

Michael C. Gianasi Written Testimony
Committee on House Administration
“2020 Election Security--Perspectives from Voting System Vendors and Experts”
January 9, 2020

As a newer County Clerk and Recorder in Illinois, I have been quickly introduced to the constantly evolving world of elections. As the local election authority, it is my responsibility to maintain the highest standards when conducting all facets of the election process. As members of this Committee, all of you are aware of the responsibilities as a candidate in an election, but may not be aware of all of the responsibilities of the election authority challenged with successfully completing the election process. Maintaining adequate election judge staffing levels, verifying all equipment is transported and set up at the correct precinct locations, and promptly and correctly having those election judges close the election and return the machines and results to the election authority office for tabulation are some of the tasks during the time leading up to, and including, election day.

As a small county in central Illinois (population approx. 34,000), maintaining election security has been challenging over the years. Physical security of the equipment is maintained within the courthouse where the County Clerk's office is located and the equipment is only outside the control of the storage area when the election judges transport the machines to the precincts and back at the end of election night.

Since 2016 there has been a constantly increasing pressure to advance all aspects of election security, with cyber security leading the way. Events occurring in the last several years have shown that any network has potential vulnerabilities from external and well as internal attack. The Illinois State Board of Elections, in conjunction with other organizations, has promoted the membership in the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC), the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), and the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN). Multiple times each day I receive emails regarding new vulnerabilities found in hardware and software; new potential attack vectors for servers exposed to the internet, and updates concerning possible threatening activities monitored by state and federal government organizations.

Another program provided by the Illinois State Board of Elections is the Cyber Navigator program that provides guidance in the form of a person trained to assist local election authorities in determining the best uses of available resources to protect the election infrastructure and voter registration data. My office is in the final stages of completing a connection into the Illinois Century Network. The ICN will provide secure network access from my local voter registration database to the ISBE database with traffic monitoring and other security measures. I have also subscribed to a service that provides cyber security training and email phishing tests to county employees. With many successful attacks starting at the press of a button on a link in an email, it is prudent to constantly provide training to employees to recognize those threats immediately. Christian County is fortunate that Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds are available for these expenditures.

Finally, there is the election equipment itself. The equipment used in Christian County was purchased in 2004. Reliability had been an increasing concern and the new focus on cyber security also played a pivotal role in approving the decision to lease new election equipment. My current election vendor has been providing excellent service to the county for many years, as prior clerks would attest to, and continues today. With his extensive knowledge in this area, I agreed with his recommendation for Christian County to use the Unisyn Voting Solutions, Inc., optical scan and Freedom Vote Tabulators. The

security of these devices is much more substantial than the previous election hardware. This equipment will provide additional comfort to the voters that the Christian County Clerk's office is making every effort to secure the election and protect the integrity of the process and the results.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael C. Gianasi
County Clerk and Recorder
Christian County, Illinois