



Susan Bysiewicz
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

February 14, 2008

The Honorable M. Jodi Rell
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Rell:

I am writing to request your assistance in a matter of great importance to the voters and citizens of this state and to those local election officials charged with administering elections here. On Tuesday, February 5, 2008, Connecticut joined more than twenty (20) states in conducting its Presidential Preference Primary. A record number of citizens registered to vote and we had record turnout at the polls. Connecticut voters have had a real voice in choosing nominees for the two major parties, and of course, this level of engagement is a sign of a healthy democracy.

As election administrators, however, we experienced tremendous difficulties in the week before the Primary with the operation of the Centralized Voter Registration System ("CVRS"). As you know, CVRS was created to comply with The Help America Vote Act and is a critical tool for Registrars of Voters in ensuring the accuracy of enrollment lists and in preventing voter fraud. We have received many calls from Registrars of Voters who were not able to enter new voters or to generate the lists they needed for their polling places on Election Day. The system crashed several times on the day before the Primary and has not yet been completely restored. My staff spent countless hours with staff from the Department of Information Technology ("DOIT") and, although numerous explanations were given and several "fixes" attempted, we do not believe that issues have been addressed in a way that would reassure Registrars that they will have what they need in November.

Prior to last November's election, my Deputy and staff met with DOIT and discussed load testing and other measures that we understand were taken to ensure that the system could accommodate the heavy usage that is a normal part of election operations. These efforts were apparently not adequate, and we must do more to ensure that election officials across the state have the tools they need to get prepared for the Presidential election.

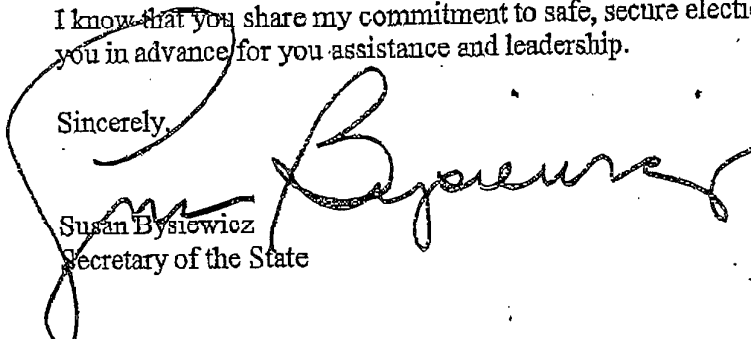
We have been planning to move forward this spring with a number of application enhancements requested by the Registrar of Voters. We believe that hardware improvements must also be made to ensure that Registrars of Voters can access and use the system effectively in the upcoming Presidential election. This effort has been stalled

and I am requesting your assistance in making this a priority for the Department of Information Technology. While we understand that DOIT, as the state's lead agency for information technology efforts in the state, has a number of important projects for a number of agencies, we are prepared to fund this upgrade and to use consultants, if necessary, to ensure its timely completion. The most important task now is to memorialize a project plan that can be shared with Registrars and others affected by the system so that they can be assured that the system will function properly for them before November. Of course, we will finalize the details of this plan with the Department of Information Technology.

Time is of the essence. We must begin preparing for the November 2008 election now. We need a commitment from DOIT to make this effort a priority as the lead agency responsible for IT efforts in our state. I promise you that my staff and I will assist in whatever way we can to ensure timely completion of this effort. Citizens around the state care deeply about the integrity of our elections, and CVRS is critical to ensuring that duly eligible voters are given access to the ballot.

I know that you share my commitment to safe, secure elections in our state and I thank you in advance for your assistance and leadership.

Sincerely,


Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State

Cc: Lesley D. Mara, Deputy Secretary of the State
Diane Wallace, Chief Information Officer, DOIT ✓