

Observations and Concerns Regarding the Louisiana 2021 Voting Machines Request for Proposal

Timothy A. Cagle and Mari H. Presedo

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Observations and Concerns Regarding the Louisiana 2021 Voting Machines Request for Proposal

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Summary:

- Statements of Secretary of State's office would have the public thinking the scope is just to replace the aging AVC advantage machines and that the rest of the infrastructure and procedures would remain intact
- The scope of work in the RFP shows that this could be closer to a complete replacement of large segments of the existing infrastructure and procedures, thereby taking a large portion of the chain of custody out of the hands of humans and placing it in the control of a single vendor.
- If the scope in the RFP is unavoidable, we can still work with this. The state will have to show their work and make the paperwork from the vote on the front end readily available to the public. For in-person voting, the paperwork is the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs). For mail in tabulation, the paperwork is the ballots. The VVPATs and the ballot images created by the tabulators must be available for download on the SOS website along with the election results.
- With the scope being as it is, without readily accessible paperwork, there is little to nothing apparent that the state can do to comfort the public. Complaints and litigation would become a feature of nearly every election.
- See appendices for alternate solutions, resources and examples of a long history of issues regarding the most likely vendors available to date. There is no escaping that the existence of such reporting weighs heavily in the public's eye.

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Statement

On January 27th, 2021 the state releases a request for proposal on a new voting machine system. The introductory paragraph is as follows,

“The Office of State Procurement has issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) to secure new voting equipment to replace the state's current stock of approximately 10,000 machines. These machines have long served the voters of Louisiana without major incident. We cannot maintain the status quo, as the lifespan of these machines nears the end. It is financially and operationally prudent to procure new voting equipment so that voters continue to have confidence in their election infrastructure.”

The secretary of state's office has made a number of efforts to comfort the public regarding the new voting systems by releasing statements (including a youtube video) which highlights requirements in the RFP including a Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), background checks and disclosures about foreign ties. With this presentation, the public could reasonably expect the RFP scope to be in just the replacement of the aging voter-facing hardware and that the existing infrastructure and procedures would remain intact. Review of the actual scope of work in the RFP opens the possibility of a different scenario. In addition to replacing the old AVC Advantage machines, the scope also includes purchase of early voting hardware, absentee mail in hardware and a seemingly brand new component, the Election Management System.

It is fantastic that, according to the RFP, *“the DRE [or direct recording electronic device] shall not have any of the following connectivity components and/or capabilities: wifi, internet, Bluetooth, near field communication (NFC), remote access, or modem on electronic voting machine or voting equipment”* but what of the rest of the infrastructure? The RFP references servers, workstations and laptops running the Election Management System, will these components have such capabilities?

The old AVC advantage system required humans to transfer the cartridges, containing the vote totals, to the clerk of court's office for direct upload into the states database (ERIN). This existing procedure is pretty solid and transparent. The RFP requires the Election Management System to interface with ERIN and upload the results directly. The process is becoming more opaque to the constituency of Louisiana. Practically nobody can see inside the EMS and feel comfortable that it is functioning correctly. So to repeat a previous point, we are not talking about simply replacing the aging hardware and keeping the rest of the infrastructure intact. Instead, we are possibly talking about replacing the entire work flow and putting it in the hands of a single vendor.

With all of this being said, there is yet a single thing that the Secretary of State's office can do that would put pretty much every concern to rest. If the course of action is to continue with the scope of work as laid out in the RFP, then so be it. The state will have to be able to show its work to the voters. The VVPATs and the scanned ballots from the absentee mail in tabulators MUST be readily available to the public. When a voter goes to the Secretary of State's website to download the election results files, they need to be able to also download the paper trail. The VVPATs and the scanned mail in ballots must be there. There is no room for missing, illegible or otherwise damaged paperwork. If the paperwork for

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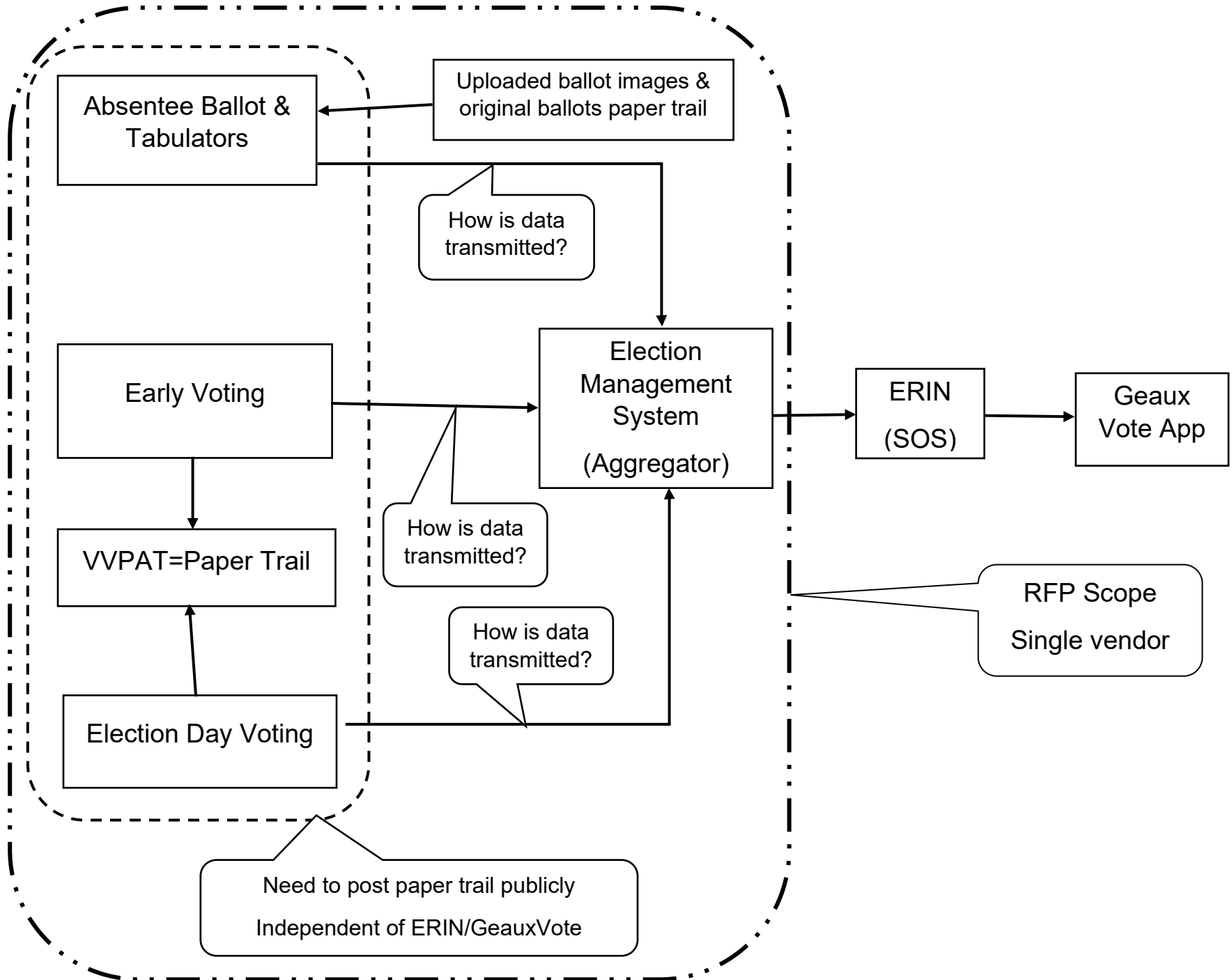
any given precinct is not available then the vote for that precinct should be considered void and a re-election is required. It will not be correct to void that precinct and count the rest as the paperwork could strategically go “missing” for precincts that are known to vote in a certain manner.

The paperwork must be able to be trusted. Ideally the VVPATs will be on continuous rolls of paper and not cut into individual ballots. This will show continuity and alleviate concerns about missing, replaced or added ballots. Re-prints of VVPATs are not acceptable as they have not been verified by the voters. Reprints must be clearly identified with watermarks or any other appropriate markings to identify it as such. The scans of the mail in ballots must be of the original ballots. All electronically adjudicated ballots must be presented as the original ballot with boxes or any other appropriate markings to identify how the vote was actually cast.

Show your work and there will never be a need for a recount as the information will be readily available. Show your work and you can have whatever vendor or infrastructure you want and it won't matter. We can have Swiss cheese in the middle and it will not matter. Short of this action, there probably won't be anything that the Secretary of State's office can do that will comfort the voters.

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Machines Request for Proposal**

APPENDIX A: Elections Flow Chart Generated from RFP



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APPENDIX B: Alternate Solutions and Additional Resources

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Alternate Solutions:

- Only replace the voter-facing hardware and keep the rest of the infrastructure intact. If the state desires to purchase the Election Management System (EMS), then the functionality of this device must be limited (i.e. analytics and report generation). The EMS should not be allowed to load results into the state's database (ERIN). The existing method of taking the results directly from the machines to ERIN, by human action, must be maintained.
- At the end of a voting session, have the voting machines display a unique code that the voter can later use online to verify that their selections were recorded as expected. Paper and pencil will have to be provided at the voting stations.

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Voter Integrity Reform Policy Objectives:

<https://lookaheadamerica.org/integrity/>

The 2020 General Election exposed many flaws and raised doubts about the way states conducted their elections. This has the dangerous impact of undermining the public's confidence in future election outcomes. Look Ahead America's state policy objectives are intended to eliminate these flaws and restore faith in our electoral system.

These objectives were informed by the lessons learned by the Voter Integrity Project in the aftermath of the 2020 election, the decades of election administration experience of Look Ahead America's team of experts, and hundreds of ideas suggested by the public.

Each of these policy objectives satisfies three key requirements: (1) eliminating vulnerabilities in our election system, (2) practicality of implementation, and (3) harmony with current state and federal laws and established legal precedence.

1. Thumbprint Authentication of Absentee Ballots.

A single machine-readable thumbprint on the affidavit envelope of an absentee ballot will limit the ability of an individual other than the voter of record to cast that ballot. Multiple ballots cast by a single individual will be easily detectable.

When paired with a thumbprint requirement on the absentee ballot request or as part of the voter registration process, it practically eliminates fraudulent absentee ballots. This process also eliminates many of the problems with ballot signature verification, witness signatures, and unscrupulous ballot harvesting.

The state will encrypt the captured thumbprints as alphanumeric values with a one-way hash using a secure key, and will be prohibited from sharing raw thumbprint data with any other government agency.

