB design standards suggests that the entire VSS 2005 should be analyzed to identify other sections that may inadvertently create incentives that undermine the public interest in accurate, secure elections, and to provide pointers for the next VSS revision.

## **Conclusion**

The GEMS DB has not been designed to adhere to fundamental normalization principles that can permit a DB to reach high standards of accuracy and reliability. But the federal regulatory apparatus has also failed, for it imposes differential documentation requirements and financial burdens on vendors seeking certification for their election DB software. Those vendors who attempt to achieve higher design standards face far greater burdens and costs, including possibly more delays, than vendors who settle for DB designs with lower horizons. None of the 2005 VSS standards constitute a mandatory federal floor for voting systems to be deployed in federal elections. The certification of the GEMS software notwithstanding the significant demonstrable design flaws, offer a clear demonstration of the inadequacy of the current certification regime.

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors appreciate the significant assistance of Andrew W. Appel, David Kettle, George H. Taylor, and David A. Wagner, and the advice of Aaron Burstein and Joe Hall in preparing this paper. Errors are the responsibility of the authors alone.



## Security Analysis of the Diebold AccuVote-TS Voting Machine

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### Abstract

This paper presents a fully independent security study of a Diebold AccuVote-TS voting machine, including its hardware and software. We obtained the machine from a private party. Analysis of the machine, in light of real election procedures, shows that it is vulnerable to extremely serious attacks. For example, an attacker who gets physical access to a machine or its removable memory card for as little as one minute could install malicious code; malicious code on a machine could steal votes undetectably, modifying all records, logs, and counters to be consistent with the fraudulent vote count it creates. An attacker could also create malicious code that spreads automatically and silently from machine to machine during normal election activities—a voting-machine virus. We have constructed working demonstrations of these attacks in our lab. Mitigating these threats will require changes to the voting machine’s hardware and software and the adoption of more rigorous election procedures.

### 1 Introduction

The Diebold AccuVote-TS and its newer relative the AccuVote-TSx are together the most widely deployed electronic voting platform in the United States. In the November 2006 general election, these machines were used in 385 counties representing over 10% of registered voters [12]. The majority of these counties—including all of Maryland and Georgia—employed the AccuVote-TS model. More than 33,000 of the TS machines are in service nationwide [11].

This paper reports on our study of an AccuVote-TS, which we obtained from a private party. We analyzed the machine’s hardware and software, performed experiments on it, and considered whether real election practices would leave it suitably secure. We found that the machine is vulnerable to a number of extremely serious attacks that undermine the accuracy and credibility of the vote counts it produces.



Figure 1: The Diebold AccuVote-TS voting machine

Computer scientists have been skeptical of voting systems of this type, Direct Recording Electronic (DRE), which are essentially general-purpose computers running specialized election software. Experience with computer systems of all kinds shows that it is exceedingly difficult to ensure the reliability and security of complex software or to detect and diagnose problems when they do occur. Yet DREs rely fundamentally on the correct and secure operation of complex software programs. Simply put, many computer scientists doubt that paperless DREs can be made reliable and secure, and they expect that any failures of such systems would likely go undetected.

Previous security studies of DREs affirm this skepticism (e.g., [7, 18, 22, 30, 39]). Kohno, Stubblefield, Rubin, and Wallach studied a leaked version of the source code for parts of the Diebold AccuVote-TS software and found many design errors and vulnerabilities [22]. Hursti later examined the hardware and compiled firmware of AccuVote-TS and TSx systems and discovered problems with the software update mechanism that could allow malicious parties to replace the programs that operate the

machines [18]. Our study confirms these results by building working demonstrations of several previously reported attacks, and it extends them by describing a variety of serious new vulnerabilities.

**Main Findings** The main findings of our study are:

1. Malicious software running on a single voting machine can steal votes with little risk of detection. The malicious software can modify all of the records, audit logs, and counters kept by the voting machine, so that even careful forensic examination of these records will find nothing amiss. We have constructed demonstration software that carries out this vote-stealing attack.
2. Anyone who has physical access to a voting machine, or to a memory card that will later be inserted into a machine, can install said malicious software using a simple method that takes as little as one minute. In practice, poll workers and others often have unsupervised access to the machines.
3. AccuVote-TS machines are susceptible to voting-machine viruses—computer viruses that can spread malicious software automatically and invisibly from machine to machine during normal pre- and post-election activity. We have constructed a demonstration virus that spreads in this way, installing our demonstration vote-stealing program on every machine it infects. Our demonstration virus spreads via the memory cards that poll workers use to transfer ballots and election results, so it propagates even if the machines are not networked.
4. While some of these problems can be eliminated by improving Diebold’s software, others cannot be remedied without replacing the machines’ hardware. Changes to election procedures would also be required to ensure security.

The details of our analysis appear below, in the main body of this paper.

Given our findings, we believe urgent action is needed to address these problems. We discuss potential mitigation strategies below in Section 5.

The machine we obtained came loaded with version 4.3.15 of the Diebold BallotStation software that runs the machine during an election.<sup>1</sup> This version was deployed in 2002 and certified by the National Association of State Election Directors (NASD) [15]. While some of the problems we identify in this report may have been remedied in subsequent software releases (current versions are in the

<sup>1</sup>The behavior of our machine conformed almost exactly to the behavior specified by the source code to BallotStation version 4.3.1, which leaked to the public in 2003.

4.6 series), others are architectural in nature and cannot easily be repaired by software changes. In any case, subsequent versions of the software should be assumed insecure until fully independent examination proves otherwise.

Though we studied a specific voting technology, we expect that a similar study of another DRE system, whether from Diebold or another vendor, would raise similar concerns about malicious code injection attacks and other problems. We studied the Diebold system because we had access to it, not because it is necessarily less secure than competing DREs. All DREs face fundamental security challenges that are not easily overcome.

Despite these problems, we believe that it is possible, at reasonable cost, to build a DRE-based voting *system*—including hardware, software, and election procedures—that is suitably secure and reliable. Such a system would require not only a voting machine designed with more care and attention to security, but also an array of safeguards, including a well-designed voter-verifiable paper audit trail system, random audits and forensic analyses, and truly independent security review.<sup>2</sup>

**Outline** The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 describes several classes of attacks against the AccuVote-TS machine as well as routes for injecting malicious code. Section 3 discusses the machine’s design and its operation in a typical election, focusing on design mistakes that make attacks possible. Section 4 details our implementation of demonstration attacks that illustrate the security problems. Section 5 examines the feasibility of several strategies for mitigating all of these problems. Section 6 outlines prior research on the AccuVote system and DREs more generally. Finally, Section 7 offers concluding remarks.

## 2 Attack Scenarios

Elections that rely on Diebold DREs like the one we studied are vulnerable to several serious attacks. Many of these vulnerabilities arise because the machine does not even attempt to verify the authenticity of the code it executes. In this section we describe two classes of attacks—vote stealing and denial-of-service [20]—that involve injecting malicious code into the voting machine. We then outline several methods by which code can be injected and discuss the difficulty of removing malicious code after a suspected attack.

<sup>2</sup>Current testing agencies are often referred to as “independent testing agencies” (ITAs), but “independent” is a misnomer, as they are paid by and report to the voting machine vendor.

## 2.1 Classes of Attacks

### 2.1.1 Vote-Stealing Attacks

The AccuVote-TS machine we studied is vulnerable to attacks that steal votes from one candidate and give them to another. Such attacks can be carried out without leaving any evidence of fraud in the system's logs. We have implemented a demonstration attack to prove that this is possible; it is described in Section 4.2.

To avoid detection, a vote-stealing attack must transfer votes from one candidate to another, leaving the total number of votes unchanged so that poll workers do not notice any discrepancy in the number of votes reported. Attacks that only add votes or only subtract votes would be detected when poll workers compared the total vote count to the number of voters who signed in at the desk.<sup>3</sup>

The machine we studied maintains two records of each vote—one in its internal flash memory and one on a removable memory card. These records are encrypted, but the encryption is not an effective barrier to a vote-stealing attack because the encryption key is stored in the voting machine's memory where malicious software can easily access it. Malicious software running on the machine would modify both redundant copies of the record for each vote it altered. Although the voting machine also keeps various logs and counters that record a history of the machine's use, a successful vote-stealing attack would modify these records so they were consistent with the fraudulent history that the attacker was constructing. In the Diebold DRE we studied, these records are stored in ordinary flash memory, so they are modifiable by malicious software.

Such malicious software can be grafted into the BallotStation election software (by modifying and recompiling BallotStation if the attacker has the BallotStation source code, or by modifying the BallotStation binary), it can be delivered as a separate program that runs at the same time as BallotStation, it can be grafted into the operating system or bootloader, or it can occupy a virtualized layer below the bootloader and operating system [21]. The machine contains no security mechanisms that would detect a well designed attack using any of these methods. However it is packaged, the attack software can modify each vote as it is cast, or it can wait and rewrite the machine's records later, as long as the modifications are made before the election is completed.

The attack code might be constructed to modify the machine's state only when the machine is in election mode and avoid modifying the state when the machine is per-

<sup>3</sup>It might be possible to subtract a few votes without detection (if poll workers interpret the missing votes as voters who did not vote in that race) or to add a few votes to compensate for real voters who did not cast ballots; but in any case transferring votes from one candidate to another is a more effective attack.

forming other functions such as pre-election logic and accuracy testing. The code could also be programmed to operate only on election days. (Elections are often held according to a well-known schedule—for example, U.S. presidential and congressional elections are held on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November, in even-numbered years.) Alternatively, it could be programmed to operate only on *certain* election days, or only at certain times of day.

By these methods, malicious code installed by an adversary could steal votes with little chance of being detected by election officials.<sup>4</sup> Vote counts would add up correctly, the total number of votes recorded on the machine would be correct, and the machine's logs and counters would be consistent with the results reported—but the results would be fraudulent.

### 2.1.2 Denial-of-Service Attacks

Denial-of-service (DoS) attacks aim to make voting machines unavailable on election day or to deny officials access to the vote tallies when the election ends [20, 28, 3]. It is often known in advance that voters at certain precincts, or at certain times, will vote disproportionately for one party or candidate. A targeted DoS attack can be designed to distort election results or to spoil an election that appears to be favoring one party or candidate. Several kinds of DoS attacks are practical on the AccuVote-TS system because of the ease with which malicious code may be executed.

One style of DoS attack would make voting machines unavailable on election day. For example, malicious code could be programmed to make the machine crash or malfunction at a pre-programmed time, perhaps only in certain polling places. In an extreme example, an attack could strike on election day, perhaps late in the day, and completely wipe out the state of the machine by erasing its flash memory. This would destroy all records of the election in progress, as well as the bootloader, operating system, and election software. The machine would refuse to boot or otherwise function. The machine would need to be serviced by a technician to return it to a working state. If many machines failed at once, available technicians would be overwhelmed. Even if the machines were repaired, all records of the current election would be lost. (We have created a demonstration version of this attack, which is described below in Section 4.4.) A similar style of DoS attack would try to spoil an election by modifying the machine's vote counts or logs in a manner that would be easy to detect but impossible to correct, such as adding or removing so many votes that the resulting totals would

<sup>4</sup>Officials might try to detect such an attack by parallel testing. As we describe in Section 5.3, an attacker has various countermeasures to limit the effectiveness of such testing.

be obviously wrong. A widespread DoS attack of either style could require the election to be redone.

## 2.2 Injecting Attack Code

To carry out these attacks, the attacker must somehow install his malicious software on one or more voting machines. If he can get physical access to a machine for as little as one minute, he can use attacks discovered by Hursti [18] to install the software manually. The attacker can also install a voting machine virus that spreads to other machines, allowing him to commit widespread fraud even if he only has physical access to one machine or memory card.

### 2.2.1 Direct Installation

An attacker with physical access to a machine would have at least three methods of installing malicious software. The first is to create an EPROM chip containing a program that will install the attack code into the machine's flash memory, and then to open the machine, install the chip on its motherboard, and reboot from the EPROM.<sup>5</sup>

The second method is to exploit a back door feature in Diebold's code, first discovered by Hursti. This method allows the attacker to manually install attack software from a memory card. When the machine boots, it checks whether a file named `explorer.glb` exists on the removable memory card. If such a file is present, the machine boots into Windows Explorer rather than Diebold's BallotStation election software. An attacker could insert a memory card containing this file, reboot the machine, and then use Explorer to copy the attack files onto the machine or run them directly from the card. [18]

The third method exploits a service feature of the machine's bootloader, also discovered by Hursti. On startup, the machine checks the removable memory card for a file named `fboot.nb0`. If this file exists, the machine replaces the bootloader code in its on-board flash memory with the file's contents. An attacker could program a malicious bootloader, store it on a memory card as `fboot.nb0`, and reboot the machine with this card inserted, causing the Diebold bootloader to install the malicious software [18]. (A similar method would create a malicious operating system image.)

