Honorable Alex Padilla  
California State Senator – SD20  
Chair, Select Committee on Science, Innovation and Public Policy  
State Capitol, Room 4038  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: March 11th Informational Hearing — New and Necessary Innovations to Improve Vote Participation and Registration

Cc: Board of Directors, OSDVF Legal, OSDVF Public Policy

Greetings Mr. Senator and May it Please the Select Committee:

The Open Source Digital Voting (OSDV) Foundation, an IRS tax-exempt non-profit California public benefits corporation researching, educating the public, and catalyzing development of open source elections technology, and representing the general public and stakeholders comprised of States’ elections directors and other voting systems experts across the nation, is pleased to submit a statement for the public record on the topic of your Hearing today under the title above.

We applaud you and your Select Committee for undertaking this necessary, timely, and actionable public Hearing. You have assembled a world-class roster of domain experts to contribute. We would have been honored to be included, but believe this selection of speakers will provide you with a robust level of information. That observed, the attached statement is intended to highlight their likely testimony and offer some additional consideration.

Your leadership in this area is vital. While there is much work to be done, the good news is there is much developing with regard to innovations in the process of elections administration and the voter experience. To be sure, your work on SB.360 removes logjams to an inlet of innovation. We would be honored to brief you and your staff as well as the Select Committee at any time on our 7-years of work so far in utilizing Silicon Valley know-how to bring innovation to public elections and voting technology—something that is essentially, “critical democracy infrastructure.”

Respectfully Submitted,

Gregory A. Miller, JD  
Chief Development Officer  
Open Source Digital Voting Foundation  
503.703.5150 | gam@osdv.org
COMMENT SUBMISSION

THE OPEN SOURCE DIGITAL VOTING FOUNDATION AND TRUSTTHEVOTE PROJECT

Introduction

The Open Source Digital Voting (OSDV) Foundation is pleased to provide a statement to supplement the testimony gathered at today’s public Hearing on the aforementioned matter. Our intent is that our remarks hereunder aid and assist the Select Committee’s research on innovations to improve voter participation and registration.

In the spirit of fairness and full disclosure our flagship effort, the TrustTheVote™ Project, a 6-year old Silicon Valley based non-profit research and development initiative has, in fact, developed substantial open source technology—freely available to any elections jurisdiction for adoption, adaptation, and deployment on a royalty-free basis—that directly addresses many aspects of today’s Hearing topic. Some of this technology is already in production deployment in the Commonwealth of Virginia for a range of voter services, and portions are also being considered here in the State of California by the Office of the State Secretary and in Los Angeles County specifically with regard to the processes of voter registration.

With that, on the following pages, we train the balance of our comments on the agenda items of today’s hearing.
1. **Recommendations from the President’s Commission**

- In general, the OSDV Foundation concurs with the PCEA recommendation for online voter registration. In particular, we encourage the Select Committee to examine existing open source technology available to support those recommendations located on the Web at: [http://web.mit.edu/vtp/ovr3.html](http://web.mit.edu/vtp/ovr3.html)

- The Foundation believes that online voter registration innovation is an excellent enabler for additional voter services—not just registration itself, but updates; ballot information; online voter pamphlets; absentee ballot request and tracking; access to voter participation records; and all services needed by military and overseas voters. We’re witnessing this quality of innovation today in the development of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s voter services portal project.

- In that regard, we applaud the Commonwealth of Virginia and other states who are working towards an integrated, full-service voter services portal, and in particular where there leverage of open source technology that can reduce development and implementation costs by as much as 75 percent.

- The OSDV Foundation also concurs with the PCEA recommendation for online voter registration services to include inter-operation between government systems and online voter registration services offered by 3rd party registrars (*e.g.*, Rock The Vote, VotoLatino, the NAACP and others). In particular, we encourage the Select Committee to examine the resources available to support this located on the Web at: [http://web.mit.edu/vtp/ovr2.html](http://web.mit.edu/vtp/ovr2.html) as well as [http://web.mit.edu/vtp/ovr1.html](http://web.mit.edu/vtp/ovr1.html)

- The OSDV Foundation recognizes and applauds the State of California for also creating technology to support inter-operations with other government services, and engaging with 3rd party voter registrars to enable them to provide data to the State.