2. Mandated and Public Voter List Hygiene.

The state will be required to engage in several processes to ensure the list of registered voters contains only those legally eligible to cast ballots.

Further, whether or not these processes result in a voter record's removal, the findings of these processes will be reflected in the publicly available voter list (not applicable to Social Security numbers). This will allow citizens or organizations to use this information to take additional steps to ensure only legal ballots are cast.

These processes will include, but are not limited to:

Shared Interstate Residency Databases. The state will cooperate with other states to build a secure, transactional database to detect when an individual has registered in another state or taken other steps that would indicate a loss of residency and therefore voter privileges. This

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database will rely on a match of name, date of birth and the last four digits of the Social Security number. Any records matched through this process must be publicly flagged in the state's voter database.

Non-Citizen Matching Using the USCIS's SAVE Database. The state will take advantage of the USCIS's SAVE database to flag non-citizens and remove them from the voter list. Any records matched through this process must be publicly flagged in the state's voter database.

National Change of Address, Social Security Death Index, and Master Death File Matching. The state will match the voter list against the NCOA permanent moves, SSDI, and MDF on a monthly basis. Any matches will require a follow-up to ensure whether or not the voter is still eligible to cast a ballot and, if not, they will be removed from the voter list. Any records matched through this process must be publicly flagged in the state's voter database.

3. Ban on the Use of "Black Box" Voting Equipment.

"Black Box" voting equipment uses proprietary, non-public software and hardware designs, and according to a study by Princeton University, are susceptible to undetected hacking and manipulation.

The alternative is to mandate that all election equipment use open-source software and design that is available for inspection and review by the public and technology organizations to ensure the validity and accuracy of vote counting.

Open-source election software and hardware, paired with paper ballots, will remove the potential for tampering as well as the suspicion of tampering.

4. Appointment of a Citizens Elections Supervisory Committee.

The public must have assurance from those they trust that elections are conducted in accordance with the law. A Citizens Election Supervisory Committee will help restore the trust of the public in election outcomes.

The committee shall consist of trusted citizens who represent various political parties as well as non-partisan organizations. Each committee member will be granted access to the election process that is the equivalent of the state's election director and any county election director. These representatives will have the responsibility of documenting the lawful execution of the election at every level.

5. Creation and Sufficient Funding for a Dedicated Voter Fraud Investigation Division within the State's Attorney General's Office.

Many states have little to no standing effort to investigate voter fraud. Dedicating a sufficient level of staffing and funding to a permanent division within the state's attorney general's office will help to defend the integrity of our elections.

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6. Equitable Distribution of Private Contributions to Election Operations.

While private individuals and corporations may choose to sponsor improvements to election operations with direct donations of funding or material to government election agencies, these contributions may not be geographically targeted and must be equitably distributed throughout a state based on voter populations.

This restriction will only be applicable to contributions beyond a certain threshold to allow incidental contributions to continue, such as a club allowing its headquarters to be used as a polling place.

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What is VVPAT? How does VVPAT work?

JagranJosh.com

October 10 , 2020

VVPAT Use in Elections: When the voter casts the vote on the EVM, printer-like VVPAT apparatus linked to the EVM generates a slip showing serial number, name and symbol of the candidate to whom the vote was made. With this slip, the voter can verify his casted vote.

The Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) is an independent printer system attached with Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) that allows the voters to verify that their votes are cast as intended.

It provides feedback to voters using a ballot less voting system by generating a paper slip every time a voter casts his vote. It records the party to whom the vote was made.

The VVPAT slip is kept in a sealed cover. VVPAT slip counting takes place in the VVPAT counting booths under the close monitoring of the returning officer and direct oversight of the observer.

How does the VVPAT work?

- The voting in India is done using the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) that is designed with two units: the control unit and the balloting unit.
- The balloting unit of the machine has a list of candidate names and party symbols with a blue button next to it. The voter can press the button next to the candidate's name they wish to vote for.
- When the voter casts the vote on the EVM, printer-like VVPAT apparatus linked to the EVM generates a slip showing serial number, name and symbol of the candidate to whom the vote was made.
- With this slip, the voter can verify his casted vote.
- This VVPAT slip is displayed for 7 seconds before it's automatically cut.
- The slip, once viewed, is cut and dropped into the drop box in the VVPAT machine and a beep will be heard.
- The VVPAT machines can only be accessed by the election officers in the rarest of rare cases.

Note: A VVPAT consists of a Printer and a VVPAT Status Display Unit (VSDU). The control unit of the EVMs and VSDU are kept with the presiding officer or polling officer, while the balloting unit and printer are kept in the voting compartment.

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Can VVPAT print wrong information?

Yes, there can be cases when the VVPAT prints wrong information. In such cases, voter can report it to the presiding officer who will take a voter declaration explaining that if found false, voter can be penalized.

The officer will then let the voter cast a test vote in front him and other poll officials. If voter's claim is found false and the VVPAT is printing the right slip, the test vote will not be counted.

However, if the claim is found true and the VVPAT is faulty, then the presiding officer will stop the poll and report to the returning officer.

Maiden use of VVPAT with EVM

The idea of using VVPAT was for the first time suggested during an All Party Meeting in October 2010. Subsequently, the Union Government issued a notification in August 2013 amending the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, to enable the Commission to use VVPAT With Electronic Voting Machines.

