



Clear Thinking about Statewide Voter Registration under HAVA

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Abstract

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) was written to address a variety of issues made prominent during the 2000 elections, including voting systems, statewide voter registration, provisional voting, support for persons with disabilities, and election administration. HAVA provides significant funding for development, implementation, and administration of statewide voter registration systems. State and local government elections officials seeking federal funding to implement a feature-rich, flexible and durable HAVA-compliant statewide voter registration system have a rare clean-slate opportunity and face significant challenges. This paper provides an overview of Quest's recommendations regarding statewide voter registration under HAVA.

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Overview

HAVA creates a rare opportunity to rebuild states' voter registration systems with a clean slate. Substantial funding is available to satisfy legislative, strategic, and technological objectives, and to set the course for a system that will require support and enhancements well past 2010.

With substantial funding, wide latitude, considerable risk, and abundant choices, success will demand significant vision and well-managed transformation.

Summary

To help states meet the challenges of voter registration under HAVA, this document provides:

- Background information regarding HAVA and voter registration;
- Analysis and coverage of issues that will affect elections officials now confronting new challenges with their systems and processes;
- Advice on approach, decision points, timing, tasks, and risks to consider;
- Explanation of the attributes of our solution;
- Recommendations on how a project is likely to occur and cost elements to consider.

Our Approach

Quest Information Systems is developing the first statewide voter registration solution specifically designed for the Help America Vote Act. Quest's experience in designing statewide motor vehicle and election systems enables us to deliver compliant, integrated, reliable, and high-value systems.

Our approach is to create a solid software foundation and then provide services to precisely tailor that software to the specific needs of each state. Doing so ensures that any state implementing the Quest solution will enjoy simplified implementation, lower overall cost, and maximum flexibility.

Since voter registration activity is widely distributed and local technical resources may be unavailable, we recommend a software architecture based on broadly-accepted Internet standards. Secure software usage is simplified using a browser and support is simplified with a centralized architecture.

Quest is partnering with Microsoft Corporation, which is providing technical and other resources, to build a HAVA-compliant solution using the best, most mainstream, and lowest-risk technologies.

About Quest

Quest Information Systems (www.questis.com) is a leading provider of mission-critical solutions to state and local governments. Quest has consolidated statewide voter registration data since 1996 and has developed web-based campaign finance reporting and publication systems for multiple states, as well as systems for state election management. Quest has played a significant role in development of statewide motor vehicles systems – a key integration requirement under HAVA.

Quest is a proud member of Microsoft's Partner organization, in which it has achieved Gold certification in eCommerce.

Scenario

Public Law 107-252, the “HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2002” (known as “HAVA”) was written:

“To establish a program to provide funds to States to replace punch card voting systems, to establish the Election Assistance Commission to assist in the administration of Federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain Federal election laws and programs, to establish minimum election administration standards for States and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections, and for other purposes.”

HAVA addresses a variety of elections-related issues, including: modernization of voting machines, accessibility for individuals with disabilities, voting research, protection and advocacy, mock elections for students and parents, and voting rights of military and overseas persons. It also sets requirements and provides funding for states to develop and implement statewide voter registration systems. Those requirements are the subject of this document.

Voter Registration Under HAVA: Primary Requirements

Title III of HAVA (UNIFORM AND NONDISCRIMINATORY ELECTION TECHNOLOGY AND ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS), Section 303 (COMPUTERIZED STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION LIST REQUIREMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTERS WHO REGISTER BY MAIL), instructs that states implement a “a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive computerized statewide voter registration list defined, maintained, and administered at the State level that contains the name and registration information of every legally registered voter in the State and assigns a unique identifier to each legally registered voter in the State”.

Section 303 goes on to spell out:

1. The computerized list shall serve as the single system for storing and managing the official list of registered voters throughout the State.
2. The computerized list contains the name and registration information of every legally registered voter in the State.
3. Under the computerized list, a unique identifier is assigned to each legally registered voter in the State.
4. The computerized list shall be coordinated with other agency databases within the State.
5. Any election official in the State, including any local election official, may obtain immediate electronic access to the information contained in the computerized list.
6. All voter registration information obtained by any local election official in the State shall be electronically entered into the computerized list on an expedited basis at the time the information is provided to the local official.
7. The chief State election official shall provide such support as may be required so that local election officials are able to enter information as described in clause (6).
8. The computerized list shall serve as the official voter registration list for the conduct of all elections for Federal office in the State.

Voters may only be removed from the rolls in accordance with the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

The Act mandates “adequate technological security measures to prevent the unauthorized access” and “provisions to ensure that voter registration records in the State are accurate and are updated regularly”.

HAVA also requires verification of voter registration information in the form of a valid driver’s license number. In the absence of a driver’s license, the last 4 digits of the applicant’s social security number are required. In the absence of both a driver’s license and a social security number, the State must have the capability to assign the applicant a number which will serve to identify the applicant for voter registration purposes.