- The OSDV Foundation recommends further work on developing standards to enable similar sharing with NVRA agencies, and federal government agencies including a similar function for state-level NVRA agencies.
2. Security and Technology—Lessons Learned Since HAVA

• For new online voter registration implementations, the OSDV Foundation recommends close attention be paid to lessons learned by early online voter registration States, in terms of vote registration fraud potential and fraud detection and prevention methods.

• Similarly, for new online ballot delivery implementations, the OSDV Foundation recommends close attention be paid to lessons learned by early online ballot delivery States, in terms of ballot fraud potential and fraud detection and prevention methods.

3. Interstate Exchanges of Voter Registration Information

• The OSDV Foundation recommends more standards development efforts for voter registration data for interstate exchange, starting with common data formats already in use.

4. Technology to Improve Access, Accuracy, and Participation

• The OSDV Foundation strongly encourages the State of California undertake new work on integrating online voter services portals with access to the polling place. This should start with existing "Where Do I Vote?" services, and extending to the concept of a Voting "boarding pass" (using a metaphor of the process of boarding an airline or train) for rapid check-in at polling places, and ultimately integrated with digital poll books.

• Similarly, the OSDV Foundation encourages development of polling place technology specifically to reduce wait time, including voter services kiosks, and digital poll books designed to quickly move voters with check-in issues from the head of the queue (delaying others) to a kiosk (where they can get help with issue resolution).

• The OSDV Foundation also recommends further data standards work on records of voter participation and voter outcomes, for increased transparency about voter access and participation (or lack of access or participation).
5. Modernizing Voter Registration

• To modernize California voter registration processes, the OSDV Foundation recommends starting with existing online voter registration technology already in place, in evaluation, or in development, with careful attention paid to fraud management.

• The OSDV Foundation also recommends adopting and advancing development of data standards for online voter registration services integration with 3rd party registrars, NVRA agencies, and similar agencies because these so-called 3rd-party registrars will continue to be a significant source of first-contact with new registrants. Therefore, integration through qualified and standardized methods, processes, and digital tools will rapidly increase through-put of registrations, increase quality, reduce opportunities for errors and omissions, and should reduce the opportunity or likelihood of fraud.

• The OSDV Foundation submits that tight and seamless integration of online voter registration with full-service voter services portals will significantly modernize the processes of voter engagement under a “Millennial mandate” of “ease and convenience.”

• In all of this effort, the OSDV Foundation strongly believes data standards for recording voter registration participation and outcomes will be essential to modernizing voter registration and improving verification, accuracy, security and transparency.

• Likewise, the OSDV Foundation advocates data standards for integrating voter records with records of voting participation and outcome. To this point, we add that it is imperative to pay careful attention to privacy and anonymity concerns.

Closing Remarks

First, we would like to point out that with regard to all of our comments and recommendations above, the OSDV Foundation’s TrustTheVote Project has software technology research and development underway in each of the elements mentioned above, particularly in Parts 1, 4, and 5. We would be honored to provide
presentations, demonstrations, and explanations of this open source technology work underway at any time the Select Committee is interested.

Second, we observe that open source, while not a panacea to addressing the integrity of elections administration, nor sufficient to ensure security or privacy of voter data, can reduce the costs of innovations to improve voter participation and registration. For many online voter registration tools there is no longer a need to develop, from the ground-up, fully custom solutions (open source, closed source, or proprietary or otherwise) when there exists a growing pool of freely available, tried, trued, and tested (open source) technology for online voter registration services—such as the technology employed in jurisdictions like the Commonwealth of Virginia (showcased in the PCEA Resource Web Site). Counties and the State itself should look to developers and systems integrators to accelerate their work, reduce their costs, and get a jump-start by adapting existing online voter registration technologies.

Finally, in closing the OSDV Foundation thanks the Select Committee on Science, Innovation and Public Policy for conducting this timely and actionable Hearing on this topic, and inviting our submission of this statement. We remain committed and focused as a tax-exempt CA public benefit corporation on advancing innovation in elections administration, voter registration and related services, and the process of voting itself. We welcome any opportunity to share our work with this or any member of the State of California government.

Respectfully Submitted on Behalf of the TrustTheVote Project,

Gregory A. Miller, JD
Chief Development Officer
OSDV Foundation, Palo Alto, CA