

Ballot Integrity Project
Minutes of 12/10/03 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by Roy L. at the Healing Earth Resource Center, 3111 N. Ashland, Chicago.

Present were--

Steve C.
Warren G.
Annette J.
Roy L.
Anita M.
Larry Q.
Sterling R.
Julia T.

I. Selection of recording secretary.

Annette agreed to act as recording secretary for the evening.

II. Old business

A. Setting up meeting with the Illinois Secretary of State.

Larry contacted Secretary of State Jesse White, who told him that the responsibility for Illinois elections resides not with the Secretary of State, but with the Illinois Board of Elections.

Nonetheless, the Secretary agreed to review materials from Larry, and later had a staff member contact Larry and acquire additional material.

The staff person, Bob Yadgar, promised to review the material and get back to Larry.

The material included an extensive article by Jean Krawitz, who attended our first meeting (October).

Larry said he will contact still other Illinois State officials, including Lt. Gov. Patrick Quinn.

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Action:

We agreed to use a set of three [four?] brief documents to introduce the issues to public officials.

These documents are intended to make our point as cogently and succinctly as possible. They are--

1. Ernest Partridge's allegorical introduction (or a revised edition of that document):

<http://www.onlinejournal.com/Commentary/040303Partridge/040303partridge.html>

2. A catalog of the major vulnerabilities inherent in computerized voting machines.

3. Citations of five or six reports that detail serious equipment malfunctions in computerized elections.

Roy will assemble the above documents.

B. Reminding other States about HAVA-deadline extension.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) provides funding to States that acquire HAVA-compliant voting equipment before the deadline of January 1, 2004.

States that cannot meet that deadline may apply for a waiver (extension) of the deadline. But the application must be made before the deadline.

At our November meeting, our group discussed sending reminders of the approaching deadline to the various Secretaries of State.

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Roy contacted Diane Felts, Director of Illinois' Voting Systems and Standards office.

She stated that only six States remained undecided about about whether to apply for a HAVA equipment waiver.

She says about thirty other States have decided against applying, in most cases because they feel they can meet the original dealine.

Ms. Felts also stated that election officials in the various States are in communication with one another and are very aware of the approaching deadline.

It thus appears unnecessary for our group to send our reminders about the approaching deadline.

C. Helping move the Holt Bill out of committee.

Steve reported that the Holt Bill (H. R. 2239) now has about ninety supporters, including four Republicans.

The need for the Holt Bill is evident because some states have already banned paper ballots within their jurisdictions.

The media have been paying increasing attention to the need for paper ballots. Recent articles and editorials have appeared in major news outlets, including the New York Times, the UK Guardian, and USAToday.

It was remarked that this issue should be of strong interest to the Democratic presidential candidates. Some of the candidates have already commented on the issue.

Some suggested websites:

<http://consciouschoice.org>

<http://www.crisispaper.org>

<http://www.qnc.us>

<http://verifiedvoting.org> (David Dill's website)

D. Inviting the participation of other community groups.

1. Our group expressed appreciation at the presence of Anita, representing Chicagoans Against the War and Injustice.
2. Julia reported that Roy gave a talk to Women for Peace, a Highland Park civic action group, on December 4.

Women for Peace is planning a second meeting in late January on the issue, in collaboration with representatives from our group, from the Cook County Clerk's office, from the ACLU, and from the League of Women Voters.

- E. Distributing excerpts of Illinois voting statutes.

These were not available at our meeting.

III. New business

- A. Articulate our mission and objectives.

Roy distributed a draft charter for our group. (See attachment to the original meeting agenda.)

The following actions were taken:

1. GOAL

Formulated as--

"The adoption of a voter-verified paper ballot, to be used for the original count and any recounts, in all elections throughout Illinois and the United States."

[Note: The above is not verbatim; please correct.]

2. VISION

This will be formulated via collaborative email. Larry will begin the discussion.

- B. Elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson.

By acclamation, Roy was elected chairperson and Larry was elected vice-chairperson.

IV. Announcements and adjournment

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 14.

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:27 pm.