To validate this information, the Act indicates that “The chief State election official and the official responsible for the State motor vehicle authority of a State shall enter into an agreement to match information in the database of the statewide voter registration system with information in the database of the motor vehicle authority to the extent required to enable each such official to verify the accuracy of the information provided on applications for voter registration.”

HAVA goes on to say that “The official responsible for the State motor vehicle authority shall enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Social Security ... for the purpose of verifying applicable information” and that “The Commissioner shall develop methods to verify the accuracy of information provided by the agency with respect to applications for voter registration, for whom the last 4 digits of a social security number are provided instead of a driver’s license number.”

To be able to vote, individuals who have registered to vote by mail or who have previously not voted for a Federal election in the jurisdiction will be required to provide proof of identification. Individuals who can not provide such proof or whose name does not appear on the official list of eligible voters for a polling place may cast a “provisional vote”, which must be validated before it can be counted. A free-access system (a toll-free phone number and/or a web site) must be established to allow individuals who cast provisional votes to discover if their vote was counted or, if not, the reason why not.

Voter Registration Under HAVA: Impact & Implications

HAVA requires statewide voter registration systems by January 1, 2004. States may request a waiver (“for good cause and including in the certification the reasons for the failure to meet such deadline”) to defer implementation to January 1, 2006. Most states will request this waiver.

Administration & Support

For many states (specifically for elections personnel), acquisition/development, implementation, and subsequent support of a complex software system on a statewide basis may be a new challenge. It is not one to be underestimated.

Since voter registration in most states has been conducted using PC-based county-level systems, each owned, managed, and supported by local elections officials, state-level elections personnel have been significantly insulated from operational issues and responsibilities. With a statewide system, all users of the system become the state’s responsibility. With even two or three users in each locality, the total number of system users will be significant. Each will require education, allocation of privileges, interaction on a variety of issues, and ongoing general administration. Care

must exercised to acquire or build a system that reduces administrative and supportive complexity, both functionally and technically.

Personal interaction, though highly prized by all involved, is expensive and may be prohibitive if not rationed carefully. While it goes with saying that the system must be intuitive as possible, it is important that it is complemented by copious online documentation. Significant strides have been made in the area of e-learning technologies, which make training easier to deliver and content easier to maintain. This can be of significant value when some may only use a system periodically or when turnover within the user community occurs with regularity.

In the 1990's most commercial software was PC-based, deployed on a "fat-client" that offered a highly responsive interface and was not constrained by network availability or low bandwidth. By 2000, a "thin-client" model became a best practice in new software development as software technologies deployed over networks using tools and standards from the Internet had matured to a level of readiness acceptable to support mission-critical applications.

In the near future, software built with components that run on the Internet (or on private networks that run like the Internet) will need to be available anytime, anywhere, and on any device. Systems built before use of the Internet was a serious consideration will be difficult, if not impossible to effectively adapt to these needs.

Long-Term Considerations

Though HAVA intends to commit unprecedented funding for new statewide systems, there are some risks that not all funding will be achieved. States should plan that no such similar funding will reappear in the foreseeable future. Systems acquired or developed for statewide voter registration must be built to survive and adapt within a planning horizon of at least ten years. Elections officials will live with (and pay to support and enhance) these systems well past 2010, with many states likely to use them past 2020.

While use of older or more esoteric information technologies may seem viable on the short-term, doing so creates significant risk looking five or more years into the future. As needs change, capabilities increase, new legislation is passed, and better processes are developed, any systems built for January 2006, must be flexible enough to reasonably accommodate enhancements. Scenarios accompanied by high ongoing costs must be avoided wherever possible.

Technology Issues

In the past, most software was built to satisfy functional and technical needs at a specific point in time. In the future, software will be built with integration and future modifications in mind. Software can no longer be developed in a vacuum. HAVA itself accurately recognizes the growing importance of systems integration (i.e. with agencies such as Motor Vehicles, Social Security, Human Services, Legal). The state-of-the-art in systems development is now to build systems in components, to position for enhancements and incorporation of new technologies, and to deploy in a multi-layered information technology architecture using standards that have become dominant through the rise of the Internet.

Government systems must be accessible to all citizens. The US Government's Section 508 requirements under 1998's Rehabilitation Act (see <http://www.section508.gov>) state that Federal agencies' electronic and information technology must be accessible to people with disabilities.

Finally, security of new systems – especially those as central to democracy as Voter Registration – is vital. Security issues include those that relate to usage on private networks or on the Internet, to policies and procedures, to availability of data or program code within those systems, to validity of information within the systems, to point-to-point encryption during transmission of data, to privileges within systems, and to the ability to change those privileges.

Choosing a Statewide Voter Registration Solution

Beyond legislative compliance, choosing (and subsequently implementing) the new systems will be complex and challenging, requiring a variety of experience and expertise.

Capitalize on this Rare Clean-Slate Opportunity

As “start-from-scratch” opportunities of this scale appear so infrequently, states that fail to act boldly and opportunistically based on the funding and direction that HAVA provides will miss a huge opportunity. Systems are commonly either funded from operations over long periods of time or are foregone in favor of incremental, evolutionary change – usually fraught with compromises and transitional challenges. The opportunities from HAVA to improve voter registration processes are quite special.

