

From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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For Immediate Release

CONTACT: **Larry Perosino** 860/509-6259

BYSIEWICZ INVITES EIGHT TOWNS TO TEST ELECTRONIC VOTING IN NOVEMBER

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz invited eight cities and towns to participate in an Election Day test of electronic voting technology. Bysiewicz proposed the test, which was approved by the Legislature this year, to determine the type of voting system that will best serve Connecticut voters in the future.

Registrars of Voters from 21 municipalities volunteered to be considered as test towns. Eight were selected by lottery from subgroups divided by congressional district.

Secretary Bysiewicz notified officials from **Griswold, Hartford, Middletown, Sharon, Southington, Tolland, West Hartford** and **Wilton** of their selection. Each town that receives final approval from their local legislative body by the end of July will be included in the electronic voting test.

“I am looking forward to determining which technology proves the most reliable and find out what voters think of the various systems available,” Bysiewicz said. “I’m also pleased to announce that the test of new voting systems will be done at no cost to taxpayers because voting machine companies are loaning their equipment free of charge.”

Mechanical lever voting machines have been used almost exclusively in the state for over 50 years, but the federal “Help America Vote Act” (HAVA), authored by Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd and signed into law by President Bush, requires all states to update their voting systems by 2006.

For example, the new federal law requires that voting systems provide persons with disabilities the opportunity to vote privately and independently. The state Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities estimates over 200,000 Connecticut’s residents with disabilities may not vote. “Electronic voting technology can help ensure that persons with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity to cast their ballots privately and independently,” said Bysiewicz.

The state has already secured \$5 million in federal funds under HAVA, which was proposed as a result of the voting debacle in Florida during the 2000 presidential election. Bysiewicz expects to eventually receive about \$30 million from the federal government over the next few years to comply with the new election reforms.