



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Contact: Nghia Nguyen Demovic
916-653-6575
Ann Guerra
530-272-1732

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Insists on User-Friendly Voting Machines For Disability Community

Grass Valley, CA – In his first trip to the FREED Center for Independent Living as Secretary of State, Bruce McPherson met with members of the disability community to discuss his vision to make voting user-friendly for all Californians. Secretary McPherson listened to the community's concerns and recommendations for making voting more accessible for those with special needs.

“Securing full access to the polling place is a top priority for my administration. I will do my best to assure that voters are able to vote privately, securely and independently,” said Secretary Bruce McPherson. “All voters need to be able to verify that their votes have been cast accurately.”

According to U.S. Census figures, 20% of Americans with disabilities are of voting age, yet the voting rate is only 35%. Members of this community face barriers to voting that include inaccessible polling places, inaccessible voting systems, lack of voter registration opportunities, and lack of voter education and get-out-the vote activities.

“Secretary McPherson’s visit is a great thing for people with disabilities,” said Gary Engelking, a member of FREED who was injured in 1976 as a result of a car accident. “He is showing us that he cares and genuinely wants to engage members of the disability community in the voting process. Voting accessibility will allow me to vote independently after 29 years of being injured.”

FREED Center for Independent Living serves people of any age, with all kinds of disabilities, including people fully participating as community members, as well as those wishing to transition to the community from institutional settings. Established in 1985, FREED currently assist over 800 consumers in Nevada, Sierra, Yuba and Colusa Counties.

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