

**Colorado Voter Group**

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Colorado Joint Budget Committee  
200 E. Colfax  
Denver, CO 80203

December 7, 2007

**RE: Request to be heard by the JBC during Department of State Hearing**

Dear JBC Chairman and Members:

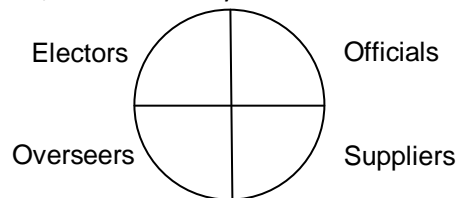
It is our understanding that your committee has invited some county clerks to be present at the planned December 20th continuation of your Nov 15th JBC meeting.

As you know, the county clerks, the Secretary of State, and their staffs constitute one of the interests in election matters – the election officials.

A second interest is represented by their legislative representatives – the electors.

A third interest includes the producers of election related goods and services – the suppliers.

A fourth interest, with valuable election expertise, often forgotten and generally un-represented, includes the canvass boards, election judges, poll watchers, candidates, campaign managers and campaigns, petitioners, expert witnesses, technology experts, and election system advocates – the independent overseers.



The Colorado Voter Group has dedicated many person-years to the improvement of Colorado’s election system. Members of the Board of Trustees have been or currently are: canvass board members, election judges, poll watchers, political party county chairmen, candidates, petitioners, campaign managers, expert witnesses, technology experts, voting system standards developers, and leaders of statewide and national election system advocacy groups.

The perspective of the independent overseer is unique and valuable, yet is generally denied a place at the table during election system discussions between election officials and the electorate’s representatives.

1. **Election officials**, being burdened by cost and efficiency responsibilities, are motivated to create the impression that each election is secure, accurate, fraud-free, and error-free. They manufacture voter confidence and polish their own public image by controlling the facts.

To maintain control, election officials resist independent oversight. What they cannot prevent outright, they thwart by preventing access to the facts. By positioning themselves so they are not accountable, election officials can make unsubstantiated claims that effectively cannot be challenged. The Attorney General represents the Secretary of State, not the electors. Courts accept the tiniest hint of compliance

as “substantial” and resist interfering with elected officials.

Election officials, because of their unhealthy dependence on them, protect their suppliers at the expense of the people. Further, most election officials lack the technical training to oversee their suppliers or their complicated and secretive voting and vote counting equipment. They are easily overwhelmed by election complexity, and this increases their substantial reliance on assistance from the manufacturers.

2. **Electors** rely on the purity of the election system including the laws established by the legislators, election officials and rules, and independent overseers to guarantee a fair and accurate election. Aside from the valuable acts of voter registration and voting, most electors do not directly engage in the planning, conduct or verification of an election. They trust, but do not verify.
3. **Suppliers** work to make profits by convincing election officials that their products and services are superior. They establish a dependency relationship with officials using proprietary technology, secrecy, and overly complex products. They resist oversight and public disclosure.
4. **Independent overseers** are absent from the discussion. We propose to represent the interests of the various constituents that we have identified as the independent overseers. We believe that our information will help you complete your understanding of (1) the state of our election system, and (2) the best alternative for conducting the 2008 elections.

Attached is a Framework for Colorado’s 2008 Election. It contradicts the positions expressed by many election officials, and it is a cost-effective and verifiably trustworthy way to conduct our elections – all things being considered.

For many years, we have documented concerns regarding election system certification and SCORE II. These concerns have not been addressed.

Specific details aside, it is most troubling that election officials have been unwilling to engage in a two-way public discussion of the issues we have raised. If election officials are permitted to continue to operate in this protective self-defined vacuum, without benefit of oversight, transparency and accountability, public distrust of the election system will reach a level that will likely prompt backlash.

We ask you to invite us to actively participate in your December 20th meeting. We believe that our unique perspective and knowledge are valuable assets. It is vital that the needs of election overseers be represented in the discussion.

Assuming that you will permit us to participate, we are happy to work with you or your representatives to properly prepare for your hearing.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

*Al Kolwicz*

Al Kolwicz

For the Board of Trustees, Colorado Voter Group

Attachments:

Colorado Elections 2008 - Framework for Primary and General Elections – 11/19/2007

Colorado Voter Group wants polling place elections with a few adjustments. – 11/19/2007

Open letter to Colorado Clerk - Colorado Elections 2008 - Framework for Elections – 11/20/2007