
From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, August 24, 2006

CONTACT: Dan Tapper, 509-6259
324-9862 (Cell)

**SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ DEMONSTRATES NEW VOTING
TECHNOLOGY FOR NEW BRITAIN ELECTION OFFICIALS**

Shows how optical scan machines work, answers questions of local officials

NEW BRITAIN – Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today demonstrated new optical scan voting technology for elections officials at New Britain City Hall, showing local election officials the type of voting machines that will serve as replacements for all of Connecticut's lever voting machines by 2007. Additionally, some towns will be able to use the optical scan machines for this November's elections, Secretary Bysiewicz said.

Secretary Bysiewicz was joined by officials from LHS Associates, the company chosen earlier this month by the state to provide optical scan voting machines for Connecticut cities and towns. Optical scan voting technology, in which a voter fills out a paper ballot and then scans it into a machine for verification, is the most common form of voting technology in America today, with more than half of the counties in America voting on optical scan machines. Optical scan technology also provides a paper trail for every vote case, in compliance with state law and the federal Help America Vote Act.

Today's visit to New Britain is the third of eighteen scheduled regional visits throughout Connecticut to meet with local elections officials, demonstrate the new technology for them, and answer any questions they may have, Secretary Bysiewicz said.

"As our office considered potential new technologies, our decision was based upon the principles of security, accessibility and reliability. LHS Associates, with its optical scan equipment, ensures a level of security needed to protect the integrity of our elections, today and into the future," Secretary Bysiewicz. "Much like filling out a standardized test or even a lottery ticket, the practice of filling out an optical scan ballot is something with which most people are familiar. The machines will ultimately replace our lever voting machines; this year, some towns throughout the state will be able to receive them for the November election, and LHS will replace all of our lever machines

*****MORE*****

by the November 2007 election.

"Federal funds will cover the \$15.7 million cost of purchasing the new machines and providing the proper training for elections officials," Secretary Bysiewicz added. "We will work closely with Registrars and Town Clerks to ensure that people receive the education and on-the-job training they need."

Secretary Bysiewicz also discussed the state's decision to sign a one-year contract with IVS, LLC, a company that will provide Connecticut telephone-based voting equipment which for the first time in seventy years will allow those citizens with disabilities to vote privately and independently. The state will use federal funds to provide the IVS technology, telephones, fax machines, and secure telephone lines at all 769 of Connecticut's voting precincts for this November's election.

Mark Bernacki, a Republican member of the New Britain Town Council, attended today's demonstration and said such visits will help cities and towns to become more familiar with the new machines. "Education is very important in the process of introducing new voting technology to the public; we will all be looking to Susan for assurances that we all understand this new technology and have our questions answered as part of the education process. It is going to take an effort, particularly with our seniors who tend to vote as a block, because many people have grown very attached to the old lever machines."

"The demonstration of this equipment in New Britain by Secretary Bysiewicz is another important step in informing voters in Connecticut about this new voting technology," said Senator Donald DeFronzo (D-New Britain), the co-chair of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. "Having seen the different variety of the voting technology available, I think this optical scan system represents the most simple, secure, and cost effective alternative under the federal requirements. I think it will be easier for voters to transition to this system than some of the other voting technologies."

Edward Dzwonkowski, Democratic Registrar of Voters in New Britain, said, "I'm glad to see New Britain selected as on the demonstration towns. I've asked our Democratic moderators to show up as well, and I'm very happy that they are here for this. Now, people can get an idea what these machines are like in real life."

#####