

By Bev Harris, founder of BlackBoxVoting.org

Public officials now admit they can see how you voted and link it to your name. This issue affects Colorado, almost all of Washington State, as well as some locations in California, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia and likely other states as well.

If you vote by mail or at combined-precinct "vote centers" your vote may be viewable by public officials and/or vendors.

In Colorado, election officials have been trying to cover up this inconvenient (and unconstitutional) issue, by preventing the public or the media from being able to examine ballots -- ever, even after elections are over. The Hart brand ballot scanner, widely used in CO, WA, and TX, affixes a unique identifier bar code to each ballot. With absentee or mail-in ballots, this produces a mechanism for the government or its vendors to download how you voted into a database.

The Citizen Center lawsuit in Colorado seeks a federal court ruling prohibiting the government from placing marks on the ballots, or otherwise using mechanisms to identify your vote choices. This requires no new law; these practices were put into place in violation of the Colorado Constitution, which already bans such tactics.

Note that there are two ways to remove ballot privacy:

- 1) By implanting a unique number or bar code on each ballot, creating a mechanism through which the government and vendors can decode 100% of the votes for mail-in voters, potentially compromising ballot privacy for millions of voters at a time;
- 2) By creating a large number of small voter subsets; then, simply comparing results for each subset to identify all small sets with homogenous votes. Many small subsets are created with certain mail-in voting and vote-center practices.

Please also see the article about Indiana voter privacy theft, at the end of this article. This uses a third mechanism, implanted by the vendors into voting machines at the behest of the state.

Black Box Voting first reported on this problem in 2007: "Two voting products combine to steal your political privacy " <http://www.bbforums.org/forums/messages/1954/47220.html>

Also see the important video here:

<http://www.blackboxvoting.org/video.html> - scroll down to "**CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DISCOVER THEIR SECRET BALLOT INVADED**"

" (keep watching, the first few seconds is blank); This video shows two Washington state citizens who found identifiers on their ballots.

If officials admit this now in Colorado and Indiana, and citizens found this in Washington state, one wonders how pervasive this is and why this functionality has been kept secret from the public.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN COLORADO HAVE NOW ADMITTED THEY CAN SEE HOW YOU VOTED

During the course of important litigation to examine ballots after the election was over, several Colorado public officials admitted that they can see how people voted.

A new nonprofit organization, called the Citizen Center, is now litigating to stop the government and its vendors from collecting data on how citizens are voting.

Portions of the Citizen Center press release are reprinted below.

But first, be aware that this issue is going to grow much bigger than Colorado. The core of the Colorado Clerk's arguments revolves around an abhorrent belief that the government has the right to see how you voted. The Citizen Center lawsuit correctly argues that under the Colorado Constitution NO ONE has that right.

Follow Bev Harris at BlackBoxVoting.org