Careful analysis and strategic planning will be critical to success. Elections officials are encouraged to look beyond functional requirements and **clarify the State’s vision for implementation** of the voter registration system – over at least **10 years**:

- How much infrastructure will be required to support the system?
- Who will use the system? Where? When? How? On what devices?
- Who will support the system (technically and functionally)?
- Who will fund the ongoing maintenance of the system? How much will it cost?
- How often is the system likely to require enhancement? Who will do it and at what cost?
- How will technology updates be performed? How will new technologies be incorporated?
- What will be the annual budget to support the system?
- How will the new system fit into the state’s government-of-the-future? (i.e. a “citizen file” concept will likely be based on Voter Registration, Motor Vehicles, or Tax data)
- If the original provider of the system does not exist, who will provide assistance, when needed?

States should consider implementing disciplined **Risk Management** processes as soon as possible, including:

- gather a team to identify all potential risk areas and specific risks
- prioritize risks based on (a) likelihood, and (b) potential impact
- develop strategies to eliminate, mitigate, or accept each of the top risks, based on priority
- re-assess and revise the Risk Management Plan on a regular basis

Evaluate Alternatives from a Long-Term Perspective

While federal funding of HAVA has created a unique, one-time opportunity for states to rebuild their voter registration systems, it has also generated something of a feeding-frenzy among software developers and information technology service providers. States are advised to proceed with care and to maintain a long-term perspective on decisions related to new voter registration systems.

Many vendors of county-level voter registration software use older technologies, which present significant challenges for implementation and even greater challenges for future support and growth. When interacting with these companies, states should ask:

- How can a system built for county-level voter registration support statewide needs?
- How will the software interface with systems at other state agencies?
- Is the system scalable: can it grow and be customized and enhanced as future needs dictate?
- What future costs should be expected after the system has been implemented?
- How will the company survive after losing its county-level voter registration business?

In the face of an economy that is still challenging, the all-purpose “systems integrators” or “Big 6” consulting firms are understandably excited by the prospect of large pools of federal money. It is useful to understand that their underlying business objectives may not be well-aligned with the long-term interests of state governments. When interacting with these companies, states should ask:

- Can a company with a high cost structure provide significant value in a project such as this?
- How committed is the firm to the long-term elections needs of state governments?
- Can the state be assured that staff assigned to its project will be the firm’s “A team” of personnel, experienced with elections-related and government-related systems?
- How does the firm respond to ongoing concerns regarding Sarbanes-Oxley and potential conflicts of interest within the large consultancies?

Based on years of experience with state-level elections-related systems and information, Quest is building its HAVA-compliant voter registration solution from the ground-up. In all cases, states should ask:

- Was the solution that is being proposed built for statewide voter registration?
- Was the solution that is being proposed built to comply with HAVA?
- Were mainstream, future-oriented information technologies used to build the solution?
- Are the components of the system built to easily interface to systems in other state agencies?
- Who will own the system, once it has been implemented?
- Can state personnel collaborate to develop, implement, and support the new system?

Quest's Voter Registration Solution for HAVA (overview)

Quest Information Systems is developing the first solution specifically designed to meet the requirements of the Help America Vote Act. It is a comprehensive, feature-rich software application that will exceed the requirements of HAVA and will provide rich functionality to support the business processes of users at every level. The solution is specifically designed to interact with state motor vehicle and driver licensing systems as required by HAVA. Our experience and expertise in designing both motor vehicle and election systems will result in seamless integration with state DMV information stores by leveraging modern data sharing technologies and techniques.

This solution will be based upon state-of-the-art technology that is well-suited to the typical environment for implementing a statewide voter registration solution. Given the widely distributed nature of voter registration activity and lack of technical resources available locally to users, we have selected an architecture which will deliver the software utilizing a standard Internet browser. While the application will operate in a secure, private network, navigation will be simplified using browser technology. This architecture also simplifies support. Since the application is delivered via browser, the majority of the software is operating centrally and in only one location. This drastically reduces the support required at the local (user) level and facilitates instantaneous delivery of updates and enhancements to all users..

Our approach of building a solution foundation and then providing services to tailor the solution to the specific needs of each state, coupled with the use of web technologies, will ensure that any state implementing the Quest solution will have simplified implementation, lower overall cost and maximum flexibility to meet future requirements.

By taking advantage of the convergence of powerful, web based software tools and the unique “clean slate” opportunity afforded by HAVA, Quest will deliver a solution to the voter registration market that is precisely suited to the needs of each state.

Objectives

Quest's model for the delivery of a statewide HAVA compliant voter registration solution is based upon a proven approach of *services-on-software*. This approach utilizes a base solution which is designed to deliver all common functionality required under HAVA for each jurisdiction. This includes basic voter list management, as well as the additional functions required by each jurisdiction at the state or local level. Using this foundation, Quest will complete a requirements analysis with the users in a given jurisdiction to identify unique requirements and desirable features to clearly articulate the needs of that jurisdiction.

