DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS
City and County of San Francisco
www.sfelections.org

John Arntz
Director

August 1, 2011

Brent Turner

Half Moon Bay, California

Dear Mr. Turner:

I am writing in relation to your recent visit to my office regarding the City and County of San Francisco participating in the development of a voting system that uses open source software.

You asked if I would be willing to meet with other interested parties from the technology industry and government regarding the development of an affordable, open source voting system. In response, if you are able to organize such a meeting, I would be interested in attending and participating.

I understand that you do not seek my support for the City to purchase a specific voting system and that you want to bring people together to share ideas on how to identify the optimal specifications for the next generation of voting systems.

Respectfully,

John Arntz, Director

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City and County of San Francisco
Department of Elections

John Arntz, Director

June 5, 2017

Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, California, 94249-0080

RE: AB 668 – Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018 – Support and Seek Amendments

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez Fletcher:

On behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, I write to express the City's support for AB 668 ("The Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018"). If approved by the voters, your bill would provide matching funds for new voting systems, including the research and development of accessible, open source systems.

The City and County of San Francisco recognizes the importance of open source voting systems and has begun evaluating options to possibly develop and certify an open source voting system. Both the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Elections Commission passed unanimous resolutions in support of accessible, open source voting systems. The Mayor recently allocated $300,000 towards assessing the feasibility of the City's options to possibly develop an accessible, open source system.

While the City appreciates your inclusion of nonproprietary system development in the bill, we request that the following amendments be made to increase the likelihood that California can save money in the future through the use of open source voting systems:

1. The bill should match open source development costs at a higher ratio of one dollar ($1) of county moneys for every four dollars ($4) of fund moneys. Open source systems may benefit the entire State, and counties working on open source systems are bearing costs and risks not borne by other counties.
2. The bill should include certification in the costs associated with developing open source systems, and $2 million (amounting to less than one half of one percent of the total bond funds) should be set aside to cover such expenses fully. Certification is a necessary part of development, and setting aside funds would let even small counties sponsor the certification of a system.
3. The bill should clarify that development costs be matched only if the system is accessible and open source (as opposed to "nonproprietary"). Open source is a legal condition that can be applied to a voting system in a manner that allows any jurisdiction the opportunity to use a voting system's underlying software for free.
4. The bill should clarify that development costs be covered not just for "whole" voting systems, but also for voting system components. This would better support efforts to move in the direction of a "modular" approach to voting systems rather than seeking to build the entire system as one large project.

Thank you for your leadership on this bill.

Respectfully,

John Arntz, Director

cc: San Francisco State Legislative Delegation
     Secretary of State Alex Padilla
     The Honorable Edwin M. Lee, Mayor of San Francisco
     San Francisco Board of Supervisors
     San Francisco Elections Commission

State Legislation Proposal Form

This form should be used to submit legislative proposals for consideration by the State Legislation Committee. We ask that you keep your submissions under two pages. To be included at an upcoming meeting, proposals should be submitted by 5:00pm on the Wednesday before the meeting. Before submission, proposals must be reviewed and approved by the Department Head or Commission. Please send completed forms to Eddie McCaffrey in the Mayor's Office at edward.mccaffrey@sfgov.org and cc Rebecca Peacock at Rebecca.peacock@sfgov.org.

Date Submitted	May 2, 2019
Submitting Department	Elections
Contact Name	John Arntz
Contact Email	John.arntz@sfgov.org
Contact Phone	415 554 4348
Reviewed and approved by Department Head?	X YES ☐ NO
Reviewed and approved by Commission?	☐ YES ☐ NO X N/A

AB 1784
Introduced by Asm. Santiago, Chiu, and Gonzalez
Coauthors Sen Wiener and Hill, Asm Mullin
Secure the VOTE Act

Recommended Position

☐ SPONSOR   X SUPPORT

☐ SUPPORT if amended   ☐ OPPOSE

☐ OTHER & Describe

Summary

[Provide high-level summary of the bill in question and brief explanation of recommended position.]

Background/Analysis

[Provide history of the issue in question and/or a description of the law as it currently stands.]

Challenge

[Describe the challenge or problem that this bill is trying to solve for and the impacts to San Francisco.]

Solution/Recommended Proposal

[Describe the solution the bill is proposing, and/or the new policy it creates to help San Francisco.]

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Departments Impacted & Why

[List any departments that may be impacted by the legislation and explain the impact. We recommend consulting with affected departments for their perspective before submitting this proposal form.]

Fiscal Impact

[If any, describe the fiscal impact of the legislation, especially as it relates to San Francisco and your department in particular. Please include any analysis completed that summarizes fiscal impact to the State.]

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

John Arntz, Director

Memorandum

To: State Legislation Committee

From: John Arntz, Director

Date: May 2, 2019

RE: Request to support Assembly Bill 1784

Summary

Assembly Bill 1784, "Secure the VOTE Act," would add $16 million in matching funds in the State's FY 19/20 budget to support counties in developing their own open source voting systems using software components licensed under the GNU General Public License 3.0. The development must occur in a manner that allows for public review and input and applicable software must be placed in a public repository.

Counties can receive three dollars of State funds for every one dollar from any other source expended to develop open source voting systems. Also, any system must receive approval or conditional approval from the California Secretary of State (SOS) in time for the system to be implemented for the November 8, 2022 election.

The ratio of matching funds decreases to 2:1 for systems the SOS approves after November 8, 2022 and are implemented by the November 5, 2024 election. Matching funds are then available on a 1:1 basis for open source voting systems the SOS approves after November 5, 2024 and by December 31, 2026.

Background/Analysis

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors and Elections Commission have both approved resolutions supporting the City to develop an open source voting system. The Committee on Information Technology previously allocated $300,000 in FY 16/17 to fund an analysis to review the feasibility of developing a system and the Board of Supervisors allocated $1.3 million as an add-back during the FY 18/19 budget process. The Department of Technology hired a technical resource to the development efforts of other jurisdictions and organizations to inform the setting of criteria for the City's system.

Challenge

No voting system currently operates using open source software under a GNU General Public License 3.0. The City must establish the specifications for a system and the interface of the system with voters. The City must also determine the methods for developing the voting system in a manner that allows for public review and input during the development processes. Most likely the project will require contractors to undertake much of the development work associated with the system. Estimated costs for developing a voting system range from $24 – $30 million.

Solution/Recommended Proposal

AB 1784 provides partial funding for developing a voting system with the City limited to obtaining $8 million of the $16 million that the legislation would include in the State's FY 19/20 budget.

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Departments Impacted and Why

The Department of Technology is impacted since it is the technical lead for the project. The Department of Elections is impacted since it will operate the system to conduct the City's elections.

Fiscal Impact

The City can leverage the matching funds to cover a greater amount of costs associated with developing a voting system while also decreasing the impact to the City's General Fund.