Testimony to Voting Modernization Board  
February 24, 2011 Meeting  

By  
Dean C. Logan  

Good morning Vice Chair Kaufman and Members of the Voting Modernization Board.  
My name is Dean Logan, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk for the County of Los Angeles. I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the Board today.  

I come before you this morning to make you aware of Los Angeles County’s current efforts to modernize its voting systems, which serve nearly 4.5 million registered voters; and the challenges we face in this endeavor. Drawing on the experiences of our current efforts and my observations of the current elections environment nationally and in the State of California, I am also here to urge this body to consider the relevance and need for this Board to continue and potentially expand it’s work during what is a critical time for California elections.  

Los Angeles County is the nation’s largest and most diverse election jurisdiction, with an electorate comprised of multiple races/ethnicities, national origin groups, age groups, and socio-economic backgrounds. As an elections jurisdiction we provide election services in six languages other than English and have more than 500 political districts
(from federal and state to municipal and special districts) One of the core principles of our mission is to provide election services in a fair, accessible and transparent manner. Our ability to meet that core principle is becoming more difficult.

In response to these needs the County is currently engaged in efforts to modernize its voting systems to provide fair, accessible and transparent elections to the voters of today and those of tomorrow. [As part of this testimony, in advance of this meeting, I submitted to your board a recent plan submitted to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, outlining the Department’s strategy for implementing a new voting system by 2015. I will be more than happy to respond to any questions regarding the plan.]

As I’m sure you appreciate this task is not easy; especially for a jurisdiction as complex as Los Angeles County. There are a number of variables that contribute to this:

1) Size and Complexity - Currently, the County has not identified any certified voting system that would fully meet our needs. The size and diversity of Los Angeles County make it almost impossible to reasonably consider a Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) voting system solution. Any solution will entail a significant development or customization process. It is very likely that a solution for a jurisdiction as large and complex as Los Angeles may involve the development of new systems and technologies.
2) Voter Confidence – We are committed to ensuring that new voting systems in Los Angeles County address voter’s needs. More importantly, that voters are confident that there needs and priorities were taken into account in the process. As such, the County developed the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP). The VSAP is an unprecedented election practice premised on a collaborative approach that ensures greater citizen input through partnerships within the academic community, public interest organizations, and policy makers, in the pursuit of establishing a more participatory model for procuring voting systems. [Further documentation on the VSAP project has been submitted for the record]

3) Stagnant Voting Systems Market – Development and certification of new voting systems has been at a near stand-still in recent years; a dynamic impacted by economic conditions and by the lack of clarity and consistency in the adoption and application of regulatory requirements for voting systems testing and certification at the federal and state levels. Federally, only six voting systems have been certified since the Election Assistance Commission was created. In California, there are no pending applications for certification and a number of systems are operating under “quasi” conditional certification. The industry itself is doing little to expand as a market and provide greater supply. Voting System companies are not making significant investments in research and development for new systems. Where such efforts are being made, the timeframes for seeking testing and approval has become both time and cost prohibitive. These
concerns are further exacerbated by legislative proposals currently before Congress to dissolve the United States Elections Assistance Commission (EAC).

These factors present serious challenges not only for Los Angeles County but for other counties across this state and throughout the country. Without a robust voting systems market and an effective regulatory process, efforts to maintain the integrity of our democracy by providing accurate, accessible, and transparent election will be severely limited.

Current social and demographic trends that are defining how we act, interact, and communicate suggest the need for a serious re-envisioning of democracy in the 21st Century. This may mean significant changes to how we conduct elections. Election Officials will need the tools (in voting systems) to be able to accommodate these changes.

With the passage of the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2002, the voters of California declared their clear intent to ensure that California continue to be a beacon of democracy by modernizing its voting systems to provide every opportunity for all of its citizens to be able to cast their vote and have it counted securely and accurately. As a body entrusted by the voters of California to see the update of voting systems through, the work and oversight of this Board remains important. Los Angeles County as other counties in this state still need the assistance of this board, the Secretary of State, and the Legislature to ensure that voting systems in the state can serve the voters of today
and tomorrow with integrity and that the funding allocated under Proposition 41 is
preserved and protected until modernized systems that can meet that challenge are
identified and/or developed.

As this Board discusses the future of this body I ask you to consider the current state of
the voting systems environment and the future of elections. The relevance and
importance of this Board has never been greater.

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions I will be more than happy to
address them or to provide you a future written response.