The VVPAT with the EVM was used for the first time in the bye-election for the Noksen Assembly seat in Tuensang district of Nagaland in September 2013. Thereafter, the VVPATs have been used in select constituencies in every election to the State Assemblies.

Use of VVPATs in Lok Sabha Elections

The VVPAT with the EVMs were deployed in eight Parliamentary constituencies during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. In the Lok Sabha Elections 2019, the VVPATs were used in all the constituencies.

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APPENDIX C: History of Issues

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Hugo Chavez wants your vote

By A.M.Mora

March 28, 2006

Looking for something to be alarmed about? Forget Dubai. Try Venezuela's potential takeover of the U.S. voting apparatus. A secretive, intransparent company called 'Smartmatic' that's known to have ties to the Venezuelan government, has just bought a U.S. voting machine company called Sequoia. And the deal has gotten no scrutiny from federal regulators, who cite outdated criteria for national military security as their only watchpoint.

That's right, Venezuela, a country that holds the dirtiest, filthiest most intransparent and fraudulent elections in the hemisphere, elections that match those of Zimbabwe or Belarus, has just got its hands on a U.S. electronic voting company and now might be in charge with the outcome of your vote. There is not one good thing about this deal. Aleksander Boyd at VCrisis has done an extraordinary job of ferreting the first reports of this information out here. And the *Miami Herald* has a spectacular editorial.

Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chavez has long used soft power against the U.S., through the manipulation of oil prices and the distribution of cheap heating fuel to select poor contingencies in a bid to buy loyalty. He's also funded a very active propaganda office, whose chief purpose has been to intimidate U.S. news media like the *Los Angeles Times* into publishing Venezuela's otherwise not—worth—bothering—about government tripe. It openly organizes letter—writing campaigns using swarms of U.S. leftists as its semi—covert agents. Now, Chavez has moved on to far more ambitious things like getting a grip on the U.S. voting apparatus itself.

Venezuela's electoral system is based on a system of highly suspect electronic machines. These machines have been demonstrated to have the capacity to record voter identities and match them with cast ballots. This was proven in Venezuela in November 2005. These machines also appear to have flipped final tally results, as seemingly happened in August 2004, a sham election endorsed by the odious Jimmy Carter who ——— amazingly —— endorsed the obviously fraudulent recall referendum as "free and fair" and tried to undermine any other sources with evidence to the contrary.

All of these horrible things brought Venezuela its current dictatorship. Smartmatic's voting machines are the chief reason why Venezuelans no longer trust their voting systems and why at least 82% of them refused to vote at all during December 2005's elections, something I witnessed myself in Caracas.

With Chavez already convincingly shown to have been meddling in Mexico's and in Peru's elections right now, there is no doubt in the slightest that Chavez intends to do as much as he can to destroy our elections in our free system here, too. He's got his eyes on us. He intends to destroy our elections and put a candidate to his liking as high up as he can go in our government in our next election.

This must be stopped.

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Why is Hugo Chávez Involved With U.S. Voting Machines?

Richard Brand

March 2006

The greater threat to our nation's security comes not from Dubai and its pro-Western government, but from Venezuela, where software engineers with links to the leftist, anti-American regime of Hugo Chávez are programming electronic voting machines that will soon power U.S. elections.

Congress spent two weeks overreacting to news that Dubai Ports World would operate several American ports, including Miami's, but a better target for their hysteria would be the acquisition by Smartmatic International of California-based Sequoia Voting Systems, whose machines serve millions of U.S. voters. That Smartmatic -- which has been accused by Venezuela's opposition of helping Chávez rig elections in his favor -- now controls a major U.S. e-voting firm should give pause to anybody who thinks that replacing our antiquated butterfly ballots and hanging chads will restore Americans' faith in our electoral process.

Consider the lack of confidence Venezuelans have in their voting system. Anti-Chávez groups have such little faith in Smartmatic's machines that they refuse to run candidates in elections anymore as reports surface of fraud and irregularities from Chávez's 2004 victory in a recall referendum. Yet somehow Smartmatic International and its Venezuelan owners were able to purchase Sequoia last year without the deal receiving any scrutiny from federal regulators -- including the Treasury Department's Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States (CFIUS), which is tasked with determining whether foreign takeovers pose security risks.

CFIUS generally investigates such transactions only when the parties voluntarily submit themselves to review -- which Smartmatic did not do. But it retains the authority to initiate an investigation when it suspects a takeover compromises national security.

Smartmatic has a brief but controversial history. The company was started in Caracas during the late 1990s by engineers Antonio Mugica and Alfredo Anzola. They worked out of downtown Caracas providing small-scale technology services to Latin American banks. Despite having no election experience, the tiny company rocketed from obscurity in 2004 after it was awarded a \$100 million contract by the Chávez-dominated National Electoral Council to replace Venezuela's electronic voting machines for the recall vote.

When the council announced the deal, it disingenuously described Smartmatic as a Florida company, though Smartmatic's main operations were in Caracas and the firm had incorporated only a small office in Boca Raton. It then emerged that Smartmatic's "partner" in the deal, Bizta Corp., also directed by Anzola and Mugica, was partly owned by the Venezuelan government through a series of intermediary shell corporations. Venezuela initially denied its investment but eventually sold its stake.

When the vote finally came, exit polls by New York's Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates showed Chávez had been defeated 59 to 41 percent; however, when official tallies were announced, the numbers

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flipped to 58-42 in favor of Chávez. Venezuela's electoral council briefly posted machine-by-machine tallies on the Internet but removed them as mathematicians from MIT, Harvard and other universities began questioning suspicious patterns in the results.

