

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

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November 19, 2019

Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State
State of Connecticut
30 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Secretary Merrill:

I write to ask that you make available to federal, state and local officials the non-public evaluations you commissioned on the cybersecurity of electronic poll books.

As you are aware, the adoption of insecure election technology can threaten the integrity of our elections. However, despite reports of security vulnerabilities in electronic poll books, state and local election officials are increasingly using these devices to check in voters at polling locations. If foreign hackers exploit vulnerabilities in electronic poll books, they may be able to influence the outcome of American elections, for example by shutting down polling locations in which a majority of voters typically vote for candidates from a particular party.

According to a recent survey conducted by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), 36 states used electronic poll books in at least one jurisdiction in elections held in 2018. According to the EAC survey, 26.2 percent of jurisdictions nationwide reported using electronic poll books to check voters in at polling locations, which is a 48 percent increase since 2016. As there are no federal cybersecurity standards for electronic poll books, it is up to state and local governments to determine whether the electronic poll books offered by election technology companies are secure. However, many state or local governments may lack the resources and expertise to sufficiently assess the cybersecurity of electronic poll books and other election technology.

In 2014, the Connecticut Legislature passed a law permitting the use of electronic poll books to check in voters at polling locations. This law directed the Secretary of the State to work with experts at the University of Connecticut to evaluate electronic poll books and then to provide municipalities in the state with a list of approved devices they could use. In March of 2015, you announced a set of technical requirements that would be used by the University of Connecticut's Voting Technology Center to "rate and review" electronic poll books and invited commercial manufacturers of poll books to submit their products for evaluation.

According to media reports, three manufacturers of electronic poll books submitted devices for evaluation, but, as you told National Public Radio in May, the experts at the University of Connecticut "came back to us, and they said they don't feel comfortable with any of these being entirely secure." As a result, you have yet to recommend any electronic poll books for use.

There is a vital public interest in ensuring that federal, state and local elections officials are aware of any security vulnerabilities present in electronic poll books and other election infrastructure. If the University of Connecticut's evaluations were troubling enough to prevent you from recommending electronic poll books for use in your state, it is essential that officials in other states can review these reports so they can assess the risks posed by insecure electronic poll books to their own elections. Accordingly, please share a copy of these evaluations with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, so that it can then distribute the information to state and local officials around the country. Please also provide me with a copy, so that I can share this information with my colleagues in Congress who are considering legislation I authored that would establish mandatory federal cybersecurity standards for electronic poll books.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Chris Soghoian in my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Wyden", is positioned above the printed name.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator