

DEBRA BOWEN

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Releases Draft Criteria for Top-to-Bottom Voting Machine Review

SACRAMENTO – Secretary of State Debra Bowen today unveiled her proposed draft criteria that will be used to conduct a thorough top-to-bottom review of the voting machines certified for use in California.

“The review is designed to restore people’s confidence in the integrity of our electoral process,” said Secretary Bowen, the state’s chief elections officer. “Every California voter has the right to have their vote counted as it was cast. This first-of-its-kind top-to-bottom review is designed to ensure that California voters are being asked to cast their ballots on machines that are secure, accurate, accessible, and auditable.”

The draft criteria, available on the Secretary of State’s website at http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_vs.htm, cover system security issues, access for voters with disabilities, access for minority language voters, and usability for elections officials and poll workers in a variety of situations. Public comments may be submitted to the Secretary of State’s Office through March 30 by e-mail to votingsystems@sos.ca.gov or by mail to Secretary Debra Bowen, 1500 11th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, ATTN: Voting Systems Review, 6th Floor.

Once all public comments are compiled and the draft criteria are finalized, Secretary Bowen will begin a thorough examination of all voting systems currently certified for use in California elections. The review itself will be conducted publicly, though laws regarding confidentiality and proprietary software will restrict access to certain aspects of the review. Manufacturers with voting systems certified for use in California elections include DFM Associates, Diebold Election Systems, Election Systems & Software, HART Intercivic, and Sequoia Voting Systems.

“I want input from as many people as possible – voting rights activists, county elections officials, and anyone else who wants to offer an opinion – to craft the final criteria that will be used to conduct a thorough and timely review of the voting systems used in California,” continued Bowen.

After reviewing the public comments on the draft criteria, Secretary Bowen plans to finalize the criteria by April 6, and will issue a proposed review and public hearing schedule shortly thereafter.

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