Flush with cash from its Venezuelan adventures, Smartmatic International incorporated in Delaware last year and purchased Sequoia, announcing the deal as a merger between two U.S. companies.

Smartmatic says the recall vote was clean and that it is independent of the Chávez government. Responding to my inquiries, Smartmatic-Sequoias sent a written statement: ``Sequoia's products consist only of voting devices and systems, all of which must be federally and state tested and certified prior to use in an election. As Sequoia's products do not have military, defense or national security applications, they do not fall within the parameters of the matters governed by CFIUS."

In fact, Smartmatic International is owned by a Netherlands corporation, which is in turn owned by a Curacao corporation, which is in turn held by a number of Curacao trusts controlled by proxy holders who represent unnamed investors, almost certainly among them Venezuelans Mugica and Anzola and possibly others.

Why Smartmatic has chosen yet again to abuse the corporate form apparently to conceal the nationality and identity of its true owners is a question that should worry anyone who votes using one of its machines. Congress panicked upon hearing that our ports would be run by an American ally, Dubai, but never asked whether America's actual enemies in Venezuela have been able to acquire influence in our electoral process.

Richard Brand is a second-year law student at New York University and a former staff writer for The Miami Herald. Email: rmb381@nyu.edu

This article first ran in The Miami Herald. It is reprinted with the author's permission.

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Forget Dubai Deal. Worry about Smartmatic instead

Mar 29, 2006 9:42pm CDT by Bouwerie Boy,

Not possible you say? Just more crazy ravings from the 'tin foil hat' set? It has always amazed and frustrated me that, in the many discussions about election fraud and e-voting, no one ever raises the possibility that systems so poorly designed and demonstrably vulnerable to domestic fraud are also sitting ducks for international fraud. That protecting our election systems is **also protecting national security**. But, how do you convince the MSM and the radical right that this is a REAL threat and not just partisan sour grapes? Well, maybe by letting them know this...

The greater threat to our nation's security comes not from Dubai and its pro-Western government, but from **Venezuela, where software engineers with links to the leftist, anti-American regime of Hugo Chávez are programming electronic voting machines that will soon power U.S. elections.**

More after the break...

In a powerful and alarming opinion piece in yesterday's Miami Herald former staffer RICHARD BRAND lays out the threat case. Here are some excerpts...

Congress spent two weeks overreacting to news that Dubai Ports World would operate several American ports, including Miami's, but a better target for their hysteria would be the acquisition by **Smartmatic International of California-based Sequoia Voting Systems, whose machines serve millions of U.S. voters. That Smartmatic -- which has been accused by Venezuela's opposition of helping Chávez rig elections in his favor -- now controls a major U.S. e-voting firm should give pause to anybody who thinks that replacing our antiquated butterfly ballots and hanging chads will restore Americans' faith in our electoral process.**

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Scared yet? Think my tin foil hat is on too tight? Oh, I know what you're probably thinking...

"That Bouverie Boy is a bit of a xenophobe. After all, lots of software and hardware is manufactured overseas. I mean, it's not like foreign nationals from a hostile government are actually manning the central tabulators and counting the votes, right? Rights?"

"Well then have a look at these excerpts from Chicago Ballot Chaos by Christopher Bollyn at American Free Press concerning last weeks Illinois Primary debacle..."

The \$50 million touch-screen and optical-scan voting system provided by Sequoia Voting Systems failed across Chicago and suburban Cook County during the March 21 Illinois primary. However, the leading corporate-controlled newspapers merely lamented the failures of the system without addressing its fundamental flaws or even reporting that the company running the election is foreign-owned.

Election officials tried to assure the public that although nobody knew where all the ballots and computerized memory cartridges were, they were "most assuredly not lost."

"I don't trust that," U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.) said. "This is Chicago. This is Cook County. We created vote fraud, vote scandal and stealing votes. We created that mechanism. It became an art form."

We have accounted for the votes," Langdon Neal, city election chairman told the publication. "What we haven't been able to do is count them."

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In one precinct on the Near South Side, for example, the Sequoia optical scanner failed to register anything but Republican ballots. Although "election officials" tried to repair the machine four times, by the end of the day it had failed to register a single Democratic ballot in a precinct in which some 86 percent of the voters are Democrats.

The so-called counting of the votes is managed by some two dozen employees of Sequoia Voting Systems, a privately held foreign company. These employees, many of whom are not even U.S. citizens, have "full access" to the "back room area," a sealed-off section of the 5th floor of the county clerk's office which is called the "tally area."

In Chicago, the person in charge of the tallying of the votes was a British employee of Sequoia named David Allen from London. Allen, who ran the "Sequoia War Room" in an office next to that of Cook County Clerk David Orr, oversaw the "tally room" team, which included a dozen Venezuelan employees, who operated the hidden computer equipment that counts the votes.

Senior executives from Sequoia Voting Systems and from its partner company, Smartmatic, such as company president Jack A. Blaine and Roger Alejandro Piñate Martinez, vice president of special operations, also had "full access" to the tally area.

