

Town Of Chaplin

Registrar of Voters
495 Phoenixville Road
Chaplin, CT

February 11, 2008

My name is Bill Jenkins and I am the Republican Registrar of Voters in the Town of Chaplin. We've used these scanners not only for the municipal election in 2007 and the Presidential preference primary in 2008 but for two referendums, one in October of 2007 and another in January of 2008.

During the municipal election in the town of Chaplin in 2007, we had to **re canvass** 16 candidates. The hand counts **revealed different totals for 12 of the 16 candidates**, this is a 25% rate of accuracy which I think you'd all agree is unacceptable.

Ink bleed through on the ballots due to the "bubbles" on one side being printed exactly over candidates on the reverse side of the ballot caused a great deal of problems with ballots being rejected for "over votes." It was raining on November 6, 2007 in Chaplin and when those ballots get wet due to moisture dripping off of people's clothing onto those ballots they're marking with the special WATER COLOR markers we're told by LHS we must use, many times, it spoils the ballot.

We experienced **ballot printing problems** exactly like the ones first experienced in Naugatuck in May of 2007 that most people like to pretend never happened. If the ballots are cut wrong by as small as a few thousandths of an inch, the scanner will not accept them. We had quite a few ballots rejected and had to open another package of ballots.

What I find disturbing is that there seems to be a tendency to ignore and bury problems like this. I'd like to ask any of you Legislators on the GAE committee, how many of you heard of the problem in Naugatuck with the whole stack of ballots that the scanners kept rejecting because they were cut improperly by the printer? This was one of the first times the optical scanners were used on a relatively large scale basis and it seems that all the newspapers and the SOTS's office reported was how "well" everything went that day which obviously isn't entirely true.

I'd also do not understand **why we have to keep sending the memory cards back to LHS for "reprogramming"** for every election? I think they charge \$400.00 for this EVERY TIME they do this and I'll bet it's more for larger towns. There is absolutely NO NEED for this. The scanner output ONLY needs to list how many ballots were cast for ballot positions 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, etc. just like reading the results from the counters on the back of the lever machines. For the first five elections, the Secretary of the State's Office is reimbursing municipalities for these costs using the Federal HAVA funds but after that, towns are on their own.

The **printing costs of the ballots are outrageous as well**. Once again, the SOTS's office is covering the cost of these for the first five elections BUT after that, towns are on their own. Why can't we print our own ballots using a copy machine to save money?

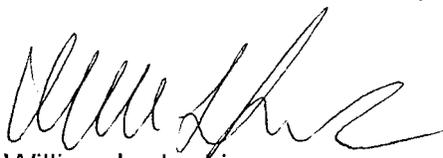
The low quality plastic seals that LHS provides to seal the memory cards in the scanners break more often than not. We had to change out our scanner on Election Day and when we installed the second scanner on the ballot bin, the seal on the memory card was broken. During our recanvass, I asked to moderator to open the sealed bag containing the scanner with the broken seal over the memory card and she refused because she claimed the SOTS's recanvass procedure didn't specify that the seal be inspected. She knew it was broken on Election Day and was deliberately trying to cover up the fact that we had a potential problem.

Once again, I requested that the bag containing the scanner be opened to inspect the seal on the memory card and she refused. I brought this to the attention of the Democratic observer, Kevin McCarthy who is the Democratic Registrar of Voters in the Town of Ashford and who is also very active with ROVAC. He insisted that the recanvass procedures don't mention inspecting the seal over the memory card. I explained to him that common sense would dictate that the seal should indeed be inspected and its condition documented but all I kept hearing was the recanvass manual doesn't mention it so there's no need to do it. This should be addressed one way or the other, if we're not going to document whether or not the seal is intact, then why seal the memory card at all, right?

While I haven't personally experienced this, during our last meeting of Registrars of Voters in Windham County, it was discussed by more than one Registrar that **the canvass bags that LHS provides for the scanners literally fall apart**. The bags are of such poor quality, the zippers come completely separated making it impossible to seal the scanner in a bag. This brings up another point, why "seal" the scanner in the bag in the first place?

During the "test voting" of our scanners prior to the presidential primaries, **we found two out of three of our scanners inoperable**. Both of the printers were not working leaving us with only one scanner for Primary Day. Fortunately our only functioning scanner didn't fail during the February 5th primary.

Did you also know that **IVS**, the company that has the contract with the SOTS's office for those vote by phone machines **charges around FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS each time they "set up" those things for an election?** Once again, the SOTS's office is covering these for five FEDERAL elections however the municipalities got stuck holding the bag for the municipal elections in 2007. This cost some larger municipalities upwards of THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS. Since the municipal elections didn't have any Federal offices on the ballot, federal money could not be used to reimburse the towns for this. Well then why did Lucian Pawlak keep calling me every day prior to the November 2007 election insisting that we had better set those up or we'd be violating HAVA? This is ridiculous, first we're told we MUST use these then we're told WE have to pay for them! I for one will not be inclined to set them up in the future no matter how many times I'm threatened by the SOTS or the Attorney General's office.



William L. Jenkins
Registrar of Voters