Resolution committing the City and County of San Francisco to work with other jurisdictions and organizations to create new voting systems using open source software; and to study the feasibility of the City and County of San Francisco developing and using a new voting system, either whole or in part, through a collaborative model like the Los Angeles County Voting Systems Assessment Project.

WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco holds it in the interest of its citizens to conduct efficient and accurate elections in a manner which promotes public trust in the integrity of every aspect of the elections process; and

WHEREAS, Transparency in the recording, collection, transmission, aggregation and tally of votes promotes public confidence in the integrity of elections; and

WHEREAS, A growing number of government leaders, good government groups, citizens, and media reports have questioned the value and integrity of the existing, limited choices of voting systems certified for use in conducting elections; and

WHEREAS, A limited number of vendors dominate the voting systems marketplace, reducing incentives to innovate, and their refusal to make public their voting system software and hardware designs conflicts with the goal of election transparency; and

WHEREAS, In order to address these issues, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on November 18, 2008, adopted Ordinance No. 268-08, File No. 081227, amending the Administrative Code by adding Sections 5.400-410 to establish a Voting Systems Task Force comprised of individuals with backgrounds in good government, computer science or the computer industry, election administration, and accommodations of persons with disabilities, to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors about voting system standards, design.
and development; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Ordinance No. 268-08, the San Francisco Voting Systems
Task Force was created to provide the City with recommendations on: standards and
guidelines for development and acquisition of voting systems; methods for acquiring voting
systems in conformity with federal, state and municipal laws; models for the development of a
voting system; business models, including the City and County of San Francisco acting as its
own vendor, which promote transparency; and any other issues related to voting systems
which will engender public trust in the elections processes of the City and County of San
Francisco; and

WHEREAS, In June 2011, “Recommendations on Voting Systems for the City and
County of San Francisco – A Report by the San Francisco Voting Systems Task Force
(VSTF)” was completed, in which the VSTF recommended that San Francisco advocate with
the California Secretary of State and the State legislature for a new, comprehensive state
certification process to replace the existing requirement for federal certification; and

WHEREAS, California Governor Jerry Brown on October 5, 2013, approved California
Senate Bill No. 360 amending the California Elections Code to create a comprehensive state
certification process and adding a new Section 19006 to the Elections Code stating the intent
of the Legislature that:

(a) All voting systems be certified or conditionally approved by the Secretary of State,
independent of voluntary federal qualification or certification, before they are used in
future elections to ensure that the voting systems have the ability to meet accuracy,
accessibility, and security standards.

(b) The Secretary of State adopt and publish testing standards that meet or exceed
federal voluntary standards set by the United States Election Assistance Commission
or its successor agency.
The Secretary of State study and encourage the development of voting systems
that use nonproprietary source code and that are easy to audit.
A local jurisdiction may use available public funds to purchase and maintain any
certified or conditionally approved voting system or part of a voting system.
California receives the benefits of the publicly funded development of a
nonproprietary voting system in the state.
A local jurisdiction may use available public funds to research and develop a
nonproprietary voting system that uses disclosed source codes, including the
manufacture of a limited number of voting system units, for use in a pilot program or for
submission to the Secretary of State for certification; and
WHEREAS, The VSTF in its June 2011 report also recommended that:
the San Francisco Department of Elections give strong preference to a voting
system licensing structure that gives San Francisco all of the rights provided by a
license approved by the Open Source Initiative, a global non-profit that supports and
promotes the open source movement ("OSI-approved license"), even if the system is
maintained by an external party.
San Francisco work with other jurisdictions and organizations, if an open source
model is used, to develop and manage the code-base in order to leverage additional
resources and expertise, and participate during the requirements gathering stage of
development so that its unique requirements can be incorporated into the system
design and implementation.
San Francisco be an active participant in the movement toward more open and
transparent voting systems, acknowledging the complexity of moving from the existing
marketplace toward more innovative voting systems; urging San Francisco to move
steadily toward the goal of transparency—even if it must do so in incremental steps;
encouraging the City to be a strong advocate in the private sector marketplace for more
transparent systems and to be open as well to new collaborative development models;

and

WHEREAS, The Los Angeles County Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) is a
collaborative project to design and implement a new voting system that was launched by the
Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and is a project that San Francisco
officials can learn from; and

WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco recognizes that development and
certification of these systems will entail substantial investment, but by pooling resources from
other jurisdictions and organizations, the cost to each participant can be reduced; now,
therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco supports the movement
toward more open and transparent voting systems and the creation of new voting systems
using open source software and inexpensive commodity components; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors requests that the Local Agency
Formation Commission conduct a study of the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the City
and County of San Francisco leading an effort to develop and use a new voting system, either
whole or in part, through a collaborative model, and which includes researching and
presenting options for structuring such a development project, as well as reviewing the work
of the Los Angeles Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) and its process of voting
system design and acting as its own vendor, as a model for San Francisco in its pursuit of
transparent, secure and fair elections.