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Sequoia / Smartmatic E-Voting Fiasco In Chicago

By Aleksander Boyd

London 24.03.06

Somewhat I feel vindicated. In August last year I posted an extremely thorough piece of investigative blogging regarding Smartmatic; the e-voting machines vendor, which owns Sequoia, that has proven so useful to Venezuela's wannabe dictator Hugo Chavez. The recent e-voting fiasco in Chicago comes to prove the hypothesis that one thing is to observe how rigged electoral processes in far away lands, which do not affect Americans, are overlooked, or simply ignored, by the mainstream media and an entirely different matter when similar problems corrode the transparency and outcome of elections in US soil.

As readers of this site know, Sequoia was acquired by Smartmatic in 2005:

Sequoia Voting Systems was the e-voting branch of De La Rue PLC, the "*world 's largest commercial security printer and papermaker*" (sic) [7]. De La Rue's 2005 preliminary statement reports the sale to Smartmatic thusly:

"following the strategic review in December 2004, we announced our intention to exit the business (added: of voting systems) by the year end and this was done through the sale of the business to Smartmatic Corporation, a US based device networking and election systems company. The business had revenues of £23.1m (2003/2004 : £44.2m) and made an operating loss of £0.2m in the year (2003/2004 : £(1.9)m)" [8, page 8].

It now seems, as reported by the Chicago Tribune, that Cook County and Chicago Board of Election officials will withheld payments to Sequoia due to its appalling performance, saying that the company "did not perform adequately." What a wonderful development, isn't it? Of course it did not perform adequately, what were these people in Chicago expecting, transparency, performance, from a company linked to Hugo Chavez? Just like Venezuelan elections conducted with Smartmatic machines, it never had "performed adequately" it never will. That is precisely the point. Furthermore, European and OAS electoral observers witnessed how utterly unreliable those machines are, as demonstrated in Venezuela on November 23 2005 by Leopoldo Gonzalez.

The difference in Chicago though, is that there are still some officials exercising due diligence in the conduction of public affairs, and so the whole thing blew up in Smartmatic's face, as it would have been the case in Venezuela, had its officials any resemblance of integrity left and respect for democratic processes. Hopefully some party will sue Sequoia / Smartmatic for breach of contract and negligence, so that never again will that joint be allowed to provide 'e-voting solutions' in the USA.

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Smartmatic Announces Sale of Sequoia Voting Systems

Nov 8, 2007 Press Release

WASHINGTON – Smartmatic, the voting machine firm with ties to the Venezuelan government, today announced that it is divesting ownership of the voting machine company Sequoia Voting Systems. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) shined the congressional spotlight on the Sequoia purchase last year by Smartmatic because it posed serious national security concerns about the integrity of our elections. Last year, Smartmatic decided to sell Sequoia rather than complete an investigation by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), the government entity charged with ensuring the safety of foreign investment in the U.S. (To read the official Sequoia sale announcement: <https://www.sequoiavote.com/press.php>).

“I am relieved by the news of this sale – it was a long time coming,” said Maloney. “The integrity of our voting machines and elections is vital to national security. Given all of the past uncertainty and anxiety surrounding electronic voting, it’s nice that voters will have this added reassurance when they enter the voting booth this Election Day.”

Smartmatic was the subject of controversy in 2004 when the Hugo Chavez-led Venezuelan government selected it to provide the voting machines system for the presidential recall election, even though it would have been the company’s first time providing machines for an election. Smartmatic teamed up with a Venezuelan software company, Bitza, which at the time was 28 percent owned by Chavez’s government. In 2005, a Chicago city alderman questioned the possible ties between Sequoia and the Venezuelan government when that company’s machines were used in the March 2006 Chicago primaries.

“When I first raised concerns about the Smartmatic case with the U.S. Treasury Department, I knew it was ripe for a CFIUS investigation. There were just too many questions and lingering doubts, which Smartmatic was clearly unable to overcome,” Maloney said.

At first, Smartmatic flatly refused to undergo a CFIUS review. It eventually agreed to a review, but later dropped out of the review process and announced its intent to divest of Sequoia.

“The Smartmatic case reinforces the importance of a strong CFIUS review system. That’s why I worked hard to pass new CFIUS reforms this year that encourage safe foreign investment in the U.S. without jeopardizing our nation’s security,” added Maloney.

Maloney authored the new law to strengthen CFIUS. For more information on Congresswoman Maloney’s work on CFIUS reform.

Observations and Concerns Regarding the Louisiana 2021 Voting Machines Request for Proposal

Background/Timeline:

May 2006 - Maloney first raised questions about Smartmatic with then-Treasury Secretary Snow, inquiring whether the deal for Sequoia had undergone a CFIUS investigation

July 2006 - Treasury acknowledged that it had initially contacted Smartmatic, although a CFIUS investigation was not underway at the time. In early October, Maloney wrote to Treasury Secretary Paulson to apprise him of the lingering questions surrounding Smartmatic:

https://maloney.house.gov/sites/maloney.house.gov/files/documents/financial/acquisitions/20061006ElectionsCFIUS_paulson.pdf

October 2006: Smartmatic announced that it was undergoing a CFIUS investigation

December 2006: Smartmatic announced it was withdrawing from CFIUS review and selling Sequoia

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Letter from Carolyn B Maloney (D) U.S. Representative to Henry M. Paulson, Jr. Secretary, Department of the Treasury

Oct 2006

Henry M. Paulson, Jr. Secretary
Department of the Treasury 1500 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Mr. Secretary:
Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20525 October 6, 2006

I am writing to follow up on my letter of May 4, 2006, to Secretary Snow, seeking review by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States of the acquisition of Sequoia Voting Systems by Smartmatic, a foreign-owned company.