This approach results in a shorter and less expensive implementation cycle than a traditional custom development project while providing a custom solution to each jurisdiction. By applying services-on-software, we can ensure seamless integration with other systems required to interact with a HAVA Voter Registration System. In addition, because the solution is built upon standard, mainstream technologies and designed and implemented according to best practices in the software development industry, it can be easily supported and customized. This can be done under an ongoing Quest support agreement, internally by the IT staff of the agency, or by a qualified third party.

We believe the services-on-software approach delivers the greatest value by providing a comprehensive solution, tailored to the specific requirements that exist, at the lowest cost. This allows funds that might otherwise be needed to implement a compliant statewide voter registration system to be reallocated for other HAVA purposes, including replacement of obsolete voting systems or providing greater access to disadvantaged voters.

Capabilities

Quest has designed a statewide voter registration solution specifically to address the requirements and challenges of the Help America Vote Act. It provides a comprehensive set of functions and capabilities that will facilitate efficient management of the voter registration process. The technical architecture of the solution is designed to address the unique challenges of centrally managing voter registration data while ensuring the appropriate tools are available to registration officials at the local level.

Additionally, by applying services to pre-developed software components, Quest is able to leverage a deep understanding of the integration of required data from the driver licensing and motor vehicle agencies. Quest has designed and implemented a state-wide motor vehicle and driver solution for a major Midwestern state. We are active members of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and have a strong command of the issues facing the required integration of HAVA solutions with Motor Vehicle agencies. This is a key requirement of HAVA and will provide particular challenges to providers who do not understand this essential element of a successful HAVA compliant implementation.

The Quest solution is fully-featured and comprehensive – able to meet the needs of users at all levels. Built specifically for HAVA and developed using state-of-the-art, secure, web-based tools, the system can be delivered at lower cost than traditional client-server or decentralized solutions and includes the following functional modules:

- Voter Registration and Maintenance (required)
- Interface with NCOA and Address-Checking software
- Imaging and Scanning of documents
- Bar-Coding on reports and correspondence
- Street File Management and Jurisdictional Boundaries
- Absentee Voting
- Petition Processing
- Poll Resource Management
- Jurisdiction (County) Management
- Candidate Management
- Provisional Ballot Management

See Appendix 1 for more detail on each of these modules.

Advantages

The Quest solution was built specifically for HAVA and therefore will not require “force-fitting” to meet the needs of a jurisdiction. As such, it will provide centralized management of the system that is required by law, while delivering the functionality expected by local election officials, as required by the practical needs within their jobs.

The system is based entirely on standard Microsoft system development products. These tools represent the state-of-the-art and are the premier technologies available in the industry. They are:

- **Mainstream.** Using Microsoft tools and technologies the Quest solution is relying upon and leveraging the most widely-accepted technologies in the world. They will be supported by one of the largest and most successful companies in history. There will always be available technical and product enhancement support and a deep pool of development and support talent to ensure many years of operation and lower overall cost.
- **Reliable.** Microsoft technologies are the result of one of the largest research and development budgets in the world, supported by a global team of engineers and support personnel.
- **Low-risk.** By utilizing Microsoft technologies, overall project risk is much lower. The tools Quest uses are designed to work together and are supported by a single technology provider.

Quest use of web standards means future integration with new systems and device types will be simple and straightforward. In addition, overall deployment costs will be lower.

Unlike a PC-based solution, on which the software must run locally, Quest’s web-based architecture requires only that local computers support an Internet Browser; all software is executed at a central location, on one or more servers. This drastically reduces implementation and support costs. In most cases, the system will be deployed over a private (state) network. It is completely secure, combining the ease-of-use and simplified administration of an Internet application with the security and reliability of a locally-implemented solution.

This lower-cost implementation and support model is particularly relevant in a HAVA environment where federal dollars are available for initial deployment but are not guaranteed for ongoing support costs. An architecture based upon web tools will provide the most manageable cost model for the future, compared to more traditional solutions requiring local implementation and support of application software.

The system also features integrated documentation and Help features, which addresses a critical challenge presented by HAVA. Since in most instances, state election administrative bodies have not had a need to support a state-wide system, through simplified implementation and integrated help features the Quest solution provides a way to support widely dispersed users at a relatively low cost.

Finally, Quest’s services-on-software approach results in states getting full access to the software source code, resulting in significant flexibility if they choose to modify and self-support the system in the future.

Accessibility to Users with Disabilities

HAVA gives significant consideration to voters with disabilities. As such, any software developed for statewide voter registration should be similarly sensitive.

