
From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ ENCOURAGES VOTERS TO USE NEW TECHNOLOGY ON ELECTION DAY

New telephone-based technology allows people with disabilities to cast their votes privately and independently for the first time ever

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today reminded Connecticut voters who live with disabilities that this year they can vote privately and independently for the first time. Every polling precinct in Connecticut is equipped with the Inspire Vote-By-Phone system, a telephone-based voting technology designed to allow those who are blind or disabled to vote in private and independently, Secretary Bysiewicz said.

The Vote-By-Phone system is manufactured by IVS LLC of Kentucky, a company which entered into a one-year contract with Connecticut in August to equip all 769 of the state's polling places with these telephone-based systems. Over the past month, officials from the Office of the Secretary of the State have conducted more than forty (40) training sessions with local registrars, moderators, and other elections officials throughout Connecticut as they prepare for Election Day, she said.

"For the first time in seventy (70) years, voters who are blind or suffer from other disabilities will be able to vote privately and independently, and that makes this year's election a very special one. Many have talked about this being a year of change in America, and here in Connecticut, this is one of the most important changes we will see," Secretary Bysiewicz said. "We have heard from many different people who have told us how excited they are to finally have the chance to vote on their own this year, and their long wait will finally end this year."

With the Vote-By-Phone system, after voters check in at their polling place, they are brought to a privacy booth where the phone is located. After the elections official dials into the system and enters a password, voters simply listen to the ballot and make their selections using the telephone keypad. Throughout the ballot, voters can verify

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their choices, make changes and take whatever time they need to cast a ballot that reflects their choice of candidates.

Bruce Woodward, a legally blind voter living in Wethersfield who intends to use the Vote-By-Phone system tomorrow, said, "This is going to make my ability to vote ever-so-easier than it's been in the past. I've waited for years for this. I always resisted having someone come into the voting booth with me, because I found that to be demeaning."

Jason Barone-Cichocki, a blind voter who lives in Hartford, said not only is he happy to be finally voting on his own, but he knows his votes will be cast properly because he will respond directly through the Vote-By-Phone system to questions asked of him. "It's going to make me feel very independent without needing someone's help to do it," he said.

A video demonstration of how to use the Vote-By-Phone system is available online at <http://www.sots.ct.gov/ElectionsServices/HAVA/IntroHAVA.htm> at the bottom of the page under the heading, "Voting Machine Use In Connecticut." The demonstration is available in both English and Spanish.

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