William J. Kelleher – Overseas Military Voters Deserve True Internet Voting

Today, overseas military voters are subjected to a ridiculous and burdensome process of voting. Some must request absentee ballots by snail mail, wait for the mail to come, vote the ballot, and return the voted ballot via snail mail. The Pew Center has show that from a quarter to a third of these voters are often disenfranchised due to land mail problems.

The obvious answer is that if they can bank online and buy online, they should be allowed to vote online. Approximately 30 states now offer a half-way form of online voting. That is, the overseas military voter can request an absentee ballot online, and receive it online. That is one half. The other half is that he or she must then download the ballot, print it out on paper, mark it, and then either mail it in over land, or upload it and email or fax it back. Often, they must sign a privacy waiver to vote!

This is nonsense! In 2004, the Department of Defense had an excellent service ready to go for the general election. SERVE – the Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment – would have allowed voters to log on to a secure website, request a ballot from their jurisdiction, mark it, and send it, all on the secure website, in a matter of a few minutes.

That program was sabotaged by just four reckless self-promoting computer science professors, with no experience building online voting systems, but with the cooperation of the New York Times. (See the history of this in my attached document.)

In 2010, West Virginia provided a SERVE-like secure website for its overseas military, and actually took votes. A limited number of counties participated in the primaries. It went so well that Secretary of State Natalie Tennant requested the legislature to approve expanding the number of counties for the general election, which it did.

A recent EAC study shows that Internet voting is being done securely all over the world. Australia, Switzerland, Estonia, India, Canada, and several other countries have used online voting with high voter satisfaction, and without any reported security incidents (with the exception of unsuccessful hacking attempts being noted).

The ONE hack of an online voting system was in 2010 in Washington DC. But that was not an actual vote. It was merely the very first trial run. The hack only showed how unprofessionally the system was built. Indeed, the builders of the system had no prior experience at this, and it showed! In all the successful cases, the systems were built by pros.

Please advise President Obama that our overseas military deserve the best voting technology our nation can give them. Each state should be allowed, and encouraged, to follow the West Virginia model, and provide convenient voting on the state's secure dedicated voting website.

Respectfully,

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Kindle edition: http://tinyurl.com/IntV-Now
In paper: http://tinyurl.com/IVNow2011
References

Election Assistance Commission Survey of Internet Voting
www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/SIV-FINAL.pdf
Natalie Tennant Continues to Make the Case for Internet Voting http://www.govtech.com/e-government/Making-the-Case-for-Online-Voting.html
Officials with actual experience in Gujarat India reported in 2011, "we fended off 4,000 attempted hackings from Pakistan, Taiwan and even China." No votes were lost, changed, stolen, or extra votes added.
http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/e-voting-for-it-land/443583/
Alexander Trechsel on Internet voting successes – Swiss & Estonia, just as in India.
http://www.eui.eu/News/2013/02-12-InternetvotingasuccessintwoEuropeancountries.aspx
See my blog posts on this courageous public official –
Internet Voting Profile in Courage: Natalie Tennant
http://tinyurl.com/NT-Courage
Natalie Tennant is the victim of Cyber Bullying
http://internetvotingforall.blogspot.com/2011/11/cyber-bullying-in-connecticut.html
Kelleher's Account of Cyber Bullying in Connecticut Verified
http://grassrootsindependent.blogspot.com/2011/12/kellehers-account-of-cyber-bullying-in.html
On the History of Internet Voting in the USA, see the attached file.