In its analysis of accessibility, the Worldwide Web Consortium (www.w3c.org) has noted that:

For those unfamiliar with accessibility issues pertaining to Web page design, consider that many users may be operating in contexts very different from your own:

- *They may not be able to see, hear, move, or may not be able to process some types of information easily or at all.*
- *They may have difficulty reading or comprehending text.*
- *They may not have or be able to use a keyboard or mouse.*
- *They may have a text-only screen, a small screen, or a slow Internet connection.*
- *They may not speak or understand fluently the language in which the document is written.*
- *They may be in a situation where their eyes, ears, or hands are busy or interfered with (e.g., driving to work, working in a loud environment, etc.).*
- *They may have an early version of a browser, a different browser entirely, a voice browser, or a different operating system.*

Content developers must consider these different situations during page design. While there are several situations to consider, each accessible design choice generally benefits several disability groups at once and the Web community as a whole. For example, by using style sheets to control font styles and eliminating the FONT element, HTML authors will have more control over their pages, make those pages more accessible to people with low vision, and by sharing the style sheets, will often shorten page download times for all users.

The W3C provides (a) a list of accessibility checkpoints that software developers are advised to consider to ensure broad accessibility and (b) three levels of priority with regard to these checkpoints:

- **Priority 1:** A Web content developer must satisfy this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it impossible to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint is a basic requirement for some groups to be able to use Web documents.
- **Priority 2:** Web content developer should satisfy this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it difficult to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint will remove significant barriers to accessing Web documents.
- **Priority 3:** A Web content developer may address this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it somewhat difficult to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint will improve access to Web documents.

Quest's statewide voter registration solution will satisfy all "Priority 1" checkpoints and will satisfy as many other checkpoints as possible. Quest uses the broadly-accepted "**Bobby**" software to ensure level "A" compliance. For more information, visit <http://bobby.watchfire.com>.

Project Execution & System Implementation

At a practical level, how the new system will be implemented to a large and diverse community of users is important to the specification, selection, and planning process. With hard deadlines and specific responsibilities, states must understand the processes by which a prospective partner will implement a new statewide voter registration system.

Following are highlights of the general approach Quest would recommend, with the caveat that the specific functional and technical needs of each state will almost certainly require creativity and flexibility. Note that these are top-level items and that detail is suppressed for purposes of this document.

- Analyze and document all of the state's unique requirements, including those of local elections officials who will participate in administration of the system.
- Publish requirements to all project stakeholders, to ensure consensus on details and priority.
- Map the slate of state-specific requirements to the requirements of HAVA and to the capabilities within the solution that has been selected.
- Define functional and technical components/enhancements needed to satisfy the requirements.
- Define integration requirements, interfaces (ex. other agencies), and processes.
- Quantify the work required to implement the exact solution.
- Identify resources available to work on the project. Understand the level of collaboration desired between the partner and the state. Determine if other partners (ex. local resources) are required to conduct the project. Identify if and, if so, when the state will take responsibility for the system.
- Develop a project plan and manage it over the web, such that it is visible to all stakeholders.
- Provide ongoing updates and regular status reports to all members of the elections community to ensure visibility and to promote support and enthusiasm for the new systems.
- Based on approved requirements, design the data, processes, software, infrastructure, documentation; update project plan; present to stakeholders for review and acceptance.
- Based on approved designs, proceed with development/implementation of the new system.
- Manage participation of elections personnel, state IT personnel, and participating partners within the development/implementation phase of the project.
- Conduct unit testing within the project team and with interfacing agencies.
- Provide education to testing teams and conduct system and acceptance testing.
- Coordinate implementation with information technology organizations at the state and in the jurisdictions where the system will be deployed (servers, desktops, infrastructure, support).
- Deliver "train-the-trainer" education, e-learning, and documentation to entire user community.

An expected timeline for statewide voter registration under HAVA is as follows:

Time Frame	Activities
2003 – Q3	Most states have completed (or are in the process of completing) their initial compliance plans, as required by HAVA to secure funding. Development of specifications to support a bid process follows.
2003 – Q4	Early states publish bid specifications, accept proposals, develop a short-list, review presentations by short-list bidders, and select a partner.
2004 – Q1	Early states complete contractual negotiations and begin their SWVR project.
2004 – Q2	Most of remaining states complete partner selection and begin contract process.
2004 – H2	Software development, integration, implementation. Infrastructure planning, implementation. Data conversion planning and development.
2005 – H1	System testing, pilots, education, roll-out. Implementation of administrative components and interfaces with other agencies. Data conversion testing.
2005 – H2	Implementation of user components. System stabilization and certification. Final data conversion and cut-over.

As previously noted, states seeking HAVA funding must have their statewide voter registration systems up and running by January 1, 2006.

Expected Investment

HAVA results in significant funding for new statewide voter registration systems in compliant states, but it is not specific about how this funding should be divided to support requirements. In addition, some risk exists that changing federal priorities will affect future funding. Finally, HAVA does not specifically allocate funding for future support of new voter registration systems, a cost that we expect to be substantial.

Though funding is significant and should be used to full advantage, Quest recommends that states take as conservative an approach as is practical in allocating funding to acquisition and/or development of statewide voter registration systems.

In the absence of state-specific requirements, it is inappropriate to generalize budgetary estimates, except to say that the cost of procurement, development and implementation in most states is expected to fall into a range of from 3-10 million dollars, depending on size and complexity.

