Security and Maintenance of Montana Election Systems

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Secure and Accurate Elections are Key to Democracy
Montana Elections are Decentralized

$6.1\text{ million}\n\text{expended using federal grant money}\n
\text{Election Services Division budget $1.1 million}$

Maintaining uniform application of system

Voter Registration Information

MTVotes

Administration and execution of elections using voter information
Election Day Process

**Voter Registration**
- Online Web Portal for Registration
- MTVotes system contains voter registration information

**Submitting a Ballot**
- Printers that create certified ballots
- Registered voters who are overseas submit online ballots through a secured process
- Disabled voters use special machines to vote and print their ballots at polling places

**Tabulating Votes**
- Tabulators that read ballots, count votes, and print audit trails
- Vendor supplied USB flash drives gather results from tabulators
- Air Gap (computer disconnected from the internet) to aggregate USB flash drive results from multiple tabulators

**Reporting Results**
- USB flash drive to pull results from unconnected computer and move them to internet-connected computer
- Internet-connected computer that staff use to access eSERS and upload results from a tabulator or aggregate computer
Multiple Risks Exist in Elections

Election Security
- Evaluating Physical Security
- Managing Election Security Risks and Resources

Election Integrity
- Data Accuracy
- Timely Updates

Reviewed...
- Security assessments and election security posture at the counties and responsibilities managing election security
- 2018-2020 HAVA funding and expenditures and the use of resources
- Maintenance and integrity over voter registration information
Define Security

- Evolution of IT and threats require continuous improvements to election security and accuracy. Proactive steps such as defining election security and responsibility will ensure that elections adapt and evolve as threats do.

Improve Resource Management

- SOS can also make improvements to grant management practices to ensure that resources are addressing high security risks at the state and local levels.

State-Level Maintenance

- Finally, as SOS implements a new voter registration system, implementing state-level maintenance procedures will ensure voter registration reliability and integrity.
Election Security Definitions

National and Federal Industry Best Practices
- Election Assistant Commission
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Defense

Election Security Best Practices and Guidance
- Election Vendor Guidance
- Center for Internet Security

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is most referenced security framework

Election Physical Security
- Tabulators
- Printers
- Ballots
- USB Drives
- Computers
Establish Election Security Definition and Oversight

Current Montana Law Needs Scope of Election Security Definitions
- Election Security Undefined

County Risk Assessments Inconsistent
- Counties Did Not Consistently Meet Standards and Best Practices
Election Security Recommendation #1

§ 13-1-202
"...evaluate the security, accuracy, and accessibility of elections...”

§ 13-17-211
"...secure voting systems before, during, and after an election.”

§13-17-103
“A voting system...is protected from tampering for fraudulent purpose...device meets electronic security standards...”

We **recommend** the **Montana Legislature**:

A. Clearly **define the scope of election security** using federal election security best practices and NIST security controls to **ensure all aspects of elections are secure** and;

B. **Mandate** the **assessment** of election security using defined security standards at the local and state level.
Establish Election Security Rule

SOS Rule does not Align with Statute, Best Practices, or Standards

• Current Rule is Not Consistent with Statute
• Missing Detailed Information and Guidelines based on Election Security National Best Practices and Standards
Election Security Recommendation #2

We recommend the Secretary of State develop rules that:
A. Define voting system consistent with statute.
B. Includes detailed security measures that align with statute, election best practices, NIST security controls, and federal recommendations.
Election Security Recommendation #4

SOS Needs Independent Security Oversight

- Oversight and coordination over all areas of security is shared between several SOS staff
- Missing single security management position

We recommend the Secretary of State fill the current Information Security Manager Position
Current Expenditures

- $2.15 million for new voter registration system
- $250,000 for cybersecurity training, county security assessments, and an election manager
- $750,000 for counties to use at their discretion

Incomplete Grant Objectives

- 53 counties have not had security assessments completed
- 25 counties have not completed security awareness training

Detailed Grant Management Program is Needed

By implementing proper grant performance metrics and monitoring procedures, SOS can ensure desired outcomes and objectives. Counties apply to SOS for HAVA sub grants for future spending and creating an oversight body to ensure the management and tracking of HAVA funding is meeting those expectations.
Recommendation #5

- Regular Maintenance, Data Analysis, Communication, and Follow-up Schedule

Do Current Maintenance Procedures Work?

- How long do updates take?

- Were ballots accepted from deceased voters?

SOS receives information and matches with voter information

- Counties review potential matches
  - 493 outstanding potential matches

- Reviewed status changes since 2015
  - Most changes within 30 days
  - 14% were 90 days to 1 year

- Matched 22,000 deceased people with voter information
  - Reviewed ballots accepted since 2010
  - 2 individuals identified
  - Verified clerical and system errors and no invalid ballots where submitted
THANK YOU!

Montana Election Security and Maintenance

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