The first method requires the attacker to remove several screws and lift off the top of the machine to get access to the motherboard and EPROM. The other methods only require access to the memory card slot and power button, which are both behind a locked door on the side of the

<sup>5</sup>When the machine is rebooted, it normally emits a musical chime that might be noticed during a stealth attack; but this sound can be suppressed by plugging headphones (or just a headphone connector) into the machine's headphone jack.

machine.<sup>6</sup> The lock is easily picked—one member of our group, who has modest locksmithing skills, can pick the lock consistently in less than 10 seconds. Moreover, in their default configuration, all AccuVote-TS machines can be opened with the same key [4], and copies of this key are not difficult to obtain. The particular model of key that the AccuVote-TS uses is identified by an alphanumeric code printed on the key. A Web search for this code reveals that this exact key is used widely in office furniture, jukeboxes, and hotel mini bars, and is for sale at many online retailers. We purchased copies of the key from several sources and confirmed that they all can open the machine.

A poll worker, election official, technician, or other person who had private access to a machine for as little as one minute could use these methods with little risk of detection. Poll workers often do have such access; for instance, in a widespread practice called "sleepovers," machines are sent home with poll workers the night before the election [35].

### 2.2.2 Voting Machine Viruses

Rather than injecting code into each machine directly, an attacker could create a computer virus that would spread from one voting machine to another. Once installed on a single "seed" machine, the virus would spread to other machines by methods described below, allowing an attacker with physical access to one machine (or card) to infect a potentially large population of machines. The virus could be programmed to install malicious software, such as a vote-stealing program or denial-of-service attack, on every machine it infected.

To prove that this is possible, we constructed a demonstration virus that spreads itself automatically from machine to machine, installing our demonstration vote-stealing software on each infected system. Our demonstration virus, described in Section 4.3, can infect machines and memory cards. An infected machine will infect any memory card that is inserted into it. An infected memory card will infect any machine that is powered up or rebooted with the memory card inserted. Because cards are transferred between machines during vote counting and administrative activities, the infected population will grow over time.

Diebold delivers software upgrades to the machines via memory cards: a technician inserts a memory card containing the updated code and then reboots the machine, causing the machine's bootloader to install the new code from the memory card. This upgrade method relies on the correct functioning of the bootloader, which is supposed to copy the upgraded code from the memory card into the machine's flash memory. But if the bootloader is

<sup>6</sup>The locked door must be opened in order to remove one of the screws holding the machine's top on.

already infected by a virus, then the virus can make the bootloader behave differently. For example, the bootloader could pretend to install the updates as expected but instead secretly propagate the virus onto the memory card. If the technician later used the same memory card to “upgrade” other machines, he would in fact be installing the virus on them. Our demonstration virus illustrates these spreading techniques.

Memory cards are also transferred between machines in the process of transmitting election definition files to voting machines before an election. According to Diebold, “Data is downloaded onto the [memory] cards using a few [AccuVote] units, and then the stacks of [memory] cards are inserted into the thousands of [AccuVote] terminals to be sent to the polling places.” ([10], p. 13) If one of the few units that download the data is infected, it will transfer the infection via the “stacks of [memory] cards” into many voting machines.

### 2.3 Difficulty of Recovery

If a voting machine has been infected with malicious code, or even if infection is suspected, it is necessary to disinfect the machine. The only safe way to do this is to put the machine back into a known-safe state, by, for example, overwriting all of its stable storage with a known configuration.

This is difficult to do reliably. We cannot depend on the normal method for installing firmware upgrades from memory cards, because this method relies on the correct functioning of the bootloader, which might have been tampered with by an attacker. There is no foolproof way to tell whether an update presented in this way really has been installed safely.

The only assured way to revert the machine to a safe state is to boot from EPROM using the procedure described in Section 3. This involves making an EPROM chip containing an update tool, inserting the EPROM chip into the motherboard, setting the machine to boot from the chip, and powering it on. On boot, the EPROM-based updater would overwrite the on-board flash memory, restoring the machine to a known state. Since this process involves the insertion (and later removal) of a chip, it would probably require a service technician to visit each machine.

If the disinfection process only reinstalled the software that was currently supposed to be running on the machines, then the possibility of infection by malicious code would persist. Instead, the voting machine software should be modified to defend against installation and viral spreading of unauthorized code. We discuss in Section 5 what software changes are possible and which attacks can be prevented.

## 3 Design and Operation of the Machine

Before presenting the demonstration attacks we implemented, we will first describe the design and operation of the AccuVote-TS machine and point out design choices that have led to vulnerabilities.

### 3.1 Hardware

The machine (shown in Figure 1) interacts with the user via an integrated touchscreen LCD display. It authenticates voters and election officials using a motorized smart card reader, which pulls in cards after they are inserted and ejects them when commanded by software. On the right side of the machine is a headphone jack and keypad port for use by voters with disabilities, and a small metal door with a lightweight lock of a variety commonly used in desk drawers and file cabinets. Behind this door is the machine’s power switch, a keyboard port, and two PC Card slots, one containing a removable flash memory card and the other optionally containing a modem card used to transfer ballot definitions and election results. The machine is also equipped with a small thermal roll printer for printing records of initial and final vote tallies.

Internally, the machine’s hardware closely resembles that of a laptop PC or a Windows CE hand-held device. The motherboard, shown in Figure 2, includes a 133 MHz SH-3 RISC processor, 32 MB of RAM, and 16 MB of flash storage. The machine’s power supply can switch to a built-in rechargeable battery in case power is interrupted.

In normal operation, when the machine is switched on, it loads a small bootloader program from its on-board flash memory. The bootloader loads the operating system—Windows CE 3.0—from flash, and then Windows starts the Diebold BallotStation application, which runs the election. Unfortunately, the design allows an attacker with physical access to the inside of the machine’s case to force it to run code of her choice [29].

A set of two switches and two jumpers on the motherboard controls the source of the bootloader code that the machine runs when it starts. On reset, the processor begins executing at address 0xA0000000. The switches and jumpers control which of three storage devices—the on-board flash memory, an EPROM chip in a socket on the board, or a proprietary flash memory module in the “ext flash” slot—is mapped into that address range. A table printed on the board lists the switch and jumper configurations for selecting these devices. The capability to boot from a removable EPROM or flash module is useful for initializing the on-board flash when the machine is new or for restoring the on-board flash’s state if it gets corrupted, but, as we discussed in Section 2, it could also be used by an attacker to install malicious code.

When we received the machine, the EPROM socket was



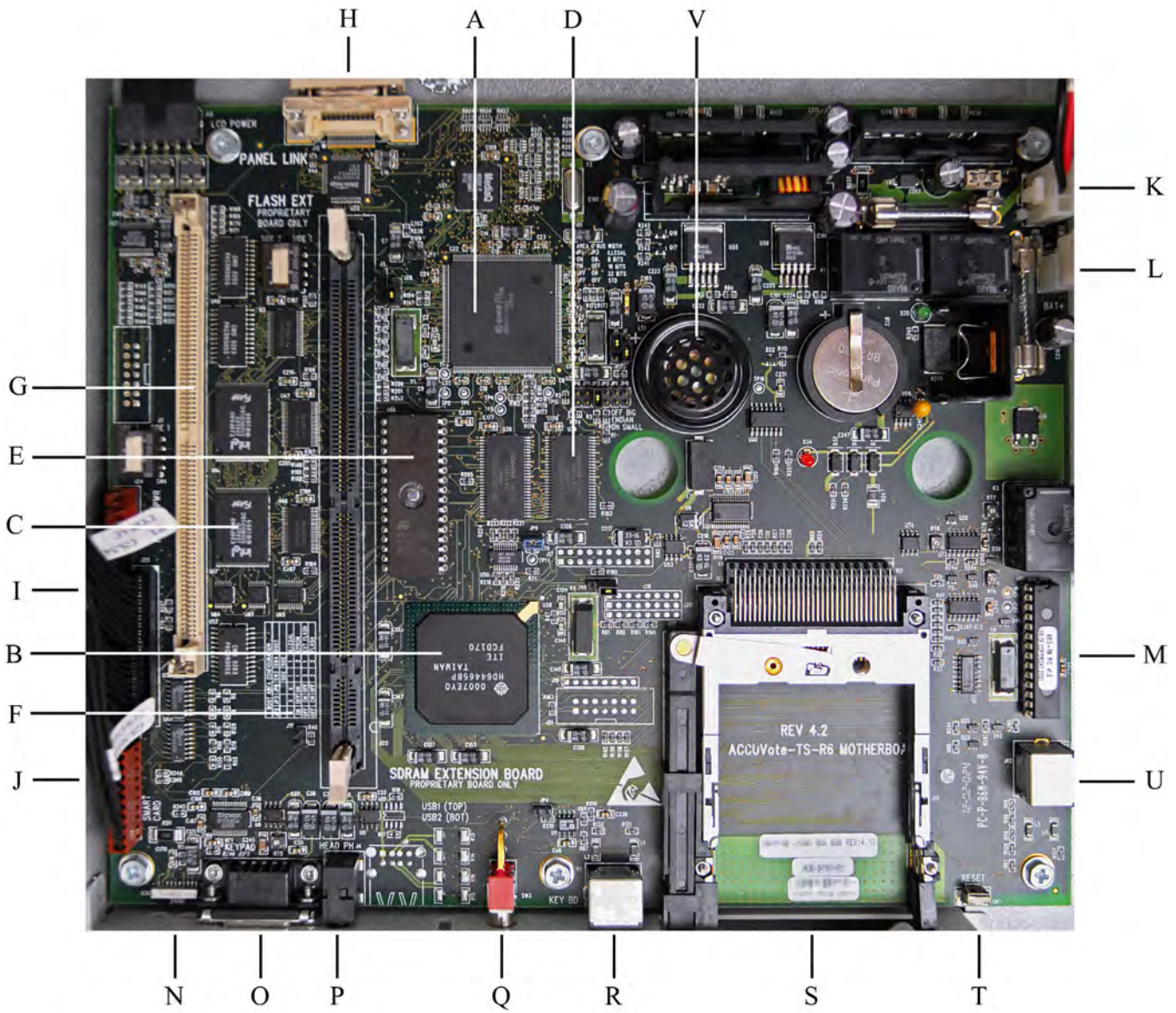


Figure 2: The AccuVote-TS motherboard incorporates a (A) HITACHI SUPERH SH7709A 133 MHz RISC MICRO-PROCESSOR, (B) HITACHI HD64465 WINDOWS CE INTELLIGENT PERIPHERAL CONTROLLER, two (C) INTEL STRATA-FLASH 28F640 8 MB FLASH MEMORY CHIPS, two (D) TOSHIBA TC59SM716FT 16 MB SDRAM CHIPS, and a socketed (E) M27C1001 128 KB ERASABLE PROGRAMMABLE READ-ONLY MEMORY (EPROM). A (F) PRINTED TABLE lists jumper settings for selecting the boot device from among the EPROM, on-board flash, or “ext flash,” presumably an external memory inserted in the (G) “FLASH EXT” SLOT.

Connectors on the motherboard attach to the (H) TOUCH SENSITIVE LCD PANEL, (I) THERMAL ROLL PRINTER, and (J) SECURETECH ST-20F SMART CARD READER/WRIter, and receive power from the (K) POWER SUPPLY and (L) BATTERY, which are managed by a (M) PIC MICROCONTROLLER. An (N) IRDA TRANSMITTER AND RECEIVER, (O) SERIAL KEYPAD CONNECTOR, and (P) HEADPHONE JACK are accessible through holes in the machine’s case. A (Q) POWER SWITCH, (R) PS/2 KEYBOARD PORT, and two (S) PC CARD SLOTS can be reached by opening a locked metal door, while a (T) RESET SWITCH and (U) PS/2 MOUSE PORT are not exposed at all. An (V) INTERNAL SPEAKER is audible through the case.

occupied by a 128 KB EPROM containing a bootloader that was older than, but similar to, the bootloader located in the on-board flash. The bootloader contained in the EPROM displays a build date of June 22, 2001 whereas the bootloader contained in the on-board flash displays June 7, 2002. The machine came configured to boot using the on-board flash memory. On our machine, the on-board flash memory is divided into three areas: a 128 KB bootloader, a 3.3 MB GZIP-ed operating system image, and a 10 MB file system partition.

### 3.2 Boot Process

When the machine is booted, the bootloader copies itself to RAM and initializes the hardware. Then it looks for a memory card in the first PC Card slot, and if one is present, it searches for files on the card with special names. If it finds a file called `fboot.nb0`, it assumes that this file contains a replacement bootloader, and it copies the contents of this file to the bootloader area of the on-board flash memory, overwriting the current bootloader. If it finds a file called `nk.bin`, it assumes that this file contains a replacement operating system image in Windows CE Binary Image Data Format [27], and it copies it to the OS area of the on-board flash, overwriting the current OS image. Finally, if it finds a file called `EraseFFX.bsq`, it erases the entire file system area of the flash. The bootloader does not verify the authenticity of any of these files in any way, nor does it ask the user to confirm any of the changes. As Hursti [18] suggests, these mechanisms can be used to install malicious code.

