

by Bev Harris, founder of Blackboxvoting.org

California Assemblyman Phil Ting has proposed AB 19, a bill to require the California Secretary of State to implement an Internet voting pilot project.

They tell us Internet voting is secure. It's not. It's not secure, and can't be made secure, but that's not even the point.

The point is it's not transparent. The whole premise in our Constitution is that we self-govern. To do that, the public must be able to see and authenticate essential processes, like who actually voted and the vote count, and that is not possible with Internet voting.

Internet voting transfers all control to whoever runs the server. (The server is just a computer that sits in a room -- and one Internet voting company, Scytl, has its server physically sitting in Spain.)

Internet voting gives the administrator complete control over the front end (who put the votes into the system) and the back end (the counting of the votes).

Internet voting is trying to come on with a vengeance, and not just in California. It is now imminent. Unless we are vigilant, many of us will be forced to vote online in 2014 and 2016. Lobbyists are at work to persuade your legislators to install Internet voting.

Political support has been secured from officials in several states. The governor of Hawaii has announced he wants Internet voting. Secretaries of State from Connecticut, West Virginia, Washington, and Oregon are already pushing online voting, and soon you'll hear about it near you. Federal bills promise cash to states that "expedite" their voting systems, with vague language as to what that means.

Because Americans are skeptical about Internet voting, politicians and reporters describe it as "smart phone voting" and "iPad voting." They also call it "convenience voting" but what they don't tell us is that, in exchange for convenience, we will lose the ability to self-govern.

HOW DID TING GET INTO THIS THING?

The California effort traces first to Assemblyman Phil Ting, but the real question is who

persuaded him to do this? I'm interested in any tips you citizens can provide on this.

Right now, I'm paying close attention to Rose & Kindel, a lobbying firm that promoted Diebold earlier. Rose & Kindel is the assigned firm for the Technology Association of America (Tech America), which is the new umbrella for the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), a group hired by Diebold, ES&S and a consortium of other voting machine vendors a few years back for the purpose of damage control.

Here is a recent lobbying filing for ITAA/Rose & Kindel:

[application/pdf](#)

[Technology Association of America Rose & Kindel filing.pdf \(14.8 k\)](#)

I took a glance at online-voting-bill-sponsor Ting's campaign finance documents. Saw Oracle and Cisco among the computer firms, which is only worth a slight mental tick-mark. It is unusual to see quid pro quo in obvious places (campaign finance reports), but if you are in an inquisitive frame of mind, you'll find the complete list of donors to Phil Ting here:

<http://cal-access.ss.ca.gov/Campaign/Candidates/#assembly>

It can also be informative to peruse the lobbyist filings to find out who is lobbying for election-related issues and who is lobbying for technology issues. Lobbyist filings can be found here:

<http://cal-access.ss.ca.gov/Lobbying/>

WHAT'S NEXT FOR CALIFORNIA'S ONLINE VOTING BILL? ("NO INFO AVAILABLE"):

Regardless of who's behind this latest incarnation towards removal of public rights in elections, I hope to see California citizens kill this bill if it gets that far. Currently, it is in a state of "no information available."

If you are a Californian living in Phil Ting's district, let him know that you don't appreciate his effort to trample your rights, and ask him exactly how any Internet voting system can ever be transparent.

You can watch for bills introduced and bill status here, for all states:

<http://www.statescape.com/search/QuickFinder.aspx>

If Ting's thing moves at all, it's time to alert the media. Reporters get into a pointless back-and-forth about security, quoting first one expert and then the other, but what no reporter will be able to get an answer to is this: Is Internet voting transparent? Be watching for any attempt of the bill to lurch out into the open again, and start contacting reporters if it does.

You own the government. You pay for it. You have a right to see how your representatives are chosen. With online voting, public transparency is impossible.

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The public must be able to see and authenticate these four essential steps for an election to be public, democratic, and valid: (1) Who can vote (voter list); (2) Who did vote (3) The original count; (4) Chain of custody.

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