Regardless of the partner selected, the primary cost areas for new system will be:

- Application software: software specifically related to voter registration
- System software: operating systems, databases, etc.
- Infrastructure: servers, desktop computers, printers, networks
- Systems development services: analysis, design, development, testing, documentation
- Implementation services: management, development & provision of training, roll-out
- Support: functional support, technical support, supplies (ex. special forms)

While quotations from providers with packaged solutions will be heavily reliant on more traditional software licensing models (ex. by number of users), more custom solutions will have significant components based on project effort (ex. staff hours and expenses).

Because of mandated interfacing requirements (Drivers License number, Social Security number) some custom work will be required in every project. Some states may elect to conduct this using internal resources, but we expect that most will engage an information technology partner with subject-matter knowledge that can be dedicated to the project.

Quest's Credentials

Quest Information Systems is a leading provider of mission-critical solutions to state and local governments. We have nearly 15 years of experience in meeting the specific business challenges faced by our clients.

Experience with statewide systems will be critical to success with new voter systems under HAVA. A provider of software solutions for business and government since 1989, Quest has consolidated statewide voter registration data since 1996 and has developed web-based campaign finance reporting and publication systems for multiple states, as well as systems for state election management. Quest has also played a significant role in development of statewide motor vehicles systems – a key integration requirement for statewide voter registration.

We are excited to partner with Microsoft Corporation, which is providing technical and other resources to help develop Quest's HAVA-compliant solutions. Quest is proud to have achieved elite Gold-Certification in eCommerce in Microsoft's Partner organization

In the area of election administration, we have provided state-wide voter data management services since 1996. Our experience in integrating and consolidating data from disparate county-level voter registration systems has given us a thorough understanding of the unique challenges of the voter registration environment.

In addition, we have designed and developed comprehensive business systems to manage the election process at the state level including ballot management, candidate filing qualification and tracking, election results reporting and election certification.

Further, we have designed, developed, implemented and supported web-based campaign finance reporting solutions for three different states. These solutions leverage the Quest services-on-software model by providing common sets of functions with services to complete a solution geared to meet the specific needs of each jurisdiction.

Quest is also a leader in the design and implementation of comprehensive solutions for Departments of Motor Vehicles. Quest has designed and developed a modern comprehensive solution to meet the needs of a state Motor Vehicle agency. In this project, we designed a new database centered on the customers instead of transactions. As a result, we have a command of the issues associated with managing driver data.

Our experience has given Quest clear perspective on the challenges and opportunities afforded by the Help America Vote Act. As a result, we have built a dedicated team specifically to address the HAVA marketplace. In addition, we have engaged at the national level through our participation and membership in the National Association of Secretaries of State.

We hope you will give us the opportunity to further discuss your state's voter registration needs and how Quest's software and services can help.

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Appendix 1: Quest's Voter Registration Solution for HAVA (detail)

To help states meet federal requirements, Quest's built-for-HAVA statewide voter registration solution consists of a foundation of core statewide voter registration components, designed to address primary functional and technical requirements, while allowing each state the flexibility to interface to other state agencies and to customize the system to meet its own specific requirements.

Using the best information technologies and embracing dominant standards from the Internet, Quest's statewide solution is being constructed for HAVA from the ground up; it is not derived from a PC-based county solution. It is intended to provide a highly-functional foundation: capable enough to provide cost-effectiveness and significant value, yet flexible enough to accommodate unique requirements in each state.

At its core, the system will satisfy the following primary requirements:

- A single, uniform, official, centralized interactive computerized statewide voter registration list that will serve as the official voter registration list for the conduct of all election for Federal office in the State.
- Serves as the single repository for storing and managing the official list of registered voters throughout the State.
- Contains the name and registration information of every legally registered voter in the State
- Assign a unique identifier for each registrant.
- Accessible to authorized election officials throughout the State via the Internet.
- Voter registration information obtained by any local election official in the State shall be electronically entered into the computerized list on an expedited basis at the time the information is provided to the local official.
- System will interface with other state agencies to obtain records on felony status and death. The names of ineligible voters shall be removed from the computerized list in accordance with State law.
- The system will have methods to verify the accuracy of information provided on voter registration applications in regards to driver's license numbers and/or the last four digits of the social security number.
- System will automatically check for duplicate voter registrations and notify involved county voter registration offices.
- Make a reasonable effort to remove registrants who are ineligible to vote from the official list consistent with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. Registrants who have not responded to a notice and have not voted in two consecutive general elections for Federal office shall be removed from the official list, except that no registrant may be removed solely by reason of failure to vote.

The approach that Quest has taken to provide states with a new voter registration and election management system is to develop several basic modules. While the Voter Registration module is

mandatory, the other available modules can be selected to match each state's requirements and budget.

Though it has many of the advantages of a "packaged" solution, it is not. Quest will work with each State to define and meet all functional and technical requirements. Each module will be customized to meet the individual needs of the State. Modules not selected for the original implementation can be added later. All modules will interact with each other and information from one module is available for use by the others.