If none of these files are present, the bootloader proceeds to uncompress the operating system image stored in on-board flash and copy it to RAM, then it jumps to the entry point of the operating system kernel. The operating system image is a kind of archive file that contains an entire Windows CE 3.0 installation, including the kernel's code, the contents of the `Windows` directory, the initial contents of the Windows registry, and information about how to configure the machine's file system.

When Windows starts, the kernel runs the process `Filesys.exe`, which in turn unpacks the registry and runs the programs listed in the `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Init` registry key [26]. On our machine, these programs are the Debug Shell `shell.exe`, the Device Manager `device.exe`, the Graphics, Windowing, and Events Subsystem `gwes.exe`, and the Task Manager `taskman.exe`. This appears to be a standard registry configuration [25].

The Device Manager is responsible for mounting the file systems. The 10MB file system partition on the on-board flash is mounted at `\FFX`. This partition appears to use the FlashFX file system, a proprietary file system from Datalight, Inc [8]. The memory card, if it is present,

is mounted at `\Storage Card`, and may use the FAT or FAT32 file system. The root file system, mounted at `\`, is stored in RAM rather than nonvolatile memory, which causes any files written to it to disappear when the machine is rebooted or otherwise loses power. This design could be leveraged by an attacker who wished to use the file system for temporarily storing data or malicious code without leaving evidence of these activities.

Diebold has customized `taskman.exe` so that it automatically launches the BallotStation application, `\FFX\Bin\BallotStation.exe`. Another customization causes `taskman.exe` to behave differently depending on the contents of any memory cards in the PC Card slots. If a memory card containing a file called `explorer.glb` is present at start-up, `taskman.exe` will invoke Windows Explorer instead of BallotStation. Windows Explorer would give an attacker access to the Windows Start menu, control panels, and file system, as on an ordinary Windows CE machine. The `taskman.exe` process also searches the memory card for files with names ending in `.ins` [18]. These files are simple scripts in a Diebold-proprietary binary format that automate the process of updating and copying files. Like the special files that the bootloader recognizes, `taskman.exe` accepts `explorer.glb` without authentication of any kind. While `taskman.exe` requests confirmation from the user before running each `.ins` script, we found multiple stack-based buffer overflows in its handling of these files. This suggests that a malformed `.ins` file might be able to bypass the confirmation and cause the machine to execute malicious code.

### 3.3 Software and Election Procedures

All of the machine's voting-related functions are implemented by BallotStation, a user-space Windows CE application. BallotStation operates in one of four modes: Pre-Download, Pre-Election Testing, Election, and Post-Election. Each corresponds to a different phase of the election process. Here we describe the software's operation under typical election procedures. Our understanding of election procedures is drawn from a number of sources [34, 13, 36, 40] and discussions with election workers from several states. Actual procedures vary somewhat from place to place, and many polling places add additional steps to deal with multiple voter populations (e.g., different parties or electoral districts) and other complicating factors. We omit these details in our description, but we have considered them in our analysis and, except where noted below, they do not affect the results.

At any given time, the machine's mode is determined by the contents of the currently-inserted memory card. Specifically, the current election mode is stored in the header of the election results file, `\Storage Card\`

CurrentElection\election.brs. When one memory card is removed and another is inserted, the machine immediately transitions to the mode specified by the card. In addition, if the machine is rebooted, when BallotStation restarts it will return to the mode specified by the current card. As a result, if a machine is powered off while an election is taking place, it will return to Election mode when it is turned back on.

### 3.3.1 Election Setup

Typically, the voting machines are stored by the local government or the voting machine vendor in a facility with some degree of access control. Before the election (sometimes the night before, or in other cases the same morning) the machines are delivered to polling places where they are set up and prepared by poll workers. Prior to the election, poll workers may configure BallotStation by inserting a memory card containing a ballot description—essentially, a list of races and candidates for the current election. If, instead, a card containing no recognizable election data is inserted into the machine, BallotStation enters Pre-Download mode. In this mode, the machine can download a ballot definition by connecting to a Windows PC running Diebold's GEMS server software.

After election definitions have been installed, BallotStation enters Pre-Election Testing mode. Among other functions, Pre-Election Testing mode allows poll workers to perform so-called "logic and accuracy" (L&A) testing. During L&A testing, poll workers put the machine into a simulation mode where they can cast several test votes and then tally them, checking that the tally is correct. These votes are not counted in the actual election.

After any L&A testing is complete, the poll workers put the machine into Election mode. The software prints a "zero tape" which tallies the votes cast so far. Since no votes have been cast, all tallies should be zero. Poll workers check that this is the case and then sign the zero tape and save it.

### 3.3.2 Voting

When a voter arrives at the polling place, she checks in at the front desk, where poll workers give her a "voter card," a special smart card that signifies that she is entitled to cast a vote.<sup>7</sup> The voter inserts her voter card into a voting machine, which validates the card. The machine then presents a user interface that allows the voter to express her vote by selecting candidates and answering questions. After making and confirming her selections, the voter pushes a button on the user interface to cast her vote. The

<sup>7</sup>Kohno *et al.* found numerous vulnerabilities and design flaws in BallotStation's smart card authentication scheme [22], which remain uncorrected in the machine we studied.

machine modifies the voter card, marking it as invalid, and then ejects it. After leaving the machine, the voter returns the now-invalid voter card to the poll workers, who may re-enable it for use by another voter.

### 3.3.3 Post-Election Activities

At the end of the election, poll workers insert an "Ender Card" to tell the voting software to stop the election and enter Post-Election Mode.<sup>8</sup> Poll workers can then use the machine to print a "result tape" showing the final vote tallies. The poll workers check that the total number of votes cast is consistent with the number of voters who checked in at the front desk. Assuming no discrepancy, the poll workers sign the result tape and save it.

After the result tape is printed, the election results are transferred to the central tabulator, a PC running the GEMS software. Like the ballot definitions, the election results may be transferred over a local area network, a phone line, or a serial cable. Once results from all machines have reached the central tabulator, the tabulator can add up the votes and report a result for the election.

For convenience, it is also possible to "accumulate" the results from several machines into a single AccuVote-TS voting machine, which can then transmit the accumulated results to the central tabulator in a single step. To accumulate results, one machine is put into accumulator mode, and then the memory cards from other machines are inserted (in sequence) into the accumulator machine, which reads the election results and combines them into a single file that will be transferred to the central tabulator or used as an input to further accumulation steps.

If a recount is ordered, the result tapes are rechecked for consistency with voter check-in data, the result tapes are checked for consistency with the results stored on the memory cards, and the tabulator is used again to sum up the results on the memory cards. Further investigation may examine the state stored on memory cards and a machine's on-board file system, such as the machine's logs, to look for problems or inconsistencies.

## 4 Implementing Demonstration Attacks

To confirm our understanding of the vulnerabilities in the Diebold AccuVote-TS system, and to demonstrate the severity of the attacks that they allow, we constructed demonstration implementations of several of the attacks described above and tested them on the machine. We are not releasing the software code for our demonstration attacks to the public at present; however, a video showing

<sup>8</sup>They can also use a "Supervisor Card" for this purpose. Supervisor cards enable access to extra setup and administrative operations in pre- and post-election modes.



some of our demonstration attacks in operation is available online at <http://itpolicy.princeton.edu/voting>.

## 4.1 Backup and Restore

As a prerequisite to further testing, we developed a method for backing up and restoring the complete contents of the machine's on-board flash memory. This allowed us to perform experiments and develop other demonstration attacks without worrying about rendering the machine inoperable, and it ensured that we could later restore the machine to its initial state for further testing and demonstrations.

We began by extracting the EPROM chip from its socket on the motherboard and reading its 128 KB contents with a universal EPROM programmer. We then disassembled the bootloader contained on the chip using IDA Pro Advanced [9], which supports the SH-3 instruction set. Next, we created a patched version of the EPROM bootloader that searches any memory card<sup>9</sup> in the first PC Card slot for files named `backup.cmd` and `flash.img`. If it finds a file named `backup.cmd`, it writes the contents of the on-board flash to the first 16 MB of the memory card, and if it finds a file named `flash.img`, it replaces the contents of the on-board flash with the contents of that file. We programmed our modified bootloader into a new, standard, 128 KB EPROM chip and inserted it into the motherboard in place of the original chip. We configured the machine to boot using the code in the chip instead of the normal bootloader in its on-board flash memory, as described in Section 3.

## 4.2 Stealing Votes

Several of the demonstration attacks that we have implemented involve installing code onto AccuVote-TS machines that changes votes so that, for a given race, a favored candidate receives a specified percentage of the votes cast on each affected machine. Since any attacks that significantly alter the total number of votes cast can be detected by election officials, our demonstration software steals votes at random from other candidates in the same race and gives them to the favored candidate. The software switches enough votes to ensure that the favored candidate receives at least the desired percentage of the votes cast on each compromised voting machine.

Election results (i.e., the record of votes cast) are stored in files that can be modified by any program running on the voting machine. The primary copy of the election results is stored on the memory card at `\Storage Card\CurrentElection\election.brs` and a backup copy is stored in the machine's on-board

<sup>9</sup>While Diebold sells special-purpose memory cards for use in the machine, we were able to substitute a CompactFlash card (typically used in digital cameras) and a CompactFlash-to-PC Card adapter.

flash memory at `\FFX\AccuVote-TS\BallotStation\CurrentElection\election.brs`. Our software modifies both of these files.

Our demonstration vote-stealing software is implemented as a user-space Windows CE application written in C++ that runs alongside Diebold's BallotStation application. Since our software runs invisibly in the background, ordinary users of BallotStation would not notice its presence. It is pre-programmed with three parameters hard-coded into the binary: the name of the race to rig, the name of the candidate who is supposed to win, and the minimum percentage of the vote that that candidate is to receive.

Alternatively, an attacker could create a graphical user interface that allows more immediate, interactive control over how votes would be stolen. We have also created a demonstration of this kind of attack. In practice, a real attacker would more likely design a vote-stealing program that functioned invisibly, without a user interface.

Our demonstration vote-stealing applications can be generalized to steal votes on behalf of a particular party rather than a fixed candidate, to steal votes only in certain elections or only at certain dates or times, to steal votes only or preferentially from certain parties or candidates, to steal a fixed fraction of votes rather than trying to ensure a fixed percentage result, to randomize the percentage of votes stolen, and so on. Even if the attacker knows nothing about the candidates or parties, he may know that he wants to reduce the influence of voters in certain places. He can do this by creating malicious code that randomly switches a percentage of the votes, and installing that code only in those places. Any desired algorithm can be used to determine which votes to steal and to which candidate or candidates to transfer the stolen votes.

Every time a new memory card is inserted into the machine, our demonstration vote-stealing software looks for an election definition file on the card located at `\Storage Card\CurrentElection\election.edb` and, if one is present, determines whether the current election contains a race it is supposed to rig. If no such race is found, the software continues to wait. If a target race is found, it searches that race for the name of the favored candidate. Upon finding that the preferred candidate is on the ballot, the software proceeds to poll the election result files every 15 seconds to see if they have been changed.

If the demonstration vote-stealing software successfully opens the result files during one of its polling attempts, it first checks the result files' headers to see whether the machine is in Election mode. If not, the attack software does not change any votes. This feature ensures that the software would not be detected during Logic and Accuracy testing, which occurs when the machine is in Pre-Election

Testing mode. The software could be further enhanced so that it would only change votes during a specified period on election day, or so that it would only change votes in the presence or absence of a “secret knock.” A secret knock is a distinctive sequence of actions, such as touching certain places on the screen, that an attacker executes in order to signal malicious software to activate or deactivate itself.

If the machine is in election mode and the demonstration vote-stealing software successfully opens the result files, then the software checks whether any new ballots have been cast since the last time it polled the files. For each new ballot cast, the software determines whether the race being rigged is on that ballot, and if so, determines whether the corresponding result record contains a vote for the favored candidate or for an opponent. The software maintains a data structure that keeps track of the location of every result record that contains a vote for an opponent of the favored candidate so that it can come back later and change some of those records if necessary. Since each result record is only labeled with the ID number of the ballot to which it corresponds, the software must look up each record’s ballot ID in the election definition file in order to determine which candidates the votes in the record are for.

Once it has parsed any newly cast ballots, the software switches the minimum number of votes necessary to ensure that the favored candidate gets at least the desired percentage of the vote. The vote-stealing software chooses which votes to switch by selecting entries at random from its data structure that tracks votes for the opponents of the favored candidate. After the necessary changes have been made to the result files, the software closes the files, resumes the BallotStation process, and continues to wait in the background.