I believe this transaction raises exactly the sort of foreign ownership issues that CFIUS is best positioned to examine for national security concerns. As discussed below, publicly reported information about Smartmatic's ownership and about the vulnerability of electronic voting machines to tampering raises serious concerns. I strongly urge CFIUS to independently verify the information provided to American officials and the public by Sequoia Smartmatic, and to take all appropriate measures to safeguard our national security.

It is undisputed that Smartmatic is foreign-owned and it has acquired Sequoia, one of the three major voting machine companies doing business in the U.S. According to a Sequoia press release in May 2006 (copy attached) Sequoia voting machines were used to record over 125 million votes during the 2004 Presidential election in the United States. As we confront another election, Americans deserve to know that the Administration has made sure that any foreign ownership of voting machines poses no national security threat.

Although many press reports have tried, it appears that it is not possible to discern the true owners of Smartmatic from information available to the public. Smartmatic now acknowledges that Antonio Mugica, a Venezuelan businessman, has a controlling interest in Smartmatic, but the company has not revealed who all the other Smartmatic owners are. According to the press, Smartmatic's owners are hidden through a web of off-shore private entities. (See attached articles.) The opaque nature of Smartmatic's ownership is particularly troubling since Smartmatic has been associated by the press with the Venezuelan government led by Hugo Chavez, which is openly hostile to the United States. According to press reports, Smartmatic shared a founder, officers, directors and a principal place of business with Bizta, a company in which, according to Smartmatic, the Venezuelan government previously held a 28% stake. Mugica is also a director of Bizta.

Henry M. Paulson, Jr. October 6, 2006

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According to Smartmatic press releases, (copies attached) Smartmatic and Bizta were part of the consortium that received the government contract to provide the voting machines for the 2004 referendum election to recall Chavez as Venezuela's president, and have since been awarded other contracts by the Venezuelan government.

Smartmatic's possible connection to the Venezuelan government poses a potential national security concern in the context of its acquisition of Sequoia because electronic voting machines are susceptible to tampering and insiders are in the best position to engage in such tampering. The 2005 Government Accountability Office Report on electronic voting, GAO-05-956, and other private sector studies consistently support this conclusion. Thus, the reports that Sequoia brought Venezuelan nationals to the United States to work on the Chicago 2006 primary election raises questions about whether these individuals are subject to direction from a foreign interest that might pose a threat to the integrity of the election. Similarly, the use of Smartmatic software and machines developed in Venezuela, such as the HAAT software that was at issue in Chicago, raises questions as to whether this software is susceptible to manipulation by its unknown creators. Reportedly, Smartmatic may soon be introducing into the United States the type of electronic voting machines that were used (with Bizta software) in the controversial 2004 Venezuelan recall election, under the label AVC Edge 11Plus.

In reviewing the Smartmatic acquisition of Sequoia, it is important that CFWS understand the products and services that are of Venezuelan origin and evaluate Smartmatic's ownership to determine who could have influence and control over these and other Sequoia products and services that are in use or intended for use in U.S. elections. In light of Smartmatic's failure fully to answer these questions to date, this issue demands the most thorough independent investigation by CFWS.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,
Carolyn B Maloney
Member of Congress

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Chavista Company Smartmatic Responsible for Vote Counting in United States



by Gabriela Moreno
November 10, 2020

Spanish – How is this possible? It seems unusual. The company Smartmatic, which for a decade counted the votes of the electoral processes in Venezuela under the Socialist regime, now operates in the U.S. elections.

Yes, its digital democracy business scored a contract in the most populated county in recent elections: Los Angeles.

In this jurisdiction with 5.2 million registered voters and 5,000 polling places, Smartmatic claims to have installed 31,100 voting machines, representing the largest electoral acquisition in North America.

And there's more. The company also marketed the integration, engineering, and manufacturing of the new voting system.

The decision was made by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to develop its "Voting for All Solution" (VSAP).

However, this company, which boasts on its website that it is an approved supplier to the United States Department of Defense and a founding member of the Electoral Infrastructure Subsector of the Department of Homeland Security, is made up of Chavista tentacles.

Very Red Roots

Antonio Mugica is the Venezuelan engineer at the head of Smartmatic. Along with Róger Piñate, he founded the company that was registered in Boca Raton, Florida, at the same address as a cooperative of Petroleos de Venezuela called Petrolusa.

An article in The New York Times reviewed by the BBC highlights a \$200,000 loan to the company by the regime as a guarantee for 28% of the shares.

The loan was disbursed seven months before the contract for the 2004 recall referendum was obtained and then justified as an aid to small businesses.

However, according to NYT, Smartmatic won 120 million USD, with the first three elections organized.

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“(Smartmatic) went from being a small technology startup to a major player in the market,” reads a U.S. embassy cable leaked by WikiLeaks and reviewed by the BBC.

It also states that although the company claims to be of American origin, “its true owners remain hidden behind a web of holding companies in the Netherlands and Barbados.”

Responsible for the presidential count

Dominion is the name of the company involved in the recent U.S. elections.

Its name is associated with irregularities due to the failure of its electronic systems, whose technology was purchased from Smartmatic through its subsidiary Sequoia, revealed American Thinker.

