SECURING UTAH'S
ELECTIONS

VOTER REGISTRATION

Voter registration is the gateway through which citizens pass in order to participate in elections. Utah uses a statewide voter registration database that is maintained by the Lt. Governor's Office. Voter rolls are rigorously maintained throughout the year to ensure that the list is accurate and up to date.

VOTING EQUIPMENT, BALLOT SCANNERS, AND TABULATION

Utah uses equipment that is certified by the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC). Equipment that is used to scan ballots or tabulate votes has NEVER been connected to the Internet and never will be. Any updates that are made to this equipment must be certified by the EAC and manually loaded on the equipment.

BALLOT PROCESSING

Ballots that are turned in to the clerks office, either by mail or through a drop box, are accounted for and carefully processed. A direct chain of custody is maintained throughout the process and ballots are never handled by any one individual.

UTAH ELECTIONS RISK: VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

During registration, voters must provide a driver's license or the last four numbers of their social security number. Clerks verify these numbers with the driver's license database. Voters must have a valid Utah driver's license in order to register online. The voter registration system searches statewide to identify possible duplicates. This search is performed weekly before ballots are mailed.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Clerk office staff verify the age of each voter at the time of registration. Voters under 18 can pre-register to vote, but they are not mailed a ballot nor allowed to vote until then.

Before voters are registered, Clerk staff validate the driver's license number or the last four of the social security number. Voters also sign an affidavit certifying their age and citizenship. There are severe penalties for non-citizens who try to vote or register to vote, including permanent inability to gain citizenship.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Voter records are automatically updated when a voter obtains or renews their driver's license or when they change their driver's license address. Election offices use the National Change of Address database to identify voters who have moved. They inactivate voters who have not updated their address or who had mail returned as undeliverable. Inactive voters must verify or update their address before receiving a ballot. Ballots are mailed only to active voters.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

The Office of Vital Records and Statistics sends counties a weekly update and deceased are removed from the rolls. If a ballot was mailed out before the voter passed away, that ballot is deactivated so that it cannot be voted.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Clerks validate every voter's address through a mapping service and assign a voting precinct. Entire precincts can be plotted out on a map to identify outliers or voters who are in the wrong precinct.

RISK

- Can voters register under fake names, multiple times, on behalf of other people, or register their pets?
- Can ineligible persons or non-citizens register to vote?
- What if voters move without updating their address?
- Can dead people register to vote and cast a ballot?
- Can voters be assigned to the wrong precinct?

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL CONTROLS: The Lt. Governor's Office should create an audit policy (Addendum A) and regularly audit random voter registration records each month according to the established policy. The Lt. Governor's Office will then provide a report to the clerk of any exceptions or corrections.

The clerk should amend the state audit report for the canvass to include a statement certifying the voter rolls were property maintained according to the law, administrative rules, and county procedures since the last election.

UTAH ELECTIONS RISK: BALLOT SECURITY AND PROCESSING

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Every by-mail ballot is assigned a unique control number (barcode) that is associated with a voter. When a by-mail ballot is received, the scanner reads that barcode and matches it to the assigned voter to verify that they have not already voted.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Ballots are addressed to a specific voter and contain an affidavit that, unless it is signed, the vote will not count.

Signature training is required for each election and developed in conjunction with handwriting experts and law enforcement. The signature on each envelope is reviewed up to three times and matched against known signatures from the voter. Each voter record contains up to five signatures.

If the clerk office staff challenges a ballot signature (signature doesn't match, unsigned, etc.), the voter will be sent notification and affidavit for correction. The affidavit requires a driver's license number or the last four digits of the social security number and a signature for the ballot to be counted.

Before Clerks certify the election, we conduct a public audit of a random sample of one percent of all signatures.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Ballot processing occurs in a public area under the care of at least two trained election workers that have sworn an oath.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Ballot secrecy is a Utah Constitutional right. Ballots remain sealed in their envelope until elections office staff review the signature and remove all personally-identifying information. After this process, the individual ballot cannot be traced back to the voter, thus protecting a voter's right to a secret ballot.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Envelopes contain an intelligent scannable mail barcode that allows for tracking.

Voters can sign up for informed delivery, which sends an email each morning with scanned images of their mail. Voters may return their ballot by mail or at a secure ballot dropbox. Voters can check the status of their ballot at any time by going to vote.utah.gov.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Ballots received in the elections office are logged in and assigned to batches. The ballots are accounted for and reconciled throughout the process to ensure that no ballots are removed or added at any time. A video of the process can be viewed here: https://bit.ly/utvbm

RISK

- Can voters have more than one ballot counted?
- Does my vote remain secret?
- Could someone vote another person's ballot?
- I'm concerned the post office will mishandle or potentially manipulate my ballot.
- Can election workers interfere with the election by altering the markings on a ballot?
- Could ballots be lost or fake ballots added to the results?

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS OR REVIEW: Counties must create documented policies demonstrating strong controls to govern ballot processing. These controls need to protect a voter's right to a secret ballot, ensure that each voter can only cast one ballot, and ensure the ballot chain of custody integrity throughout each step of ballot processing.

UTAH ELECTIONS RISK:
VOTING EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Before any vote tabulation, each piece of election equipment is thoroughly tested internally and in a publicly noticed Logic and Accuracy test.

A test deck, or pre-voted set of test ballots, is created with marks for each candidate. The equipment processes and tabulates these test ballots. Clerk staff then compare the predetermined results with the tabulated results to ensure perfect accuracy.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Election equipment is NEVER connected to the Internet.

Clerk staff detects and prevents unauthorized access of scanners used at polling places with multiple digital and physical security layers, including tamper-evident election seals and human observation.

Only trained and authorized personnel have physical access to voting equipment.

RISK

Can voting equipment not be set up correctly, or may it be configured to favor a specific candidate?

Can the Vote Tabulation Equipment be hacked or manipulated?

Can election workers manipulate ballots or vote counts?

Can equipment manipulate or incorrectly count or tabulate votes?

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Clerk staff process the ballots using a minimum of two trained election workers who have sworn an oath to process the ballots with integrity. Ballot processing is always done within view of the public, with strict controls and audits throughout the process . Results are never compiled or viewed until after the polls close on election night.

EXISTING SAFEGUARDS

Before the certification of an election, in a public meeting, clerk staff conduct an audit of a random sample of all ballots cast. During the audit, they manually review and compare the audited ballots to the system tabulated record to ensure the accuracy of the equipment. The audit results are public records reported to the Board of Canvassers and the Lieutenant Governor's Office.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS OR REVIEW: We recommend County Clerks notify the Lieutenant Governor's Office of the public demonstration and post-election audit. The Lieutenant Governor's Office shall attend without notice a number of these events to provide an independent review of the processes.