

## **Obamacare's failed tech firm to build CA voter registration database**

By Ellen Swensen on November 12, 2013

*Vendor selection raises questions concerning propriety of award.*

Few voters know that California is the only state in the nation without a federally-required centralized state-wide voter registration database, as mandated in 2002 by the federal government's Help America Vote Act. What they also don't know is that the state has now hired a questionable firm to build that database.

In 2005, California negotiated a memorandum of agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice that allowed the required new database to be delayed if the state met certain "interim" terms in managing its voter lists. This "interim solution" is a messy combination of 58 independent county databases. Despite the fact that California is a hotbed of technology, this "interim" database uses 1993 software and an outdated architecture, which have not been effectively updated. The "new and improved" state database (VoteCal), is not slated for launch until mid 2016.

**March 2013 Secretary of State hires a contractor: Failed ObamaCare tech firm CGI!** EIP has learned that the contract to build the new HAVA compliant VoteCal database has been awarded to CGI Technologies and Solutions, a part of the same company as CGI Federal, the tech firm that built most of the failed Healthcare.gov website. Like the ObamaCare contract, CGI was awarded the project with no competition. In the latter case, because the RFP financial requirements for vendors were so demanding that only CGI was determined to be qualified. Lack of competitive bids may also explain why the contract price more than doubled since an earlier, failed attempt to build VoteCal in 2009-2010. California Technology Agency has rightly complained about lack of VoteCal vendor competition, stating that "competition is paramount to achieving effective information technology solutions". And State Auditor Elaine Howell said in her August 8, 2013 audit of the Secretary of State office that limited competition "raises concerns for future success" of VoteCal.

### **No centralized voter registration database means chaos in our voter rolls and enables voter**

**fraud.** Lacking a single, centralized voter registration database means that the state cannot easily identify and clear up anomalies such as duplicated and deceased registrants and those that have relocated. And, the ability to check for voters registered in more than one county is nearly impossible. This means that tens of thousands of illegitimate registrations remain on the rolls. Because California has no voter ID, these anomalies create opportunities for voter impersonation. In Los Angeles County alone, EIP identified over 35,000 registrants that appear to be registered more than once and over 15,000 that appear to be deceased. Of these, hundreds appear to have voted more than once or after date of death.

**Will California voters ever get relief?!** California desperately needs a quality central voter registration database. Years of delays, followed by awarding essentially a "one-bid" contract to the firm that flubbed the Obamacare site begs the question: Do Sacramento politicians somehow benefit from the status quo of poorly managed voter rolls and is the new VoteCal system being designed to fail?