

Official Comment (Mike Queen, Spokesman for WV Secretary of State Mac Warner):

In 2018, West Virginia led the nation in the use of technology to provide overseas and deployed military voters the ability to vote regardless of where they were in the world.

Just this week, a Department of Homeland Security CISA Hunt and Incident Response Team security assessment of the application used in the 2018 pilots was declassified in summary form and made publically available. According to the DHS assessment, no threat actor behaviors or artifacts of past nefarious activities were detected in the vendor's networks. Paper ballot audits on election day also confirmed the results were accurate, as intended by the voter, in the 2018 General Election pilot.

For the upcoming May 12, 2020 Primary Election, West Virginia has not yet selected an electronic ballot delivery or marking tool for use in the 2020 Primary or General elections. The West Virginia legislature has extended the availability of electronic ballot transmission and marking technology to certain West Virginia absentee voters living with physical disabilities. The law simply extends existing options that have been available to military and overseas voters for years under the Uniformed and Overseas Absentee Voting Act.

As technology advances to provide additional security and accessibility for the voters, the state's due diligence process regarding technology options and vendors also continues. It is our goal to maintain the integrity of our elections and voters' confidence in the results, while finding the most secure method available that allows every voter the opportunity to vote regardless of their physical disability or geographic location.

Secretary Warner and his team will make a decision prior to March 1st regarding the technology that we will prescribe for use in the May 2020 Primary Election. As we have done from the very start, our decision will be based on the best available information with a strong emphasis on security and accessibility.

We appreciate the responsible and ethical reporting of this research through the Department of Homeland Security by the research team at MIT. We also acknowledge that the technology's creator has valid responses to some of the researchers' claims. To best protect our elections as technology becomes more available and secure, public-private partnerships must work together to appropriately determine the most secure and accessible system available for overseas, military and voters living with physical disabilities.