

**From:** Lisa Cyriacks <lcyriacks@rocketmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 15, 2013 9:15 AM  
**To:** Public UVS Panel  
**Subject:** Fw: please reconfigure the Colorado Uniform Voting System project

To the Colorado SOS Uniform Voting System Project:

The Colorado Secretary of State has focused attention on the value to be obtained if Colorado swaps out the equipment we use for elections. Secretary Gessler has launched a "uniform voting system" project whose parameters will be defined by August 1 and vendors selected by end of year. The co-signers of this letter would like instead to see Colorado election officials and voters both benefit from a patient, well designed and open process that will guide future equipment purchases. The process must first openly decide upon goals and quantifiable metrics for success. Components of the voting system ought to conform to intentionally designed specifications for standard interfaces to permit smooth interoperability.

Delay makes so much more sense than to jump straight from where we are now to a decision about a vendor. And the delay gives us a chance for citizens to participate in a public and principled process that can respond to many changes initiated by the 1303 bill as well as accommodate many advantageous options that are soon becoming available, including those that will have Colorado's design requests in mind.

We the signers collectively request to terminate the current plan to issue the August 1 RFP. We ask the Secretary to launch a public process intended to define specifications by mid 2014 or later, and use the 2013 election as an opportunity for data gathering and increased understanding of what 1303 will do to and for Colorado's electorate.

Signed  
Harvie Branscomb  
Co-signer  
Lisa Cyriacks

Background:

The absence of a clearly established consensus about what our election system's priorities are is a fundamental obstacle to our ability to acquire a system of quality. The Secretary's UVS project and the 1303 bill both give us an good excuse and excellent opportunity to start from basics before acquiring new systems. I fear that we are quietly hiding failings of design of our existing systems. It is hard to imagine how we will succeed in obtaining a better system, even if it is arbitrarily selected in a way to be uniform. Some for of uniformity may be one goal, but it is not enough. It is certainly not the only goal.

The ad hoc presumption that staff from our existing county elections offices and at the CDOS are the best team to design the parameters of our next system might turn out to be a severely limiting. The Secretary's rush to come to a conclusion is certain to be a limiting factor, especially when highly knowledgeable public are at last being brought into the process.

The Secretary on Thursday made what sounded like an eloquent argument that there is no better time than now to select a system. The argument he used would have worked equally well two years ago or two years from now. The argument ignored the special conditions we find ourselves in. Mr. Gessler is trying to lead us in a drastic transition toward uniformity from a condition of huge differences between counties and confusion generated by 1303. He opined correctly that there will always be something better tomorrow. That is only an abstract observation that simply ignores exceptional conditions that Colorado and the election equipment market are now in.

We are experiencing the aftermath of a huge federal spending spree in the mid 2000's to obtain electronic voting equipment that has proven itself inadequate. We are only slowly approaching the expected end of life of equipment bought at that time. Large numbers of people are now working on innovative alternative systems, and will continue to do so mostly because some states have indicated an interest in innovation. Colorado had resembled one of them. But the rush to a conclusion this year proves otherwise.

The Secretary may find himself single-handedly defending his theoretical and impractical shift to uniformity. His unique desire for a speedy jump to uniformity is self-admittedly aimed at saving money, and seems not particularly concerned about quality or improvement upon the past. We need to balance these goals.

A major shift in the target and timing of the RFP process is merited. We can use the RFP process to identify several vendors who can demonstrate their election wares in the follow-through to the 2013 election. We can plan for substantial data gathering at locations set up for the purpose to test under close to live election conditions some of the latest versions of equipment, long before we make a decision to buy only from one of them for years to come. This would also give us time to open our planning to future-looking options.

written by Harvie Branscomb