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MEMORANDUM

January 23, 2009

To: The Hon. Joe Miklosi, House of Representatives, Colorado

From: Steve Excell, Assistant Secretary of State

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Excell".

Subject: Washington State's Online Voter Registration Experience

Following up on our phone conversation, I will try to outline Washington's experience with online voter registration. First, I will jump to the punchline: Online voter registration is very popular with our voters and with our elections officials. Our launch was also a technological success story.

Washington State became the second state in the nation to provide online voter registration to its voters – following Arizona's Internet registration system, EZ Voter, which allows Arizonans to register online at a web site maintained by ServiceArizona, the same company that runs the state's online automobile registrations.

Our measure was supported by our 39 County Auditors, elected from both major political parties, who serve as our local election officials. The primary benefit for them is that their staffs no longer need to key in data from a large number of paper voter registration forms nor do they need to scan each voter's signature.

Our County Auditors served on an advisory committee that helped us develop our statewide voter registration database and the modules which were developed later like our online voter registration feature. Avoiding the keying in of data, or re-keying data multiple times, was a goal they set forth early in our project planning. The record-setting Presidential election year we just had really showed how online voter registration can benefit election workers statewide when they are extremely busy with other aspects of conducting a major election.

From when we turned on our online voter registration, January 7, 2008, through Christmas Day, 2008, we had a little over 158,000 online transactions – about 28% of our 2008 applications. This percentage was achieved with no publicity or marketing – just word-of-mouth and various web sites linking to our online voter registration page.

During that timeframe, we also had nearly 50,000 "address change" transactions come in on MyVote, a personalized voter web page, and about 153,000 electronic "motor voter" registrations from our Department of Licensing that move into the same county processing modules as the online voter registration info packets. We had about 250,000 paper registration forms during the same period.

Had we done some marketing (and we did almost none), we would have probably achieved the initial success that Arizona did:

- 70% of all registrations in Arizona are now being done on line.
- 250,000 registrations were processed in 2004
- 400,000 registrations were processed in 2006
- Arizona saw 9.5% increase in registrations from 2002 to 2004 after implementing OLR.
- Arizona had 21,400 people register in one day, the last day for registration before 2004

From the web logs, only about one person in twenty or twenty-five appeared to have encountered any problems (registering twice, backing out of the transaction, etc.). This is on par with our web metrics for most other interactive pages on our agency web site.

Our online voter registration page is at:

<http://wei.secstate.wa.gov/osos/secure/Pages/OnlineVoterRegistration.aspx>

Our online voter registration bill was House Bill 1528. It passed in 2007. A copy is attached to this memo. The measure had broad bi-partisan sponsorship and passed both houses of our Legislature with impressive margins.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to call me.