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<https://sos.vermont.gov>**James C. Condos, Secretary of State****Christopher D. Winters, Deputy Secretary****May 5, 2022 | For immediate release****Contact: Eric Covey, 802-828-2148****Vermont Secretary of State Officials Attend Regional Election Cybersecurity Conference**

Montpelier, VT – Today Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos announced that Deputy Secretary of State Chris Winters and members of his elections division attended a two-day regional conference on election cybersecurity and preparedness alongside other New England colleagues and federal partners led by the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS CISA).

"Cybersecurity is a race without a finish line. Ensuring the cybersecurity of our Vermont election systems has been and is a top priority of my office," said Condos. "Our Vermont cyber posture grows stronger when we work together in partnership with other states and with our federal partners, sharing best practices and growing our channels of communication to improve our collective situational awareness."

"Our focus on cybersecurity fortunately began prior to the 2016 Russian attacks on state election systems, and our defenses grow stronger on a daily basis," said Winters. "We want Vermonters to know that we are doing the hard work to prevent, detect and mitigate any potential cyber attacks on our election systems. We are proud to be a national leader on election security, but refuse to rest on our laurels – the bad actors will never stop trying new ways to compromise our systems, so we must be diligent and work around the clock to stay one step ahead."

The regional conference, hosted by DHS CISA, was attended by representatives from the New England Secretary of States' offices and both state and federal law enforcement partners. DHS CISA has been a valuable partner to Secretaries of State in the cybersecurity arena.

The conference this year had a greater emphasis on what is known as "mis/dis and mal-information" as one of the greatest threats to election integrity. That is, the unknowing or often intentional spread of false information about elections that is then amplified by bad actors, usually, but not always, in other countries, attempting to sow discord and undermine democratic principles in this country.

Winters added "it's important that we take a holistic approach to defending our elections systems. That means not just cyber, legal or process protections, but also being proactive in countering false narratives by providing trusted information based in fact and evidence and being transparent about how elections are conducted."

Vermont election administration was recently ranked 1st in the country for the second Presidential election cycle in a row by [MIT's Election Performance Index](#), which is widely considered the most reputable data-driven ranking of state election administration performance.

Vermont elections utilize the gold standard when it comes to the security and accuracy of votes cast: voter marked paper ballots. For every vote counted in Vermont, there is a paper ballot submitted by a voter to back it up. These ballots are sealed and stored for 22 months after every election and a randomly generated post-election audit is conducted after every General Election.

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