The steps described above are all that is necessary to alter every electronic record of the voters’ intent that an AccuVote-TS machine produces. Several of the machine’s supposed security features do not impede this attack. The so-called “protective counter,” supposedly an unalterable count of the total number of ballots ever cast on the machine, is irrelevant to this attack because the vote-stealing software does not change the vote count.<sup>10</sup> The machine’s audit logs are equally irrelevant to this attack because the only record they contain of each ballot cast is the log message “Ballot cast.” Furthermore, the fact that election results are stored redundantly in two locations is not an impediment because the vote-stealing software can modify both copies. Finally, as discussed in Section 2, the fact that the election results are encrypted does not foil this attack.

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<sup>10</sup>In any event, the “protective counter” is simply an integer stored in an ordinary file, so an attack that needed to modify it could do so easily [22].

### 4.3 Demonstration Voting Machine Virus

In addition to our demonstration vote-stealing attacks, we have developed a voting machine virus that spreads the vote-stealing code automatically and silently from machine to machine. The virus propagates via the removable memory cards that are used to store the election definition files and election results, and for delivering firmware updates to the machines. It exploits the fact, discovered by Hursti [18], that when the machine boots, the Diebold bootloader will install any code found on the removable memory card in a file with the special name `fboot.nb0`. As a result, an attacker could infect a large population of machines while only having temporary physical access to a single machine or memory card.

Our demonstration virus takes the form of a malicious bootloader that infects a host voting machine by replacing the existing bootloader in the machine’s on-board flash memory. Once installed, the virus deploys our demonstration vote-stealing software and copies itself to every memory card that is inserted into the infected machine. If those cards are inserted into other machines, those machines can become infected as well.

The cycle of infection proceeds as follows. When the virus is carried on a memory card, it resides in a 128 KB bootloader image file named `fboot.nb0`. This file contains both the malicious replacement bootloader code and a Windows CE executable application that implements the demonstration vote-stealing application. The vote-stealing executable is stored in a 50 KB region of the bootloader file that would normally be unused and filled with zeroes.

When a card carrying the virus is inserted into a voting machine and the machine is switched on or rebooted, the machine’s existing bootloader interprets the `fboot.nb0` file as a bootloader update and copies the contents of the file into its on-board flash memory, replacing the existing bootloader with the malicious one. The original bootloader does not ask for confirmation before replacing itself. It does display a brief status message, but this is interspersed with other normal messages displayed during boot. These messages are visible for less than 20 seconds and are displayed in small print at a 90 degree angle to the viewer. After the boot messages disappear, nothing out of the ordinary ever appears on the screen.

Once a newly infected host is rebooted, the virus bootloader is in control. Since the bootloader is the first code that runs on the machine, a virus bootloader is in a position to affect all aspects of system operation. While booting, the virus bootloader, like the ordinary bootloader, checks for the presence of a memory card in the first PC Card slot. However, if it finds a bootloader software update on the card, it pretends to perform a bootloader update by printing out the appropriate messages, but actually does

nothing.<sup>11</sup> Thus, once a machine has been infected, the only way to remove the virus bootloader is to restore the machine's state using an EPROM-resident bootloader.

If a memory card is present, the virus bootloader copies itself to the card as a file named `fboot.nb0` so that it can spread to other machines. If the card already contains a file with that name, the bootloader replaces it. Consequently, if a service technician performing bootloader updates tries to update an infected machine using a card containing an `fboot.nb0` file, the infected machine will not be updated (although it will pretend to be), and all subsequent machines that the technician tries to update using the same card will receive the virus bootloader instead of the updated one. Similarly, updates to the `BallotStation` software or operating system can also propagate the virus.

The malicious bootloader also copies the vote-stealing executable to the memory card as a file named `AV.EXE`. Then, immediately before starting Windows, the virus bootloader scans the region of RAM occupied by the operating system image (`0x8C080000-0x8C67FFFF`) for the hard-coded string in the `taskman.exe` binary that points to the `BallotStation` executable `\FFX\Bin\BallotStation.exe` and replaces it with `\Storage Card\AV.EXE`. Consequently, when Windows starts, `taskman.exe` will launch the demonstration vote-stealing application instead of `BallotStation`.

When the demonstration vote-stealing application on the memory card starts, it first renames the legitimate `BallotStation` executable to `\FFX\Bin\AccuVote.exe`, and then it copies itself to the machine's on-board flash memory with the name `\FFX\Bin\BallotStation.exe`. It adopts the name of the `BallotStation` executable so it will still run at start-up even if the machine is booted without a memory card in the first PC Card slot. Next, it copies the malicious bootloader image from the card to the on-board flash. Thereafter, the software periodically checks whether an uninfected memory card is present in the machine, and, if so, it copies the virus files onto the card so that other machines where the card is used will become infected. Finally, the vote-stealing application runs in the background, changing votes in the manner described in Section 4.2.

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<sup>11</sup>In order to avoid printing out fake update messages when the copy of `fboot.nb0` on the card was put there by the virus bootloader itself, whenever the virus bootloader copies itself to a card, it sets the hidden, system, and read-only FAT attributes of the resulting `fboot.nb0` file. Then, when the virus bootloader checks for the presence of the `fboot.nb0` file on the card, it only prints out fake update messages if the file does not have those attributes. Alternatively, the virus bootloader could identify copies of itself by examining the contents of the `fboot.nb0` file for some characteristic bit string.

## 4.4 Demo Denial-of-Service Attack

To illustrate how malicious software running on an `AccuVote-TS` could launch a denial-of-service (DoS) attack, we developed a demonstration attack program that, on command, erases the contents of both the currently-inserted memory card and the machine's on-board flash memory. This attack not only destroys all records of the election currently in progress (both the primary and backup copies), but also renders the machine inoperable until a service technician has the opportunity to dismantle it and restore its configuration.

The demonstration DoS program is comprised of a user-space Windows CE executable that triggers the attack and a malicious bootloader that functions like an ordinary bootloader, except that upon receiving the appropriate signal, it completely erases the currently-inserted memory card and the machine's on-board flash memory. The user-space trigger program works by first writing a special value to a part of the machine's on-board flash memory that is accessible from user-space programs and then crashing the machine by invoking the `PowerOffSystem()` Windows CE API call. The `PowerOffSystem()` API is supposed to put the system in a low-power "sleep" mode from which it can later "wake-up," but when this API is invoked on an `AccuVote-TS`, the machine simply crashes. When the machine is rebooted (which must be done manually), the malicious bootloader notices that the special value has been written to the machine's on-board flash memory. On this signal, it completely erases the contents of both the currently-inserted memory card and the machine's on-board flash memory. In so doing, the malicious bootloader destroys all of the data, software, and file system formatting on both the memory card and the on-board flash memory.

In order to account for the possibility that the malicious bootloader never gets a chance to completely erase both storage media or that the memory card is removed before the machine is rebooted, the user-space trigger program deletes as much as it can before crashing the machine. It deletes all of the files on the memory card and on the machine's on-board `\FFX` file system including both the primary and backup copies of the election results (`election.brs`), the audit logs (`election.adt`), and the `BallotStation` executable. When it deletes these files, it overwrites each of them with garbage data to make it less likely that the files will ever be recovered.

While our demonstration DoS attack is triggered by a user's command, a real attacker could create malicious software that only triggers the above attack on a specific date and time, such as on election day. An attacker could also design the attack to launch in response to a specific trend in voting during an election, such as an apparent victory for a particular candidate. Like a vote-stealing

attack, a DoS attack could be spread by a virus.

## 5 Mitigation

The vulnerabilities that we have described can be mitigated, to some extent, by changing voting machine designs and election procedures. In this section we discuss several mitigation strategies and their limitations.

### 5.1 Software and Hardware Modifications

The AccuVote-TS machine is vulnerable to computer viruses because it automatically loads and runs code found on memory cards without authenticating it. Its software could be redesigned to inhibit the spread of viruses, however. One approach would be to digitally sign all software updates and have the machine's software verify the signature of each update before installing it. Such a change would ensure that only updates signed by the manufacturer or another trusted certifying authority could be loaded.<sup>12</sup> It would also be helpful to require the person using the machine to confirm any software updates. Confirmation of updates would not prevent a malicious person with physical access to the machine from loading an update, but at least it would make the accidental spread of a virus less likely while the machine was being used by honest election officials.

While redesigning the voting machine's software can help mitigate some of the security problems that we identify, there are other problems inherent in the AccuVote-TS hardware architecture that cannot be addressed by software changes. For example, there is nothing to stop an adversary who has physical access to the machine from booting and installing his own malicious software by replacing the socketed EPROM chip on the motherboard. Furthermore, because all of the machine's state is kept in rewritable storage (RAM, flash memory, or a memory card), it is impossible to create tamper-proof logs, records, and counters. In addition, as is the case with ordinary PCs, it is difficult to determine with certainty that the machine is actually running the software that it is supposed to run. Rootkit techniques [16] and virtualization technologies [21], which are often used to conceal malware in the PC setting, could be adapted for use on the voting machines.

Researchers have proposed various strategies for building specialized hardware capable of maintaining tamper-proof and tamper-evident logs, records, and counters (e.g., [37]), as well as software strategies that provide

<sup>12</sup>Adding signatures would not be effective if a machine has already been infected with malicious code; machines would need to be booted from EPROM and completely restored to a known state before their software were updated to a version that checked signatures.

more limited protection (e.g., [33]). Although such methods could prevent attacks that aim to alter votes after they have been recorded, they could not prevent malicious code from changing future votes by altering data before it is sent to the storage device.

Assuring a computer's software configuration is also a notoriously difficult problem, and research has focused on mechanisms to ensure that only approved code can boot [1] or that a machine can prove to a remote observer that it is running certain code [37]. For example, commercial systems such as Microsoft's Xbox game console have incorporated mechanisms to try to resist modification of the boot code or operating system, but they have not been entirely successful [17]. Although mechanisms of this type are imperfect and remain subjects of active research, they seem appropriate for voting machines because they offer some level of assurance against malicious code injection. It is somewhat discouraging to see voting machine designers spend much less effort on this issue than game console designers.

While changes to the hardware and software of voting machines can reduce the threats of malicious code injection and log tampering, no purely technical solution can eliminate these problems.

### 5.2 Physical Access Controls

Despite the best efforts of hardware and software designers, any physical access to a computer still raises the possibility of malicious code installation, so election officials should limit access to voting machines' internals, their memory cards, and their memory card slots to the extent possible.

There is some benefit in sealing the machine's case, memory card, and card bay door with individually numbered tamper-evident seals, in the hope of detecting illicit accesses to these areas. While these measures may expose some classes of attacks, they make denial-of-service attacks easier. Suppose, for example, that a malicious voter cuts a seal while an election is in progress. If machines with broken seals are treated as completely untrustworthy, then cutting the seal is itself an effective denial-of-service attack. If broken seals are usually ignored when everything else seems to be in order, then an attacker has a good chance of successfully inserting malicious code that cleans up after itself. There seems to be no fully satisfactory compromise point between these two extremes.

Even leaving aside the possibility that voters will deliberately break seals, broken seals are an unfortunately common occurrence. The most comprehensive study of AccuVote DRE election processes in practice examined the May 2006 primary election in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, which used AccuVote-TSx machines. The study found that more than 15% of polling places reported at least one

problem with seals [13].

The available evidence is that machines and memory cards are not handled with anything approaching the necessary level of care. For example, the Cuyahoga County study [13] reported many procedural weaknesses: “A lack of inventory control and gaps in the chain of custody of mission critical assets (i.e. DRE memory cards, [DREs], . . .)” (p. 103); “the systems of seals, signatures and other security features of the . . . machine memory cards were not implemented on a consistent basis” (p. 109); “It appears that memory cards are regularly removed and re-inserted when a DRE becomes out-of-service. Security tabs are broken and no log of this remove and replace activity is maintained. . . There is no indication that a record comparing memory card to DRE serial number is kept” (p. 138); “Security seals are not checked for integrity at the end of Election Day, nor are they matched with a deployment list of Security seal serial numbers. There is no attempt to reconcile memory cards intended for the precinct with memory cards removed from the DREs at the end of the day. . . Therefore, it is unknown whether these memory cards were tampered with during Election Day” (p. 139); “There is no established chain of custody during the transfer of the memory cards. . . from the vote center to the BOE [Board of Elections]” (p. 140); “Security seals are collected upon return to the BOE, but these serial numbers are neither logged nor checked against the original security seal serial numbers deployed with the memory cards. Therefore, it is unknown whether these memory cards were tampered with during transport to the BOE from the polling location” (p. 140). These problems require immediate attention from election officials.

Security seals do some good, but it is not a solution simply to assume that seals will always be used, always be checked, and never be broken. Inevitably, some seals will be missing or broken without an explanation, providing potential cover for the insertion of malicious code or a voting machine virus.

