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Optical Imaging System By AVANTE To Clearly Decipher Voter Intent in Close Election

Paper ballot is an important means in the mix of voting methods that is needed to accommodate the absentee voters. In some States, it is the chosen method for voting by most voters. However, it is also well documented that paper ballots can sometimes lead to more errors in the interpretation of voter intents. Errors can be made by voters in marking and writing in the wrong places of the ballots, marking with wrong pen, and inadequate darkening of the target marking areas. Errors are also made by the counting method and technology. Of course human errors in pre-sorting and alignment of the ballots also contributes to some errors as well.

Traditional paper ballots are scanned with "discrete sensor" technology much like the SAT tests taken by students. Only paper fed in the right way within the target reading line and areas will they be scanned and read correctly. While they are fine for testing student, they may not be voter-friendly for voters that may not be familiar with taken tests. A lesser amount of marking or marking with pen rather than pencil may mean losing your votes. There is no easy way to assess the voter intent after the ballots have been scanned. To the voting system, there are ballots that have sufficient volume of markings and there are ballots that do not. There is nothing between them. The only way to assess if lighter markings were made and intended to vote for any particular candidates can only be done by pulling out all ballots for manual inspections.

AVANTE has overcome this paper balloting problem of voter intent with the document imaging system. With the use of pixel-based technology, instead of simply setting a threshold of light reflection in some discrete area, a full picture of the ballot is taken. Any and all markings with different pixel volume of filled are recorded. By evaluating the difference between ballots with 10% filled verses 50% filled can help to find any voter intents that may have been missed by the pre-set standard of acceptance.

Another important feature is that any ballots that contain either over-votes or under-votes can be printed out as pictures (ballot images) for manual deciphering and inspection. That is, the counting machines do not have to stop whenever an over-voted or under-voted ballot is encountered.

Not relying on the paper alignment eliminates error due to ballot misalignment. It also reduces the cost of using "precision-cut and printed" heavy bond paper and replace with standard

copying paper. Instead, OPTICAL VOTE-TRAKKER™ uses fiducial markers to help distinguish the orientations. It will self-align any ballots that are not fed correctly.

With the fiducial markers, OPTICAL VOTE-TRAKKER™ is also able to “scale” any paper shrinkage by moisture and handling wrinkling. This function helps to reduce the need to use replacement ballots that must be filled in by the voting officials.

OPTICAL VOTE-TRAKKER™ also incorporates machine-readable unique and randomly generated ballot identifier to authenticate each and every ballot. No duplicate ballots can ever be used or fed into the system. This unique feature eliminates both unintentional human errors and intentional tampering.

The randomly generated unique ballot-identifier not only preserves voter privacy but also allows the ballots to be faxed in by overseas voters. The ballots can be authenticated without doubt. Special receiving terminals can be set-up as not to print out the ballot images but only the affidavit pages.

AVANTE International Technology, Inc. is a new force in the voting industry located in Princeton, New Jersey. It pioneered the use of voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) for touch-screen voting system (VOTE-TRAKKER™) in March 2001. VVPAT has since become a nationally accepted gold standard for a trustworthy voting system.

For more information on how this proven and certified technology can help you in managing your election, please visit www.vote-trakker.com or call 609-799-8896.