

1601 Rita Dr NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
(505) 262-0602
ingham@i-pi.com

March 7, 2007

Secretary of State Debra Bowen
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5746

Dear Ms Bowen:

Greetings from New Mexico!

Recently, I (and many other concerned citizens) pushed our legislators in New Mexico to change our laws concerning voting to require voter verified paper trail. I have now learned about California AB 852, the SAFE Elections Bill, which requires technology disclosure for new voting system certifications and provides an incentive for open source voting products.

I recently completed the work for my PhD specializing in computer security. I work in development of secure systems and study vulnerabilities in software for a living. As a result of my research and work, I understand all too well the vulnerabilities likely to exist in electronic voting systems. In fact, it terrifies me to think how easy it probably is to subvert an electronic voting system. The few independent reviews of the closed and secret election system software do nothing to allay my fears.

One of the fundamental tenets of computer security is that security by obscurity is not security. Instead, a system must be open for review. In the case of voting software, any concerned citizen should be able to review the voting system, including the software used. Open source election software is a necessary condition for fair and accurate elections.

It heartens me to read about AB 852, because if California takes the lead, it raises the probability that we in New Mexico can follow. As an example of why I am hopeful, in 2004 parts of New Mexico were second only to Florida in terms of elections problems, and 2006, we continued to have serious election problems. If you show how to run accurate and fair elections, we can hold you as an example of where we need to go to achieve the same goals.

Therefore, I request that you do all you can to support AB 852.

Thank you,

Kenneth L. Ingham, Ph.D.