### 5.3 Effective Parallel Testing

In parallel testing, election officials choose some voting machines at random and set them aside, casting simulated votes on them throughout election day and verifying at the end of the election that the machines counted the simulated votes correctly. The goal of parallel testing is to trigger and detect any vote-stealing software that may be installed on the machines.

A challenge in parallel testing is how to make the simulated voting pattern realistic. If the pattern is unrealistic in some respect—if, say, the distribution of votes throughout the day doesn’t match what a real voting machine would see—then vote-stealing software may be able to tell the difference between a real election and parallel testing, al-

lowing the software to steal votes in the real election while leaving results unchanged in parallel testing.

Parallel testing is also vulnerable to a “secret knock” attack by a testing insider. Generally, parallel tests are carried out by representatives from all political parties to ensure impartiality. However, if one representative has placed vote altering code on the machines, she could disable the code on the machine being tested by issuing a surreptitious command. For example, the code might watch for a specific sequence of touches in a normally unused area of the screen and deactivate its vote altering function in response. Preventing this kind of attack requires carefully scripting the testing procedure.

Alternatively, a secret knock might be used to activate malicious code. In this scheme, malicious voters would perform the secret knock on the machines being used to collect real votes, or a malicious election worker would perform it surreptitiously when setting up the machines, and vote-stealing software would wait for this secret knock before operating. Machines chosen for parallel testing would not see the secret knock and so would count votes honestly. This approach has the drawback (for the attacker) of requiring a significant number of malicious voters or a malicious poll worker to participate, though these participants would not have to know all the details of the attack.

These possibilities reduce the usefulness of parallel testing in practice, but we think it can still be a worthwhile precaution when conducted according to rigorously controlled procedures.

### 5.4 Effective Whole-System Certification

Despite their very serious security flaws, the Diebold DREs were certified according to federal and state standards. This demonstrates that the certification processes are deficient. The Federal Election Commission’s 2002 Voting System Standards [14] say relatively little about security, seeming to focus instead on the machine’s reliability if used non-maliciously.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission issued voluntary voting system guidelines [38] in 2005. These are considerably more detailed, especially in the area of security, than the FEC’s 2002 standards. Though it would not be entirely fair to apply the 2005 guidelines to the pre-2005 version of the AccuVote software we studied, we do note that the AccuVote-TS hardware architecture may make it impossible to comply with the 2005 guidelines, in particular with the requirement to detect unauthorized modifications to the system software (see [38], Volume I, Section 7.4.6). In practice, a technology can be deployed despite noncompliance with certification requirements if the testing agencies fail to notice the problem.

In general, the certification process seems to rely more

on testing than analysis. Testing is appropriate for some properties of interest, such as reliability in the face of heat, cold, and vibration, but testing is ill-suited for finding security problems. As discussed frequently in the literature, testing can only show that a system works under specific, predefined conditions; it generally cannot ensure that there is no way for an attacker to achieve some goal by violating these conditions. Only a competent and thorough security analysis can provide any confidence that the system can resist the full range of realistic attacks.

Weak certification would be less of a problem if information about the system's design were more widely available to the public. Researchers and other experts would be able to provide valuable feedback on voting machine designs if they had the information to do so. Ideally, strong certification procedures would be coupled with public scrutiny to provide the highest assurance.

## 5.5 Software-Independent Design

Although the strategies described above can contribute to the integrity of election results, none are sufficient to mitigate the vote-stealing attacks that we have demonstrated. The only known method of achieving an acceptable level of security against the attacks we describe is software-independent design. "A voting system is *software-independent* if an undetected change or error in its software cannot cause an undetectable change or error in an election outcome [31]." In the near term, the only practical way to make DREs software-independent is through the use of a voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) coupled with random audits. The VVPAT creates a paper record, verified visually by the voter, of how each vote was cast. This record can be either a paper ballot that is deposited by the voter in a traditional ballot box, or a ballot-under-glass system that keeps the paper record within the voting machine but lets the voter see it [24]. A VVPAT makes our vote-stealing attack detectable. In an all-electronic system like the Diebold DREs, malicious code can modify all of the logs and records in the machine, thereby covering up its vote stealing, but the machine cannot modify already created paper records, and the accuracy of the paper records is verified by voters.

Paper trails have their own failure modes, of course. If they are poorly implemented, or if voters do not know how or do not bother to check them, they may have little value [3, 13]. The real advantage of a paper trail is that its failure modes differ significantly from those of electronic systems, making the combination of paper and electronic record keeping harder to defraud than either would be alone. Requiring a would-be vote stealer to carry out both a code-injection attack on the voting machines and a physical ballot box stuffing attack would significantly raise the difficulty of attacking the system.

Paper ballots are only an effective safeguard if they are actually used to check the accuracy of the machines. This need not be done everywhere. It is enough to choose a small fraction of the polling places at random and verify that the paper ballots match the electronic records there. If the polling places to recount are chosen by a suitable random procedure, election officials can establish with high probability that a full comparison of paper and electronic records would not change the election's result. Methods for conducting these random audits are discussed by Rivest [2] and Calandrino, *et al.* [6], among others.

Another limitation of VVPATs is that they cannot stop a denial-of-service attack from spoiling an election by disabling a large number of voting machines on election day. Given this possibility, if DREs are used, it is worthwhile to have an alternative voting technology available, such as paper ballots.

In the future, cryptographic voting may provide an alternative means of achieving software-independence that offers greater security than VVPATs. Cryptographic voting systems (e.g., [32, 5]) aim not only to allow voters to verify that their votes were recorded as cast, but also to allow them to confirm that their ballots were actually included in the final vote totals. Currently, however, achieving acceptable usability and maintaining ballot secrecy remain challenges for such schemes (see [19]).

## 6 Related Work

Several previous studies have criticized the security of the Diebold AccuVote DRE systems. The first major study of these machines was published in 2003 by Kohno *et al.* [22], who did not have access to a machine but did have a leaked version of the source code for BallotStation. They found numerous security flaws in the software and concluded that its design did not show evidence of any sophisticated security thinking. They did not study the AccuVote-TS's kernel or bootloader, however.

Public concern in light of Kohno's study led the state of Maryland to authorize two security studies. The first study, by SAIC, reported that the system was "at high risk of compromise" [34]. RABA, a security consulting firm, was hired to do another independent study of the Diebold machines. RABA had access to a number of machines and some technical documentation. Their study [30] was generally consistent with Kohno's findings, and found some new vulnerabilities. It suggested design changes to the Diebold system, and outlined some steps that Maryland might take to reduce the risk of security problems. The state responded by adopting many of RABA's suggestions [23].

A further security assessment was commissioned by the Ohio Secretary of State and carried out by the Compuware Corporation [7]. This study examined several

DRE systems, including the AccuVote-TS running the same version of BallotStation as our machine, and identified several high risk security problems.

In 2006, in response to reports that Harri Hursti had found flaws in Diebold's AccuBasic subsystem, the state of California asked Wagner, Jefferson, and Bishop to perform a study of AccuBasic security issues. Their report [39] identified several vulnerabilities that differ from those that we describe because the machine that we studied lacks the AccuBasic subsystem.

Later in 2006, Hursti released a report [18] describing several security weaknesses in the AccuVote-TS and -TSx systems that could allow an attacker to install malicious software by subverting the systems' software update mechanisms. These weaknesses form the basis for many of the attacks that we describe in the current study. With limited access to the voting machines, Hursti could only confirm that one of these weaknesses could be exploited; we show that many of the others can be as well.

Our work builds on these previous reports. Our findings generally confirm the behaviors and vulnerabilities described by Kohno *et al.*, RABA, and Hursti, and demonstrate through proof-of-concept implementations that the vulnerabilities can be exploited to implement viral attacks and to change election results. To our knowledge, our work is the first comprehensive, public description of these threats to Diebold's DREs.

Several studies discuss general issues in the construction of software-based attacks on DRE voting machines. Kelsey [20] catalogs the attacker's design choices; our analysis confirms that all or nearly all of the attack options Kelsey discusses can be carried out against the Diebold machine we studied. The Brennan Center report [3] offers a broader but less technical discussion; its discussion of malicious software injection attacks is based partially on Kelsey's analysis.

Additionally, there is an extensive literature on electronic voting in general, which we will not attempt to survey here.

## 7 Conclusion

From a computer security standpoint, DREs have much in common with desktop PCs. Both suffer from many of the same security and reliability problems, including bugs, crashes, malicious software, and data tampering. Despite years of research and enormous investment, PCs remain vulnerable to these problems, so it is doubtful, unfortunately, that DRE vendors will be able to overcome them.

Nevertheless, the practical question facing public officials is whether DREs provide better security than other election technologies, which have their own history of failure and fraud. DREs may resist small-scale fraud as well

as, or better than, older voting technologies; but DREs are much more vulnerable to large-scale fraud. Attacks on DREs can spread virally, they can be injected far in advance and lurk passively until election day, and they can alter logs to cover their tracks. Procedures designed to control small-scale fraud are no longer sufficient—DREs demand new safeguards.

Electronic voting machines have their advantages, but experience with the AccuVote-TS and other paperless DREs shows that they are prone to very serious vulnerabilities. Making them safe, given the limitations of today's technology, will require safeguards beginning with software-independent design and truly independent security evaluation.

## Acknowledgments

We thank Andrew Appel, Jeff Dwoskin, Laura Felten, Shirley Gaw, Brie Ilenda, Scott Karlin, Yoshi Kohno, David Robinson, Avi Rubin, Adam Stubblefield, Dan Wallach, and Harlan Yu for technical help, information, and feedback. We are especially grateful to the party who provided us the machine to study.

This material is based upon work supported under a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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**Assumed software versions in use in Georgia for 2017 elections**

**Optical Scan**

AccuVote OS 1.94W

**Touch Screen**

R6 – Ballot Station 4.5.2! \*

TSx – Ballot Station 4.5.2! \*

**ExpressPoll**

Express Poll 2.1.2

Security Key 4.5

**Election Management System**

GEMS 1.18.22 G

Source-- Georgia's Logic and Accuracy Testing Manual v1.4

([https://www.eac.gov/assets/1/28/Logic and Accuracy Testing Manual Final v1.4.pdf](https://www.eac.gov/assets/1/28/Logic_and_Accuracy_Testing_Manual_Final_v1.4.pdf) )

\*Note: We assume that the version in use is 4.5.2 as issued by Diebold/Premier and installed without modifications. We assume that the “!” in the version number is a stray typo with no significance.

# **EXHIBIT 2**

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May 17, 2017

The Honorable Brian Kemp  
Georgia Secretary of State  
214 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
(Via email [tfleming@sos.ga.gov](mailto:tfleming@sos.ga.gov) )

Re: Supplemental information to May 10, 2017, Request for reexamination of voting system

Dear Secretary Kemp:

I am the technical adviser to the group of sixteen Georgia citizens who have formally requested a review of the voting system under the provisions of Georgia Code §21-2-379.2. We have not received a response to our attached May 10, 2017, letter seeking your immediate reexamination of the touchscreen (DRE) voting system prior to the June 20, 2017, special election in Congressional District 6.

Your office was quoted in the press as stating, “We’ve received their letter, and we will provide a timeline and cost estimate for the review,” and “Georgia’s voting equipment is regularly tested by experts and local elections officials across the state. We have complete confidence in its accuracy and security.”<sup>1</sup> I wish to reiterate that the review that the citizens request should require no more than one day to review the system documentation and one day to prepare, review, and release your findings. Additionally, the cost of the reexamination should be borne by your office, given its responsibility to provide fair, accurate, and secure elections.

Laboratory testing of machines to federal certification standards is not required to determine whether the machines can be “safely and accurately used” in the upcoming election. Adequate documentation exists in Kennesaw State University’s Center for Election Systems to reach the irrefutable conclusion that the DRE system is not secure

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/voters-seek-review-georgia-voting-system-before-6th-district-runoff/FHtMDKqMsW0ojYZppnINKN/>

and must not be used for future elections. A review of the records in the public domain demonstrates there is considerable doubt that the voting system is fit for use. Machine testing is not required to reach this conclusion.

We are dismayed that by expressing your “complete confidence in its [the system's] accuracy and security” you have prejudged the system as adequate. Overwhelming technical evidence in the public domain details numerous significant security vulnerabilities in the system and demonstrates that such confidence is misplaced. We are certain that any responsible review of the system documentation and the academic research will rapidly conclude that the system cannot be used with reasonable assurance of its security and accuracy.

We call your attention to three major security issues that have come to our attention and must be considered in your reexamination:

1. Significant security vulnerabilities at the KSU Center for Election Systems

Exhibit A is a recent internal Kennesaw State University general overview assessment of certain security issues at the KSU Center for Election Systems (CES). The assessment notes several significant security vulnerabilities. It is our view that documented security vulnerabilities create such critical questions of security that the “safe and accurate” use of the voting system cannot be assured for the upcoming June election. Even if all listed CES facility vulnerabilities were currently mitigated, it is quite possible that systems may have already been compromised in one or more ways that will remain undetected. Such potential compromises and security implications to the voting system components cannot be reasonably assessed in the near term.

The CES security vulnerabilities noted in the assessment, considered in relation to the twelve issues listed in our May 10 letter attached, make it clear that the system cannot be used safely and accurately.

Indeed, what can be inferred from the KSU report is that security and integrity measures that would be reasonable and obvious in any situation involving sensitive information were not in place at the CES. Such measures were possibly not even thought to be necessary for perhaps extended periods of time prior to the security incident. These measures included an acknowledged poor understanding of risk and a failure to recognize the value of the contents of at least one of the targeted servers, the use of software with well-known vulnerabilities, and a lack of established protocols for handling sensitive information.

We note also that the only “successes” reported are procedural: CES and KSU were able to respond quickly *when* disaster struck, although thorough testing of the response effectiveness has apparently not been conducted. There are no successes mentioned that involve preventing disaster or mitigating a disaster’s effects, and the lack of such successes only decreases the trust that Georgia’s citizens should have in their elections.

2. Significant violations of HAVA Section 301(a)

We call your attention to the legal requirements of the Help America Vote Act that mandate minimum voting system security standards for audit capacity. The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) issued an advisory letter regarding audit capacity compliance on July 20, 2005 (Exhibit B). The system must comply with Sections 2.2.5.2.1 and 2.5.3.1 of the 2002 Voting System Standards.

- a. Section 2.2.5.2.1 requires the maintenance of accessible system logs. Fulton County Elections Department has stated that such records cannot be extracted on a timely basis. In fact, they require months of work to retrieve. (Exhibit C—Rocky Mountain Foundation’s FOIA response.) The physical security of such audit log information in the memory of the TS machine is inadequate because of lax security of the voting machines themselves in storage between elections as well as at the polling places before and after voting. Additionally, the audit logs can be manipulated and edited by using malware transferred via infected memory cards. Those memory cards can be exposed to malware because of the CES security vulnerabilities noted in paragraph 1 above or through malicious insertion of malware onto voter access cards as a result of lax security of e-pollbooks, such as the April 15, 2017, Cobb County e-pollbook theft.
- b. Section 2.5.3.1 lists “Common Standards” required of voting systems. The voting system appears to be in significant violation of certain of those mandatory standards.
  - (i). Paragraph *f* of this section requires that all audit information be available to be printed. The information includes ballot images (cast vote records) as required in Section 4.5. As noted in Exhibit C and in paragraph a above, such audit data is not, as a practical matter, available from Georgia’s voting system.

(ii). Paragraph *g* requires that security must be in place to avoid alteration or destruction of data when election results are transmitted electronically. We question the adequacy of security of transmission of results from TSx units via modem to the GEMS server. Issue 4 of our May 10 letter raised this concern. Additionally, we believe that the encryption key for the TS machine is in the public domain and undermines any security of the votes or results transmitted in any fashion. (See issue 9, May 10 letter.)

### 3. Significant Violations of FEC 1990 Voting System Standards

It is our understanding that Georgia's system was certified under the Federal Election Commission's 1990 VSS standards, which requires audit trails as "essential for public confidence, for recounts, and in the event of litigation."<sup>2</sup> However, it appears that the system is not in compliance with numerous essential security and accuracy-related provisions of the 1990 VSS. I provide two examples:

- a. Similar to the HAVA requirements detailed in paragraph 2 above, VSS Sections 1.3.3, 2.3.2, and 3.2.4.2.5, among others, require the retention and accessibility of ballot images and activity logs. Yet the images and activity logs cannot be retrieved on a practical and timely basis to address transparency, recount, audit, or litigation needs.
- b. VSS Section 5.3 requires adequate measures to prevent unauthorized access to the system. As noted in paragraphs 1 and 2a above, the physical security vulnerabilities raised in our letter of May 10, demonstrate that security is critically inadequate and cannot meet the mandatory minimum standards.

Significant noncompliance with *any one of these individual mandatory provisions* for security and accuracy renders the system unsafe for use in the upcoming June election. Considered in combination, the numerous significant violations summarized above and in the May 10 letter provide overwhelming evidence that the system cannot be reasonably certified to be safe and accurate for near-term use.

The clear intent of the provisions of Georgia Code §21-2-379.2 is to provide a failsafe method to assure the security and accuracy of the voting system regardless of the official status of system certification. We wish to make it clear that the mere absence of detected and documented intrusions, malware, or irregularities is not an appropriate standard on

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<sup>2</sup> page xxiii FEC 1990 Voting Systems Standards

which to evaluate the security and accuracy of the system. The documented areas of current system vulnerability present clear evidence that past and future intrusions could easily go undetected. Given such overwhelming evidence, there is no reasonable path to reach a responsible conclusion that the system is secure and reliable for voter use in the near term.

I reiterate the fact that laboratory testing is not required to ascertain that significant security issues are present. They cannot be overcome in the immediate future. The system documents are sufficient to confirm the existence and proliferation of the serious issues we have noted. A review of these issues can be accomplished and documented in one to two days. We request that you make this issue a priority for your staff and the KSU Center for Election Systems. Your required reexamination of the voting system cannot be reasonably delayed. Early voting in the June 20 special election begins on May 30, and voters must not be permitted to vote on the clearly vulnerable system.

Paper ballots are a safe, efficient, and cost-effective solution for the June 20 election. Given that there is only one contest on the ballot, hand counting of ballots in the precinct is easily accomplished and verified in a short period of time after the closing of the polls. It seems likely that results would be available at least as quickly with hand counting as with electronic tabulations and transmission, and possibly even more promptly.

If your office or the KSU Center of Election Systems has questions about our concerns, I am happy to discuss them at your convenience. Additionally, I have the good fortune of having several computer scientist colleagues who have conducted extensive Diebold voting systems research and who are available to assist with any specific technical issues.

I look forward to hearing from you very soon. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Duncan A. Buell

(For informational purposes)  
Professor and NCR Chair in Computer Science and Engineering  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia SC 29209  
[buell@acm.org](mailto:buell@acm.org)  
803-479-7128

cc: DeKalb County Elections, H. Maxine Daniels, Director [voterreg@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:voterreg@dekalbcountyga.gov)

Fulton County Elections, Director Richard Barron [Richard.Barron@fultoncountyga.gov](mailto:Richard.Barron@fultoncountyga.gov)  
Cobb County Election Director Janine Eveler, [info@cobbelections.org](mailto:info@cobbelections.org)  
David Worley, State Election Board Member, [david@ewlawllc.com](mailto:david@ewlawllc.com)  
Rebecca Sullivan, State Election Board Member, [Rebecca.Sullivan@DOAS.Ga.Gov](mailto:Rebecca.Sullivan@DOAS.Ga.Gov)  
Judge Ralph Simpson, State Election Board Member, [rfs@simpsonmediation.com](mailto:rfs@simpsonmediation.com)  
Mustaque Ahamad, Atlanta, GA 30306  
David Bader, Atlanta, GA 30306  
Ricardo Davis, Woodstock, Georgia 30188  
Richard DeMillo, Atlanta GA 30305  
Virginia Forney, Atlanta, GA 30309  
Merrick Furst, Atlanta 30306  
Adam Ghetti, Atlanta, GA 30324  
Jeff Levy, Atlanta, GA 30306  
Rhonda J. Martin, Atlanta, GA 30305  
Paul Nally, Rydal, GA 30171  
Michael S Optiz, Marietta, GA  
Susan McWethy, Decatur, GA  
Renee Vorbach, Norcross, GA  
Anita Darden, Atlanta, GA  
Linda McPherson, Peachtree Corners, GA  
Michael Burke, Norcross, GA



Zimbra

darmstea@kennesaw.edu

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**Re: Incident Reponse Walk through**

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**From :** Stephen C. Gay <sgay@kennesaw.edu>

Mon, Apr 24, 2017 12:01 PM

**Subject :** Re: Incident Reponse Walk through

📎 1 attachment

**To :** Merle King <mking@kennesaw.edu>, Michael Barnes  
<mbarne28@kennesaw.edu>**Cc :** Lectra Lawhorne <llawhorn@kennesaw.edu>, Christopher M.  
Dehner <cmd9090@kennesaw.edu>

Merle &amp; Michael,

Following up on this, one of the areas in which we are actively looking to grow is in the "Post-Incident Activity" area and specifically working to understand what vectors led to a compromise and what KSU could have done better to close those vectors (or minimally detected earlier). For the Center for Election Systems incident, we adopted a format which GaTech shared to conduct document incident "After Action Reports". The document purposely vague in regards to the incident, but is highly tactical in prescribing mitigation steps to prevent future incidents.

Can I ask you to review and provide your feedback, as I value your input and all mitigation is going to be conducted in a secure and collaborative manner.

Thank you,  
Stephen

----- Original Message -----

From: "Merle King" &lt;mking@kennesaw.edu&gt;

To: "Stephen C Gay" &lt;sgay@kennesaw.edu&gt;

Cc: "Michael Barnes" <mbarne28@kennesaw.edu>, "Lectra Lawhorne"  
<llawhorn@kennesaw.edu>, "Steven Dean" <sdean29@kennesaw.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2017 9:55:05 AM

Subject: Incident Reponse Walk through

Stephen - We are looking for assistance in designing and conducting an incident response exercise walk through for several difference scenarios here at the Center. Do you have a template or other guidelines that can help us organize the exercise? We would like to include our staff, UITS, and SOS IT staff in the exercise.

Thanks in advance,

Merle

--

Merle S. King

Executive Director  
Center for Election Systems  
Kennesaw State University  
3205 Campus Loop Road  
Kennesaw, Georgia 30144

Voice: 470-578-6900

Fax: 470-578-9012

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**— CES AAR.docx**  
45 KB

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## Background

On Wednesday March 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:29pm, a member of the KSU UITS Information Security Office was contacted by a KSU faculty member regarding an alleged breach of data on the elections.kennesaw.edu server. UITS staff validated the vulnerability and notified the CIO regarding the incident. The data contained hosted on the identified server was outside the scope of student information and no student records are associated with this alleged breach. Log analysis identified that the largest file identified contained voter registration information for 6.7 million individuals.

## Actions Taken

Within an hour of initial contact, the vulnerability was confirmed and firewall rules established to block access to elections.kennesaw.edu. On March 2, 2017, UITS-ISO pulled apache and Drupal logs, reported incident to USG, reset passwords, and seized the elections.kennesaw.edu server. On March 3, 2017, the FBI was engaged and the impacted server was turned over to FBI for investigation.

IT staff which were reporting within the Center for Election systems were realigned to report within the University Information Technology Services Information Security Office and a walkthrough of the area performed to validate the isolated internal network's segregation from the public network. The elections backup server – unicoi – was removed from the Center and physically secured within UITS ISO Evidence Storage.

On March 30<sup>th</sup>, KSU employees (President Olens, CIO, AVP Strategic Communications, Legal Counsel, CISO, CES Representatives) met with the FBI and US Attorney's Office regarding the outcome of the Federal Investigation. Chad Hunt shared that the investigation had yielded no data that "escalates to the point of breach". KSU Released a statement to the media on 3/31/17 as follows:

**KENNESAW, Ga (Mar. 31, 2017)** –Kennesaw State officials report there is no indication of any illegal activity and that no personal information was compromised following unauthorized access of a dedicated server at the Center for Election Systems. KSU officials were briefed yesterday by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

University officials were first notified of the situation on March 1 and immediately isolated the server. Officials also contacted the Office of the Secretary of State and federal law enforcement, which prompted the FBI investigation. According to the FBI, the server was accessed by an outside security researcher. No student data was involved.

"We are working with experts within the University System of Georgia and an outside firm to validate that KSU's systems are secured and meet best practice standards," said KSU President Sam Olens. "We greatly appreciate the speed and dedication of the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office in helping us resolve this issue."



UITS Information Security Office

## Financial Impact

Center for Election Systems

Incident Date: March 1, 2017

None, although if it was determined that the data hosted on elections.kennesaw.edu was maliciously disclosed, the notification and credit monitoring would have been approximately \$2 million.

## Successes

The following list describes those actions or systems that worked as intended, or better than anticipated, during the execution of incident and breach response activities:

- The UITS ISO Incident Response process worked as intended, isolating the server and preserving evidence for later analysis and hand-off to federal authorities.
- The time between initial report and the server being isolated was approximately 60 minutes.
- The open dialog between the faculty incident reporter and the Office of the CIO staff facilitated timely notification and rapid response time.
- Having regular conversations with Legal Affairs, Strategic Communications, Center for Election Systems staff, and the Office of the CIO ensured that all parties were informed on developments, allowing for individual planning in each respective area.