Available modules:

- Voter Registration (required)
- Interface with NCOA and Address-Checking Software
- Imaging and Scanning of Documents
- Bar Code on Reports and Correspondence
- Street File Management and Jurisdictional Boundaries
- Absentee Voting
- Petition Processing
- Poll Resource Management
- Jurisdiction (County) Management
- Candidate Management
- Provisional Ballot Management

Quest also provides software development services, which may be used for needs such as:

- Public website for provisional voters using their DLN, SSN or number assigned to provisional ballot to check the status of their vote.
- Public website for voters using their DLN, SSN, or address information to inquire on polling places and county registration office information.
- Public website that displays county and state office and election information.
- Provide software to interface with voting equipment software to automatically capture and report vote totals or other information

The following standard features will be implemented in all modules:

Change Management

- All changes to data will be tracked and available for inquiry. Information includes the change itself, who made it, and the date and time it occurred.

Security

- System will provide a security management system that allows authorized county staff to act as security managers to control access and privileges for county users based on assigned user roles (update, view only, view confidential information, extract information, etc.).
- County officials will only be allowed to maintain their county's registrations, but will be allowed to view information in the statewide file.
- Ability to flag voter record as confidential and suppress residential address and phone number from printed reports and public inquiry.
- Ability to suppress sensitive data (SSN) on screens, reports and extracts.

Validation

- Standard validation of dates, numeric fields and required fields.
- Clear and useful error and warning messages.
- Confirmation notification for deletion of information and removal of voter registrations.

Online Help

- Provide tool tips on all fields.
- Provide easily accessible online help information.

Reporting

- Appropriate printed reports for each module to satisfy legal and functional needs.

Module Features

Following is a summary of the functionality that is standard within each of the available modules. Note that each module is intended to be customized to match the specific requirements of each State.

Voter Registration and Maintenance

The Voter Registration module is the core of the system and is required.

- Store all voter registration information required by State. Includes (but not limited to): first name, middle initial, last name, surname, legal/residential address, mailing address, date of birth, county, drivers license and/or social security number (last four digits).
- Easily update voter registration records and track all changes.
- Postcard or letter template to customize printing of correspondence required for voter registration (voter registration/notification, request for more information due to invalid data on registration application, notification of possible duplicate registration, non-activity, precinct changes, etc.)
- Track registrations that require notifications (new, invalid or rejected, and possible duplicates). The user determines the actual processing of the notifications. Options for processing include: print postcard or letter, extract mailing information, print mailing labels, or any combination.
- Flexible selection to create a mailing list for other notifications. Examples include creation of list of voters in a specified precinct whose polling location has changed or creation of list of voters who have not had activity for two years. Options for processing include: print postcard or letter, extract mailing information, print mailing labels or any combination.
- Tracking of correspondence mailed to a voter, including date mailed, whether response is required and any responses received.
- A process is provided that will assist in changing the status of voters who fail to respond to a confirmation mailing with NVRA time limit. The user will be provided with an online list of these voters. The suggested changes can be accepted or rejected in total or on an individual basis. System will track the reason of the status change.
- System will provide a process that complies with the requirements of NVRA to “purge” notified inactive voters that have no activity after two general elections. The user will be provided with an online list of these voters. The suggested changes can be accepted or rejected in total or on an individual basis. System will track the reason of the status change.
- Ability to find voters utilizing a combination of criteria. Including full or partial name, address, date of birth, DLN, SSN, status, precinct. Search provides options for parameters of: equal to, begins with, ends with, or contains. Also provides option to search only county voters or search entire statewide database.
- Main registration form will provide easy links to view complete voter maintenance history, voting history and correspondence history. If imaging module is implemented, link to available images will also be available.

- Updates found during interface with state agencies for records on felony status and records on death will be treated as “pending” changes. The county registration officials will have option to accept or reject the changes.
- New registrations from the state’s motor vehicle agency will be written to a “pending” file to be reviewed by county registration offices. These can be accepted or rejected based on individual county requirements (for example, receipt of signed forms).
- System will identify possible duplicate voters by matching name, date of birth and other available information (DLN or SSN). Voter registration records will be marked as possible duplicates until resolved.
- Capability to “merge” two or more voter registration records (including voter history, change history, etc.) into a single registration. Also provides a method to “un-merge” – useful for registrations that are determined to be duplicates.
- Option to enter parsed residential address fields: house number, house fraction, house number suffix, directional code, street name, street type, post directional code, apartment or space number, unit type, city, state, zip, and zip + four.
- Entry of free-form comments attached to each registration.
- Automatically activate registered under-age voters.
- Create and print polling books that can be split based on letter ranges. Indicate to poll workers the need for additional identification for first time mail in voters and previously registered voters with missing information (DLN or SSN). If using bar code module, the bar code will also be printed.
- Provide an easy method to update voting history by entering the unique voter ID, or scanning bar code on report.
- Provide a method to extract specified information to various formats to provide information to outside agencies (political parties, judicial districts). Security levels will be used to determine what data may be extracted. County users will only be able to extract their counties information, while State level users will be able to extract all information.

