

To: All Alameda County Supervisors and all San Leandro City Councilpersons  
From: Jim Lindsay, President and CTO, Voting Solutions, LLC; Co-founder, Californians for Electoral Reform  
Date: February 27, 2005  
Cc: San Leandro Chamber of Commerce, Californians for Electoral Reform, Center for Voting and Democracy, San Leandro Daily Review

As the President and Chief Technical Officer for a company that writes elections software, I was aghast at the supposed two million dollars it would cost to implement IRV for the City of San Leandro. This figure was apparently mentioned by the San Leandro City Clerk to a reporter, and was published in the Daily Review. This figure is ridiculous, as shown by the following facts:

- Proven tallying software is available immediately, and would cost no more than \$10,000, as I will go on record right now and offer that price to San Leandro -- we have existing software that tallies IRV elections, with full auditing capabilities. It has been used by the City of Cambridge for many years, and was approved by the State of Massachusetts.
- Diebold must already have at least a user interface built for IRV, as they competed for a contract with Ireland, and had to demonstrate IRV capability.
- Diebold machines are used by the City of Cambridge to count their ranked ballot elections, and although the machines are different, the back end interface to our software should be quite similar.
- In the response to the county RFP, the County was assured that preferential voting would not be a problem for the machines that the vendor was trying to sell. The County was told, “The *AccuVote-TS* can easily be programmed for preferential voting...”. It is most curious for a task that is “easily programmed” to cost \$2,000,000.

[See Attachment A, below, for the full response to this question. Note that PRMaster is the Voting Solutions product referred to above, since renamed to ChoicePlusPro. Also, the vendor was mistaken in thinking that Cambridge uses cumulative voting. In fact, they use a system of ranked (or preferential) voting.]

The bottom line is that someone is trying to either thwart the will of the citizens of San Leandro by quoting a ridiculous price, or perhaps they are hoping to make a killing by charging two million dollars for a job that probably should cost a maximum of \$50,000. I would suggest an investigation into this quote -- where did the two million dollar quote come from? If it came from Diebold, know that they are either trying to rip the county off, or they just don't want to do it so they are quoting a price they know will scare people away. If the quote came from staff, then the question has to be where that quote came from -- again, certain staff people may not want to be bothered with IRV, and thus may be quoting a ridiculous price in order to scare people off.

Don't let anyone dissuade you from moving to IRV. It is simply much more democratic than either plurality or runoff elections, at a fraction of the cost of runoff elections. The very successful election in San Francisco proves beyond a doubt that IRV is completely trustworthy and completely viable.

Respectfully yours,

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## ATTACHMENT A

### **Response to Alameda County RFP, question 6 of Exhibit G**

(RFP responses were originally due May 31, 2000. I believe the county signed the contract with Global Election Systems on May 23, 2002. Note that Diebold subsequently bought Global, so the contract is now with Diebold.)

#### **6. How will the DREVS manage alternative voting system such as cumulative or preferential voting?**

Cumulative Voting, or Preferential voting is becoming more prevalent in the United States. Any County interested in implementing a full County-wide touch screen system AND cumulative or preferential voting also needs to consider that the absentee (optical scan) system much also be able to conduct cumulative or preferential voting. GLOBAL's *AccuVote-OS* and *TS IS THE ONLY SYSTEM* on the market today that handles cumulative and preferential voting.

GLOBAL's *AccuVote-OS* Voting System, through Global's proprietary software, is the only system that can conduct these types of elections due to the ability to place ovals in all 32 columns on the ballot (vs. a maximum of three columns on other optical scan system). This gives the voters the ability to rank candidate numerically. Systems limited to a 3 column optical scan ballot can not accomplish preferential voting.

The *AccuVote-OS* Voting System, through Global's proprietary software, is the only voting system that is currently utilized to automate the preferential voting mechanism. The City of Cambridge, Massachusetts conducts its off year council races using a cumulative, or preferential scheme. The City of Cambridge purchased the AccuVote System and GLOBAL developed an electronic interface, in conjunction with PR Master of Albany, California, to allow the City of Cambridge to electronically conduct their preferential voting elections. To the best of our knowledge, Global Election Systems is the only election company in the United States that has developed such a system, and has actually conducted elections in the cumulative voting [sic] environment.

The *AccuVote-TS* can easily be programmed for preferential voting; however it is not programmed to do so at this time, as there are no jurisdictional requirements to do so.