## Opportunities for Improvement

1. **Issue:** Poor understanding of risk posed by The Center for Election Systems IT systems. While a previous server scan and an external researcher had helped UITS understand the high threat level of CES systems, the lack of understanding the hosted data set led to an incomplete picture of the asset value. This resulted in the existence of a high risk server (High Asset Value / High Threat Level) which should have been prioritized.

**Action item(s):** An objective 3<sup>rd</sup> party was hired to conduct a threat assessment for externally-facing applications. In addition, funding was secured to extend the current KSU vulnerability scanning engine to allow for external scans. Once these scans are complete, a thorough analysis of all vulnerable systems will quantify the threat level and remediation plans will be developed (and incorporated into remediation projects)

**Action Item Owner(s):** UITS Information Security Office

2. **Issue:** Elections webserver and Unicoi backup server are running a vulnerable version of Drupal and vulnerable to exploitation.

**Action Items:** Elections (externally-facing) was seized immediately and Unicoi (isolated network) was seized thereafter. Both were placed in ISO Secure Storage. UITS provisioned a dedicated virtual server, FS-ES, and business documents were moved to a newly provisioned server. This share is limited the CES subnet and CES Active Directory group users. Server administrators are limited to 2 UITS ISS Staff Members.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, UITS-ISS, CES Staff

3. **Issue:** CES confidential data handling processes were not defined.

**Action Items:** Business processes were developed, documented, and implemented to ensure confidential data is handled appropriately. CES technicians were issued IronKey encrypted hard



UITS Information Security Office

Center for Election Systems

Incident Date: March 1, 2017

drives and secure FTP transfers established with Georgia Secretary of State's Office. To date, all processes have been approved by the Georgia Secretary of State's Office.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, CES Staff, Georgia Secretary of State Office

4. **Issue:** Center for Election System IT staff is not aligned with the University Information Technology Services, creating a scenario in which institutional risk could be accepted without CIO awareness.

**Action Items:** CES IT staff reporting structure realigned to mirror UITS TSS model. CES IT staff will report directly to UITS-ISO while directly supporting the CES. Additionally, all processes will align with USG and KSU data security policies. Strategically, UITS is launching a project to engage all external IT in order to better understand university-wide IT risk.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, CES Staff

5. **Issue:** Room 105a, the elections private network data closet, was not latching properly due to lock/door misalignment.

**Action Items:** CISO contacted Chief of Police to have lock and door aligned. Work was completed within one business day. ISO to develop processes to review access logs on a scheduled basis.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, KSU UPD, CES Staff

6. **Issue:** The elections private network data closet contains a live network jack to the ~~public network~~ (Public network)

**Action Items:** UITS-ISO should acquire color-coded Ethernet Jack block-outs to "lock" all ports in the data closet to the public network AND to "lock" all ports to the private network outside the data closet. Key's should be maintained by ISS and ISO, necessitating consulting with UITS staff before connecting devices.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, UITS-ISS

7. **Issue:** A number of IT Assets within the Center for Elections Systems have reached end-of-life and need to be replaced or migrated to different infrastructure.

1. Rackmount UPS Battery backups (one displaying warning light)

Recommendation: Replace batteries as needed and move under UITS ISS management

2. 3com Switches – Age 10+ years -- No Support -- L2 only

Recommendation: Replace and move under UITS ISS management

3. Dell 1950 (Windows Domain Controller) – Age 10+ years

Recommendation: Surplus

4. Dell PowerEdge R630 – Age 1 year

Recommendation: Migrate services from Dell 1950 and move under UITS ISS management on CES Isolated Network

5. EPIC – Vision Computer – Age Unknown – Ballot creation box

Recommendation: Continue as ISO/CES managed

6. EPIC Files – Dell 1900 – Age 6+ years – Ballot backups

Recommendation: Surplus

7. NAS – Dell 1900 – Age 6+ years – CES Isolated Network NAS

Recommendation: Surplus

8. elections.kennesaw.edu - Age 5 years - Dell PowerEdge R610



UITS Information Security Office

Center for Election Systems

Incident Date: March 1, 2017

Recommendation: Format and reinstall on CES Isolated Network as NAS

9. unicoi.kennesaw.edu – Age 6+ years. Dell PowerEdge 1950

Recommendation: Surplus

10. Web server backup

Recommendation: Surplus

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, UITS-ISS, CES Staff

**8. Issue:** An operating system and application security assessment has not been conducted on the CES Isolated Network

**Action Items:** UITS-ISO should perform a stand-alone security assessment of the CES Isolated Network using a laptop-based scanning engine. Servers and workstations should be hardened based on the scan results and regular testing of the network scheduled.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, UITS-ISS, CES Staff

**9. Issue:** A wireless access point was found when UITS did a walkthrough of the CES House

**Action Items:** Understanding the risk that a wireless access point presents to the CES isolated network, UITS-ISO should prioritize CES for wireless network upgrade and put guidelines in place which prohibit the use of non-KSU wireless devices in the house.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, UITS-ISS

**10. Issue:** Inconsistent port colors in House 57. Data outlets throughout the building have different color bezels to indicate which network is public and which is private:

Red = analog voice/phone

Green = KSU data public network

Blue = Elections private network

White = Elections 2nd private network

Since the original cabling installation the two private networks established for elections now act as a single private network. In room 105a, the blue cables terminate to one patch panel and the white cables terminate to another patch panel. They have connected jumpers from both of these patch panels to the same switch thus eliminating any separation by the colors Blue or White.

**Action Items:** Jacks for the public and private network should be reinstalled to conform to campus color standards. Additionally, jacks from the public and private networks should be on different panels. The total cost of this change will be approximately \$3,000.

**Action Item Owner:** UITS-ISO, UITS-ISS



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 New York Ave. NW – Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

July 20, 2005

**EAC Advisory 2005-004: How to determine if a voting system is compliant with Section 301(a) – a gap analysis between 2002 Voting System Standards and the requirements of Section 301(a)**

The United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has received a number of inquiries from several states as to whether one or more particular voting systems comply with Section 301(a) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). In addition, in one of its recent public meetings, EAC was asked to conduct an analysis to identify the gaps between the 2002 Voting System Standards adopted by the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and the requirements for voting systems under Section 301(a) of HAVA. EAC is not required by HAVA to preclear or approve voting systems purchased by states and local election jurisdictions. Furthermore, EAC does not believe that it was the intention of Congress or HAVA for EAC to assume this role. However, it is evident that states and local election jurisdictions as well as testing laboratories are in need of information that will help in determining whether a voting system meets the threshold requirements of Section 301(a). Thus, EAC offers the following analysis of Section 301(a) in light of the 2002 Voting System Standards.

Title III of HAVA, entitled “Uniform and Nondiscriminatory Election Technology and Administration Requirements,” imposes certain requirements upon states and local jurisdictions conducting federal elections. Section 301(a) sets forth the standards that voting systems must meet after January 1, 2006. Those requirements include functions and features that, among other things: (1) allow the voter to review his or her selections privately and independently prior to casting a ballot; (2) allow the voter to change his or her selections privately and independently prior to casting a ballot; (3) notify the voter when he or she has made more selections in a single race than are permitted (overvote); (4) provide for the production of a permanent paper record suitable to be used in a manual recount; (5) provide voters with disabilities, including visual disabilities, the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters; (6) provide accessibility in minority languages for voters with limited English proficiency as required by the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and (7) provide for

an error rate in operating the voting system that is no greater than the error rate set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the 2002 Voting System Standards adopted by the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

Although the 2002 Voting System Standards set forth measurable standards that predict compliance with some of the Section 301(a) requirements, those standards do not provide sufficient and adequate guidance as to what is required to meet the accessibility requirements of Section 301(a)(3); do not prescribe testable measures for language accessibility required by Section 301(a)(4) of HAVA; and do not prescribe standards that adequately explain the requirements for overvote notification required by Section 301(a)(1) of HAVA. As such, EAC issues the following policy statement to identify the gaps between the 2002 Voting System Standards and the requirements set forth under Section 301(a) of HAVA and to explain what is needed to meet the requirements of Section 301(a) above and beyond the testing requirements established in the 2002 Voting System Standards.

Section 301(a)(1):

The requirements of Section 301(a)(1) of HAVA are met if the voting system (1) conforms and complies with Section 2.4.3.3 of the 2002 Voting System Standards and (2) notifies the voter through a visual and/or audio message prior to casting the ballot when the voter makes more selections than are legally allowed in a single race or contest (overvote):

- (a) that an overvote has occurred and
- (b) the effect of overvoting.

Following that notification, the voting system must allow the voter to change his or her selection(s), if so desired. Voting systems that preclude and prohibit overvoting meet this requirement. Notwithstanding the above, certain paper ballot voting systems may meet the overvote requirements of Section 301(a)(1)(A)(iii) of HAVA by meeting the requirements set forth in Section 301(a)(1)(B).

Section 301(a)(2):

The requirements of Section 301(a)(2) of HAVA are met if the voting system conforms and complies with Sections 2.2.5.2.1 and 2.5.3.1 of the 2002 Voting System Standards.

Section 301(a)(3):

Section 301(a)(3) of HAVA requires that by January 1, 2006, at least one voting system in each polling place be accessible to persons with disabilities such that the voting system allows an individual with a disability the same access and



opportunity to vote privately and independently as is afforded a non-disabled voter. Compliance with Section 301(a)(3) requires that the voting system is accessible to persons with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, including physical, visual, and cognitive disabilities, such that the disabled individual can privately and independently receive instruction, make selections, and cast a ballot. However, accessibility involves more than the technical features of the voting system. The accessible voting system also must be used in a manner that is consistent with providing access for disabled voters (e.g., the accessible voting system must be set up for use in a space that is accessible to a disabled voter who uses a wheelchair).

Conformance with Section 301(a)(3) is a complex matter, which must take into account the disability of the voter, the advancement of technology and its availability, and the efforts of the elections officials to make the voting process accessible to disabled voters in a private and independent manner. The following are some factors that must be considered in determining accessibility in conformance with Section 301(a)(3) of HAVA:

- (1) Section 2.2.7 of the 2002 Voting System Standards;
- (2) Section 2.4.3.1 (a) of the 2002 Voting System Standards;
- (3) Section 3.4.9 (a-e) of the 2002 Voting System Standards;
- (4) The voting system must afford a disabled voter the ability to perform the same functions (e.g., receiving and reading the ballot, making selections, reviewing selections, changing selections, and casting the final ballot) as are afforded to a non-disabled voter. These functions may be provided to the disabled voter through features of the voting system that are different than those used by non-disabled voters. The disabled voter need not and in many cases cannot have an identical voting experience as a non-disabled voter (e.g., a voter with a visual disability is afforded the same access to reading the ballot as a sighted voter when the ballot is read to the visually disabled voter using an audio component of the voting system).
- (5) Accessibility of the voting system to the voter includes accessibility to all equipment needed to cast and count ballots. Many jurisdictions use a paper ballot voting system that requires the voter to submit his or her own ballot after casting for purposes of ballot counting. Where such voting systems are in use, such jurisdictions must to the extent reasonably and technologically possible afford a disabled voter the same ability to submit his or her own ballot, in a private and independent manner, as is afforded a non-disabled voter. In this example, visually disabled voters must be allowed to submit the ballot independently, as the disability is one that is capable of being accommodated, and technology and practice provide a means that can be used to allow the visually disabled voter to

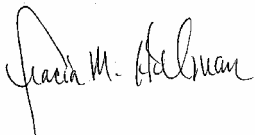
- submit a ballot with the same degree of privacy and independence afforded to a sighted voter (e.g., a privacy sleeve).
- (6) There may be certain disabled voters whose disabilities prevent them from voting independently (i.e., without assistance from a person of their choosing or a poll worker). While HAVA requires voting systems to allow independence and privacy, it does not preclude a disabled voter from requesting and obtaining the assistance of another person as provided in Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
  - (7) Section 301(a)(3)(B) contemplates that an accessible voting system can include a direct recording electronic (DRE) voting system or other voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities. This advisory should not be read to preclude the innovation and use of accessible voting systems other than DREs for purposes of meeting this requirement.

Section 301(a)(4):

The minority language requirements of Section 301(a)(4) are met if the voting system complies with the minority language requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (contained in Section 203 as well as Section 4(f)(4)) and the implementing regulations found at 28 C.F.R. Part 55 and 67 F.R. 48871 (July 26, 2002). The voting system must provide all information, excluding the names of the candidates, that would otherwise be provided by the voting system in English (whether written or oral) in the language(s) that the voting jurisdiction is required to provide materials pursuant to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its regulations as referenced above.

Section 301(a)(5):

The requirements of Section 301(a)(5) are met if the voting system error rate does not exceed that established in Section 3.2.1 of the 2002 Voting System Standards.