Dominion denies its link, although, at one point, it allowed Smartmatic to market its same technology abroad in places where Dominion did not do business.

The Washington Examiner notes that “The voting systems provider has contracts in all of the key swing states in which Trump’s campaign team is mounting legal challenges, and Republicans in two of those Southwestern states, Arizona and Nevada, also have their eye on the system.”

Susan Greenhalgh, a Free Speech for People election security expert, cited by the BBC, believes that with the digitalization of the vote, there is potential for elections to be undetectably hacked.

New York University professor Beatrice Atobatele stresses that “if voters do not trust that their votes will be counted, they will no longer participate in the electoral process.”

Business expands

Since 2006, Smartmatic has marketed its services in the United States. By 2015, it boasted of maintaining and configuring 58,000 counting and voting machines that had been sold to 307 jurisdictions.

The machines include about 10,000 optical scanners for digital capture of physical ballots and about 47,000 voting machines.

The states that use this platform include Arizona, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

It handles this market with exclusivity, designing, and manufacturing Edge2Plus- the 17-inch touch screen allows for the capture of voter intent.

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It is used in Chicago and Cook County. They made their debut in the 2012 general election and the 2014 midterm election. Even former President Barack Obama exercised his right to vote with these machines.

Additionally, it developed and manufactured the Activator-Accumulator-Transmitter (HAAT) device to consolidate data from different voting machines, print reports, and transmit counts to aggregation centers.

These are not insignificant functions for a company that moved to London and has 600 employees in 16 offices around the world.

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Check the Code: Dominion Voting system tied to Hugo Chavez voter fraud was used in 2020 swing states

NOVEMBER 15, 2020

BY WAYNE CREED

The Dominion Voting system was first designed for Hugo Chavez to “win” and “keep” himself in office. It was also used in the 2020 US Elections, in fact, it was used in all six swing states. And it unilaterally helped one team with late-night voter tallies. Only one direction, only one party. Always. Interesting how that works.

Three companies rule, Election Systems & Software (ES&S), Dominion, and Hart InterCivic, used by 92% of US voters, as Dominion services 40%. Smartmatic is another big US player.

Question: What did the chairman of Smartmatic, a vote tabulating software, do to earn a place on Joe Biden’s “transition team?”

Smartmatic was the subject of controversy in 2004 when the Hugo Chavez-led Venezuelan government selected it to provide the voting machines system for the presidential recall election, even though it would have been the company’s first time providing machines for an election. Smartmatic teamed up with a Venezuelan software company, Bitza, which at the time was 28 percent owned by Chavez’s government. In 2005, a Chicago city alderman questioned the possible ties between Sequoia and the Venezuelan government when that company’s machines were used in the March 2006 Chicago primaries.

Dominion, founded by Canadian John Poulos in 2000, is now owned by Staple Street Capital LLC, says Bloomberg. Writes Forbes, “In 2009, Diebold Election Systems was sold to its competitor, ES&S, and in 2010 selling to Dominion Voting Systems” gaining “all intellectual property, software, firmware, and hardware.” Dominion and Smartmatic contracted for 2010 and 2013 Philippines elections where claims of malfunction and fraud abounded. In 2016, seventy-one million voters in 1,635 jurisdictions used Dominion, also tied to the Clinton Foundation, and a \$2.25 million project together. Robert Mueller’s firm Wilmer Hale was their agent in 2004. Dominion outsources components to China “...down to the chip component level.”

“Former WH Cybersecurity Coordinator, Michael Daniel, notes voting machine companies aren’t known for cybersecurity expertise. Jake Stauffer, AF cyber analyst tested Dominion voting systems for CA, observing: “I’ve found for voting systems, security isn’t taken very seriously.” Testing, Stauffer found vulnerabilities in Dominion’s Democracy Suite (DDC) voting equipment enabling remote code execution, denial of service attacks, and off-line ballot tampering. “How can a vendor sell a voting system with this many vulnerabilities?”

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Glitches or Witches??

The election software “glitching” in GA & MI, which incorrectly gave Joe Biden thousands of votes, is used in 28 states. When Dominion blamed a day-before “update,” Politico wrote, “Supervisor, Marcia Ridley of Spalding County Board Elections says records show no such update occurred...That is something that they don’t ever do. I’ve never seen them update anything the day before the election.” Dominion then corrected this, admitting last update was Oct 31. Does this reveal fraud or cover-up?

What’s Up with Dominion’s Code??

The origin of Dominion’s source code is especially problematic, given Smartmatic being “adopted” by Hugo Chavez in 2004, subsidized, trained to build vote machines and code, then used to rig an election. And then Smartmatic acquired Sequoia in 2005, using it to evolve their software until selling in 2007 to Dominion. Smartmatic even went to court to preserve their right to use the code they developed..

Everything that was developed by Smartmatic and Sequoia, including the software allowing ballot fraud in Hugo Chavez’ failed recall, was passed onto Dominion.

Smartmatic machines were created for 2004 Venezuela elections, organized and funded by recipient Hugo Chavez. Then Dominion inherited it all. But questions still swirl regarding if Dominion is just a front for Smartmatic.

Questions continue to pop around all these tainted companies. Was the 1 million ghost ballot dump by Smartmatic in Venezuela’s 2017 election an accident?

If the engineers who ran Dominion wanted to commit massive ballot fraud against a US candidate, based on everything we know – Is there anything that could have stopped them?