

CITY COMMISSIONERS SUNSHINE MEETING
April 10, 2019
PREPARED REMARKS – CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Length of remarks is capped at 3 minutes.

Honorable Judges Campbell and Furlong, and Commissioner Clark, I am here today to reiterate the concerns I have raised regarding the RFP process for new voting technology. These concerns were shared with the City Commissioners prior to their announced selection of a vendor for new voting technology and their recusal. And, I shared these concerns with this body last week by letter.

While I do believe that Philadelphia's current voting technology is outdated, unsafe and in need of replacement, I do not believe that the process to select a new vendor was fair, transparent or voter-centric.

Specifically, the RFP was tailored to a system with a digital screen, or a ballot marking device. In doing so, the Commissioners ensured that other options, notably hand-marked paper ballots, would not be considered fairly.

The RFP was written in a way that made security a yes or no question. But, safety is a scale. Hand-marked paper ballots are considered safer and more reliable by voting security experts and even in the Blue Ribbon Commission on Pennsylvania's Election Security than other options.

The process did not incorporate voter feedback in a meaningful way. The selection process did not offer public demonstrations of the potential voting machine options and did not consider user experience as part of the scoring criteria. Montgomery and Berks counties held public demonstrations, but Philadelphia – the largest county in Pennsylvania – did not.

Moreover, the perspective of voters with disabilities wasn't fully considered as part of this process. While disability advocates have stated a preference for touch screen technology, the PA State accessibility examiner for the ES&S ExpressVote XL, the system that was selected, noted several significant challenges with the system in the [certification report](#)– finding that “verification of votes is possible, but challenging”. Ensuring every voter is able to cast their ballot independently is

important, and could have been considered on its own as part of the scoring criteria, but it wasn't in this RFP.

And lastly, we don't know the full cost or the plan for paying for the machines.

The RFP process was flawed from the beginning. But, you can rectify it. Today, I request that this body vacate the Commissioners' earlier decision, and draft and reissue a new, fair RFP.

Please don't deny Philadelphia's voters a true voice in the selection of new voting technology. Thank you.