Gracia Hillman, Chair



Paul DeGregorio, Vice Chairman



Ray Martinez III, Commissioner

April 27, 2017

Marilyn Marks  
Rocky Mountain Foundation  
7035 Marching Duck Drive E504  
Charlotte, NC 28210

Via email @: Marilyn@aspenoffice.com

**RE: Open Records Request to Fulton County, Georgia**

Dear Ms. Marks,

I write in response to your request for records to Fulton County. For clarity, I've pasted the substance of your request below:

**Rocky Mountain Foundation is requesting electronic copies of the following public records related to the April 18, 2017 Congressional District 6 election:**

- 1. An electronic copy of the GEMS audit log (also referred to as system log) beginning April 1, and continuing through the date of your response.**
- 2. An electronic copy of the AV Server log for the April 20 CD6 election.**
- 3. If ballots were counted using Central Count, provide a copy of the Central Count server log.**
- 4. An electronic copy of the GEMS poster log.**
- 5. An electronic copy of the text file of cast vote records (ballot image files) generated by each DRE used in the election.**
- 6. An electronic copy of the system log (audit log) of each DRE used in the election.**
- 7. An electronic copy of the system log (audit log) of each optical scanner used in the election.**
- 8. An electronic copy of each iteration of interim election results uploaded into the Clarity Election Night Reporting application.**
- 9. An electronic copy of the system log of the Clarity Election Night Reporting application showing all activity of uploading and edits between the dates April 15, 2018 and the date of your response.**

Fulton County maintains certain records which are responsive to your request. With respect to items 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9 above, the estimated cost to retrieve these records is \$253.5. This amount represents approximately 10 hours of time at an hourly rate of \$26 per hour. This rate represents the lowest hourly wage of the full-time employee capable of responding. You will not be charged for the first 15 minutes of time, however. Because this amount is in excess of \$25, response to your request will be delayed until such time as you commit to pay the estimated cost. In addition, once you commit to pay, we believe responsive records can be made available within 7 business days. In addition, please be advised that certain codes may be removed from production pursuant to O.C.G.A. sec. 50-18-72(a)(25)(A)(iv). Due to the time involved in responding, we cannot waive the estimated fees.

With respect to request 3 above, Fulton County maintains no responsive records.

With respect to items 5, 6, and 7, Fulton County does not maintain records in electronic format as you have requested. Therefore, responding to your request would amount to the creation of a report, summary, or compilation not currently in existence. The Georgia Open Records Act does not require such an undertaking. *See* O.C.G.A. sec. 50-18-71(j). By way of further response, the manual compilation of the data you are seeking would take approximately 1000 hours to reproduce at a rate of \$26 per hour. Even if this task could be undertaken, due to manpower constraints, these records could not be available until at least August of this year.

You may commit to the estimated costs simply by responding to this email indicating your intent to pay. Once you do so, we will begin pulling responsive records.

Steven Rosenberg  
Custodian of Records  
cc: Unique Jones, Administrative Assistant

# **EXHIBIT 3**

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Brian Kemp  
214 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Secretary Kemp,

On March 14<sup>th</sup> we sent a letter to you expressing grave concerns regarding the security of Georgia's voting systems and requesting transparency from your office concerning key questions about the reported breach at Kennesaw State University Center for Election Systems (KSU).

The FBI has reportedly closed its investigation into the breach at KSU and will not be pressing federal charges<sup>1</sup> but regrettably little more is known. We remain profoundly concerned about the security of Georgia's votes and the continued reliance on Diebold paperless touchscreen voting machines for upcoming elections.<sup>2</sup>

The FBI's decision not to press charges should not be mistaken for a confirmation that the voting systems are secure. The FBI's responsibility is to investigate and determine if evidence exists indicating that federal laws were broken. Just because the FBI concluded this hacker did not cross that line does not mean that any number of other, more sophisticated attackers could not or did not exploit the same vulnerability to plant malicious software that could be activated on command. Moreover, the FBI's statement should not be misinterpreted to conclude that KSU or the Georgia voting system do not have other security vulnerabilities that could be exploited by malicious actors to manipulate votes.

Any breach at KSU's Election Center must be treated as a national security issue with all seriousness and intensity. We urge you to engage the Department of Homeland Security and the US Computer Emergency Readiness Team (CERT) to conduct a full forensic investigation. We cannot ignore the very real possibility that foreign actors may be targeting our election infrastructure.

The FBI investigation lasted a mere few weeks. It's our understanding that this investigation was designed to determine whether criminal charges should be brought. However, a truly comprehensive, thorough and meaningful forensic computer security investigation likely would not be completed in just a few weeks, and it could take many months to know the extent of all vulnerabilities at KSU, if any have been exploited and if those exploits extended to the voting systems. Time and again cyber breaches are found to have been far more extensive than initially reported. When the breach at the Office of Personnel and Management was discovered in March of 2014 it was not disclosed to the public because officials concluded (incorrectly) that there was no loss of personal identifying information. The system was then reviewed by a private security

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<sup>1</sup> Torres, Kristina, "Feds: "Security Researcher" behind KSU data breach broke no federal law," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, March 31, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Diamont, Aaron, "KSU takes back seat in Georgia elections after server hack," *WSB-TV2 Atlanta News*, March 17, 2017

firm which determined in May (again incorrectly) that the system's security was sound.<sup>3</sup> One month later news reports surface warning that 25,000 individuals' personnel records have been compromised. A year later, that number had grown to over 21 million plus the fingerprints of 5.6 million employees.<sup>4</sup>

Problems reported during the April 18<sup>th</sup> special election have only escalated our concerns. According to news reports, an error occurred during the uploading of votes in Fulton County on election night.<sup>5</sup> Fulton's director of registration and elections, claimed that when a memory card was uploaded to transfer vote totals the operation failed and the system generated an error message that was "gobbledygook, just junk, just letters."<sup>6</sup> This sort of error message could be the result of a corrupted database and more investigation is needed.

While one cause of database corruption could be cyber intrusion which should not be ruled out, it is important to note that it was documented over ten years ago that the Diebold GEMS database used in Georgia is vulnerable to database corruption, especially if databases are run concurrently<sup>7</sup> as reportedly occurred in the recent special election.<sup>8</sup> This is because GEMS was built on Microsoft JETS database software, an outdated database which cannot be relied upon to provide accurate data.

According to Microsoft:

*"When Microsoft JETS is used in a multi-user environment, multiple client processes are using file read, write, and locking operations on a shared database. Because multiple client processes are reading and writing to the same database and because JETS does not use a transaction log (as do the more advanced database systems, such as SQL Server), it is **not possible to reliably prevent any and all database corruption.**"*<sup>9</sup>[Emphasis added.]

The voting system database stores the vote data. Corruption of the database could mean vote data, or vote counts, are lost. Because Georgia still relies on touchscreen voting machines that do not provide a paper ballot, if votes data is corrupted, it is possible that vote totals could be lost and without a physical paper ballot, there is no way to restore and correct the vote count.

This would be an excellent time to move with all expediency to replace Georgia's outdated voting system, to adopt paper ballot voting and implement robust manual post-election audits. The threat that foreign hackers might target the Dutch national elections caused the Netherlands

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<sup>3</sup> "Timeline: What We Know about the OPM Breach," *NextGov.com*, <http://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2015/06/timeline-what-we-know-about-opm-breach/115603/>

<sup>4</sup> Rosenfeld, Everett, "Office of Personnel and Management: 5.6 million estimated to have fingerprints stolen in breach," *CNBC*, September 23, 2015

<sup>5</sup> Kass, Arielle, "'Rare error' delays Fulton County vote count in 6<sup>th</sup> district race," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, April 19, 2017

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Hoke, Candice, Ryan, Thomas, "GEMS Tabulation Database Design Issues in Relation to Voting System Certification Standards," [https://www.usenix.org/legacy/event/evt07/tech/full\\_papers/ryan/ryan.pdf](https://www.usenix.org/legacy/event/evt07/tech/full_papers/ryan/ryan.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Kass, Arielle, "'Rare error' delays Fulton County vote count in 6<sup>th</sup> district race," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, April 19, 2017

<sup>9</sup> How to Troubleshoot and to Repair a Damaged Access 2002 or Later Database, (Rev. 6.1 2006) at <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;283849>

to cancel all electronic voting and hold its March elections on paper ballots. The U.S. has not responded to the threat of foreign hacking with the same accountability and speed. The former director of U.S. national intelligence James Clapper recently told Congress that foreign hackers will continue to attack and we should expect them in the 2018 and 2020 elections.<sup>10</sup>

We believe this is a profoundly serious national security issue. We stand ready to help you any way we can to help protect our democratic process and regain the confidence of voters.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard DeMillo  
Charlotte B. and Roger C. Warren Professor of Computing  
Georgia Tech

Dr. Andrew W. Appel  
Eugene Higgins Professor of Computer  
Science,  
Princeton University

Dr. Duncan Buell  
Professor, Department of Computer Science  
& Engineering, NCR Chair of Computer  
Science & Engineering,  
University of South Carolina

Dr. David L. Dill  
Professor of Computer Science,  
Stanford University

Dr. Michael Fischer  
Professor of Computer Science,  
Yale University

Dr. J. Alex Halderman  
Professor, Computer Science and Engineering  
Director, Center for Computer Security and  
Society  
University of Michigan

Candice Hoke  
Co-Director, Center for Cybersecurity &  
Privacy Protection and Professor of Law,  
Cleveland State University

Harri Hursti  
Chief Technology Officer and co-founder,  
Zyptonite, and founding partner, Nordic  
Innovation Labs.

Dr. David Jefferson  
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Dr. Douglas W. Jones  
Department of Computer Science  
University of Iowa

Dr. Joseph Kiniry  
Principal Investigator, Galois  
Principled CEO and Chief Scientist,  
Free & Fair

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<sup>10</sup> Ng, Alfred, "Ex-intel chief James Clapper warns of more Russian hacks," *CNET*, May 8, 2017



Dr. Ronald L. Rivest  
MIT Institute Professor

Dr. John E. Savage  
An Wang Professor of Computer Science,  
Brown University

Dr. Barbara Simons  
IBM Research (retired),  
former President Association for Computing  
Machinery (ACM)

Dr. Philip Stark  
Associate Dean, Division of Mathematics and  
Physical Sciences,  
University of California, Berkeley

Dr. Vanessa Teague  
Department of Computing & Information systems,  
University of Melbourne

Affiliations are for identification purposes only, they do not imply institutional endorsements.

# **EXHIBIT 4**

**Partial Transcription of Richard Barron's Election Update, Board of Commissioners, 4-19-2017, Fulton County, GA**

<http://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?&PGD=fultoncoga&eID=221>

[Start 5:25:22] We had a really unique tabulation issue last night that delayed the results. We had, because of the three databases, what we had to do was we had—and I think I sent you a memo yesterday on approximate times and what was going to happen—but we have a database for the Congressional 6. We have to open that up, we then have to close that before we accept any memory cards to be sent to us via modem for the Roswell–South Fulton Election, and we had to close that one out. Do the same thing for the Johns Creek Election. We had run through those procedures twice. All of the memory cards are color-coded. The Johns Creek ones were green; the memory cards for the Roswell were yellow. We had different baskets that were color-coded to take those. At some point during the evening while we—this was between 10 and 10:45—a City of Roswell runoff card was sent in with the Congressional 6 card, so at the time when we went to export, we got an error that we had never seen. We called KSU after about 15 minutes of trying to figure out what was going on. KSU said that it was a very rare error that happens. They couldn't tell us why. They said there was going to be one memory card in one of the precincts that we were going to have to find manually. Either that or we were going to have to pull all of the results out and rerun them. After we started that manual process to find the card, where we had to find and examine the times counted versus the races counted on each individual card, KSU called and gave us a report that we could look at that might speed up the process. It did shorten the list of cards that we had to check, but we still had to go through and do that manually. Then we—they—came up with a third option for us, which was quicker, which is when we—they told us to delete a precinct and then hit "export," delete a precinct, hit "export," and do that until we could finally export. Once we were able to do that, then we knew that the previous precinct was the one at fault. It ended up being one of the Roswell precincts. That Roswell precinct had a card in it from the City of Roswell runoff, and that went into the Congressional 6 results. Now that card isn't counted, but when that card was entered at the check-in station up in North Fulton, there's no way for the software to recognize that an incorrect card has been sent in the data packet. Once we got it down here and we hit "export," that's when you get the error because it recognizes at that point that there is foreign data in the packet that we want to export. That took probably an hour and fifteen minutes to an hour and a half to get through that, and KSU helped us with that. It was one of the challenges that we had to deal with, with this election. I think we have—you know we're dealing with a results database and software that runs on Microsoft Server 2000—that gives you any idea of the age—it's inflexible as our elections become more complex and it's unprecedented that we've had to deal with three databases. So that was the result of the tabulation delays.

And now I can take any questions you may have.