



State of Vermont

Office of the Secretary of State

128 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-1101

[phone] 802-828-2363

[fax] 802-828-2496

www.sec.state.vt.us

James C. Condos, Secretary of State

Christopher D. Winters, Deputy Secretary

August 31, 2016

Contact: Liz Ryder 802-828-2148

PRESS RELEASE

Secretary of State Jim Condos Addresses Election Cybersecurity

Montpelier, VT – In light of recent stories about cyberattacks on election databases in Arizona and Illinois, Secretary of State Jim Condos wants voters to be aware of the work he and his office have done to protect Vermont elections and reassure them their votes and voter information are safe.

“As Vermont’s chief elections officer, election integrity is among my highest priorities. This includes the security of our election information and systems,” Condos said. “The recent news about hackers going after elections data comes as no surprise to us. In fact, we’ve been anticipating these kind of cyber threats for some time now and began preparing for them years ago.”

Condos continued, “I want Vermont voters to know that we are well prepared and that we have taken precautionary steps to safeguard our elections systems.”

The Secretary of State’s Office was the first state agency to undergo a thorough cybersecurity assessment, including penetration testing for all data/systems. All elements of the VT elections management system, including the statewide voter checklist, have undergone extensive reviews and testing for vulnerabilities to cyber threats, including those of the type described in an FBI alert to state election officials.

In response to the recent FBI alert, the Secretary of State’s Office initiated a complete analysis of its elections system to search for any attacks from the specific sources identified by the FBI. After a thorough review, no abnormal activity was found.

With talk of “rigged” elections and Russian attacks, it is understandable that people can become alarmed. Fortunately, elections in Vermont are decentralized. Elections administration is a local function resting with hundreds of municipal clerks and their local election workers. Systematic fraud or a compromising of the system would be extremely difficult.

Further, Vermont is one of the many states requiring a paper ballot for every vote cast. Whether counted by hand, or run through the tabulator, the paper ballot is retained in the event of any questions regarding an election result. All tabulators receive annual maintenance and are tested for optimal performance before every election. Vermont’s tabulators are not connected to the internet or any other software.

Condos expressed confidence in the security of Vermont elections. “The Secretary of State’s office constantly monitors its systems to be on the lookout for attacks of this nature. I am proud of how proactive we’ve been about cybersecurity and hope Vermonters take some comfort knowing we have been vigilant.”

Visit: www.sec.state.vt.us

facebook.com/SecretaryOfStateJimCondos

Twitter: @VermontSOS

###