Interface with NCOA and Address Checking software

- Provide the capability to interface with an NCOA service. Quest can recommend service providers or modify application to interface with a State selected service. Registration officials will be notified of possible changes and given the option to accept or reject.
- Provide the option to mark these registrations to receive a notification to be mailed to voters.
- An interface to address verification software that helps validate and standardize addresses will also be provided. Quest can recommend a service provider or modify the software to interface to a State-selected service.
- These services can also be utilized during the conversion of existing registration records to help cleanse existing data.

Imaging and Scanning of documents

- Provide a means to attach scanned documents and signatures to registration records.
- Quest can recommend a provider of imaging software or interface to existing systems.
- If scanned signatures are available, the system will provide the capability to display it on selected forms and print it on desired reports.

Bar Coding on poll lists, reports, and correspondence

- Print bar code on reports and correspondence.
- Quest can recommend bar code reading equipment or modify application to existing scanners.

Street File Management and Jurisdictional Boundaries

- Provide compatibility with a precinct-locator street address file structure that ensures compliance with USPS addresses.
- Provide interfaces to commercially available GIS software.
- Quest can recommend available GIS software or modify to interface with existing software.
- Process to automatically assign registered voters to correct precincts, districts, etc.
- Provide a method to reassign jurisdictional boundaries and update affected voters. Mark voters to receive a change notification, if necessary.

Absentee Voting

- Track absentee ballot applications including request date, mailing date, ballot return date and alternate mailing address.
- Validate registrant's precinct and political party against election criteria.
- Record ballot type to be mailed.
- Process to create and print mailing labels (or extract information) that contain bar coding, name, address, ballot type and political party if needed.

- Allow only one ballot per voter per election.
- Provide method to link registrants to nursing home and other specified locations. System will provide mechanisms to maintain a nursing home location master.
- Absentee requests will be indicated on polling list to indicate if a voter has requested an absentee ballot.

Petition Processing

- Petition master file information will support requirements for validation of signatures.
- Allows for retrieval of voter information by name and/or address. If the imaging module is used, display the voter signature.
- System will validate petition entry for duplicates, cancelled, deceased, or voters who are not registered in required precincts/districts. These entries will remain on the list, but will be marked as invalid, with the reason.
- Users can mark entries as invalid and indicate reason for rejection. These reasons will be maintained on a user-defined table to allow for flexibility in descriptive text.
- Display a running total of valid entries and invalid entries and provide a method to indicate that the required number of entries has been reached.
- If an inactive voter signs a petition, an option will be available to re-activate the voter.

Poll Resource Management

- Maintain all necessary information about all poll locations.
- Record information about polling place accessibility and survey information.
- Create notifications (or extract information) to voters in precinct of polling location changes (temporary or permanent).
- Provide web interfaces for voters to search for polling place information.
- Provide the capability to maintain all information required for poll workers (name, address, polling place assignment, training record, etc.).
- Create notifications to poll workers of their assignments.

County/Jurisdiction Management

- Provide method to maintain information for all county voter registration locations, state election offices and related personnel. Includes: county name, county id, contact information, address, email address, phone and fax numbers, hours of operation, etc.
- Allow emailing of messages to selected counties, or broadcast a message to all locations. Also create mailing labels from information.
- Each county will be responsible for making updates to their information.
- Provide maintenance of State Election Office information.

Candidate Management

- Produce a calendar of election dates and deadlines.
- Provide methods to maintain information on offices to be elected during the election cycle.
- Capture and maintain required candidate information.

Provisional Ballot Management

- Maintain parameters, rules, and other information regarding provisional ballots.
- Processes for validating (by checking against statewide file) will be available.
- Provisional ballots will be accepted or rejected. The system will record a table-driven, user-defined reason for rejection, with a free-form comment area.
- Support phone and web access for provisional voters to check the status of their ballot.

Appendix 2: Related Information

HAVA Resources

Because of HAVA's nationwide applicability, because of the variety of issues covered, and because information technology is central to the initiatives, there is a wealth of information on the Internet that state officials will find valuable. Following are links to sites that have been helpful to us at Quest.

Useful Web Sites

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:HR03295:TOM:/bss/d107query.html>

<http://www.fec.gov/hava/hava.htm>

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/hava/hava.html>

<http://www.nass.org/electioninfo/HAVApage.htm>

<http://www.electionline.org/index.jsp>

http://www.electionline.org/site/docs/pdf/hava_information_central.pdf

<http://www.reformelections.org>

<http://www.demos-usa.org/demos/hava>

<http://www.civilrights.org/issues/voting>

<http://www.lwv.org/voter/index.html>

<http://www.aapd.com/dvpmain/newdvpindex.html>

<http://www.aamva.org/egov/index.asp>

http://www.nga.org/center/divisions/1,1188,C_ISSUE_BRIEF%5ED_5151,00.html

<http://128.104.192.129/taproject/hava/resources.html>

<http://www.microsoft.com/enable>

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserver2003/default.msp>

<http://www.section508.gov>

<http://bobby.watchfire.com>