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SOFTWARE VERIFICATION MUST BE THE MINIMUM STANDARD

VoteAllegheny, a non-partisan election integrity organization, today is releasing specific recommendations for the verification of software on Allegheny County's iVotronic systems. These recommendations include specific discussion of the procedural and equipment requirements for software verification as well as the number of systems required. A copy of the recommendation document is attached.

County Executive Dan Onorato had expressed hesitancy concerning calling for the Board of Elections to meet based upon a lack of potential plan for verifying the software. These recommendations should directly address and alleviate our County Executive's concern. VoteAllegheny, along with its many partners and colleagues, maintains that software verification must be the minimum standard for safeguarding our elections as long as we vote on unverifiable, non-recountable machines.

Our iVotronic voting machines are "software dependent," which means that the results they report are right or wrong depending on what software they are running, because there is

no machine-independent cross-check such as a voter-verified paper ballot. Yet our county has never checked that the software running our elections is genuine. After two years, it is time to verify that our voting machine software is exactly the software certified by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Our iVotronics may well be running the wrong software. In the past, voting machine vendors have intentionally installed uncertified software on voting machines — for example, the Indiana Election Commission found in 2004 that our voting system vendor, ES&S, installed uncertified software on iVotronics in four Indiana counties.[1] Also, a team of computer security experts from Penn State and the University of Pennsylvania, among others, recently found and demonstrated serious security problems that permit the installation of unauthorized software – that effectively can make it easy for attackers to install unauthorized software on iVotronics.[2]

Because the ES&S iVotronic voting machines used in Allegheny County provide no way for voters to personally verify that their votes have been correctly and accurately recorded, voters must trust the iVotronic program code to be correct. The inspection and certification process carried out by the Secretary of the Commonwealth is meaningless unless the County ensures the machines run exactly the same program the Secretary certifies.

Two of the three members of the Board of Elections have endorsed an investigation into whether our voting machines are running the right software. VoteAllegheny calls on the Board to protect the November election by acting promptly on software verification.

VoteAllegheny is a non-partisan volunteer election integrity organization which advocates secure, accessible, recountable voting for all.

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1 "Election Commission Bails Out Voting Machine Maker In Time for May Primary," March 11, 2004, retrieved from http://verifiedvotingfoundation.org/article.php?id=1529
2 "EVEREST: Evaluation and Validation of Election-Related Equipment, Standards, and Testing," Sections 6.3 and 7.2.2, retrieved from http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/upload/everest/14-AcademicFinalEVERESTReport.pdf