Voting System Technical Oversight Program (VSTO)

Doesn’t qualify for the David Letterman “C” scholarship

Presented by
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VSTOP

• Unique university partnership with Indiana Election Division & Secretary of State
  – Managed through the Bowen Center at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.
  – Program lead by two university professors (department heads) & staff, with graduate student support

• Created by legislation in Public Law 221-2005
  – Initially, designed to help with field tests of voting systems but role has expanded greatly
Purpose and Function

• Advises the Indiana Election Commission on certification of voting systems
  – Conducts field tests to ensure compliance with state law
  – Full re-certification of voting systems occurs every four years (ending October 1 following presidential election year – a non-election year in Indiana)
    • *De minimis/Non de minimis* updates or new systems require additional review from time-to-time

• Advises the Indiana Secretary of State on the certification of electronic poll books
Purpose and Function

- Conducts random audits of electronic poll books and their usage as it pertains to state law
- Conducts post-election investigations of allegations of systemic problem in single or multiple counties.
- Maintains a database of voting systems and machines used in Indiana
  - Counties are required to certify inventory annually
- Provides best practices in election administration involving voting systems and epollbooks
- Reviews technical bulletins from vendors for impact
- Assists SOS and IED in planning county risk limiting audits after each election
- Runs certification program for county election administrators (CEATS – second class graduating 2021)
Lessons Learned

• Beginning by determining scope to prevent inadvertent or deliberate “Mission Creep”
  – Purely technical versus policy recommendations
  – Statutory (or rulemaking) procedural requirements.

• Identify funding sources
  – Penalty provisions and enforcement proceedings
  – Legislative appropriations
  – State versus federal funding
  – Non-reverting funds

• Identify physical site needs
  – Recently moved to more spacious university office space with generous administrative, testing, and storage space
ePollbook Certification

• Indiana one of first states to require certification of electronic poll books (whether used in precinct-based or vote center model) in 2013 (IC 3-11-18.1-12)
• Secretary of State certifies electronic poll book models (not vendors) for a term of up to 2 years, ending on December 31 of year following certification. Shorter life span for product model
• Statutory standards, plus Certification Test Protocol developed by VSTOP for SOS adoption
• Different vendor dynamic than voting system certification (more market fluidity)
Physical Security in Elections

• Counties are required to adopt security plans to manage the safe storage of their equipment
  – State law sets forth the minimum requirements of the plan, but county may be more specific

• Counties required to develop plan for secure disposal of election equipment
  – Plan must be submitted to IED for approval before destruction can occur

• Election systems must be approved by the state in order to be marketed, sold, and leased in Indiana
Physical Security in Elections

• Delivery of voting systems to poll locations before Election Day must be carried out by bipartisan teams or nonpartisan commercial entities with documented chain of custody
  – State legislature is considering bill that would apply the same requirement for return of systems after polls close

• Electronic poll books are dedicated election equipment
  – In other words, can’t load solitaire on the iPad or use a laptop with Microsoft office suite
Questions?