To the Northampton County Council members,

The county administration presented informational materials to bolster their contention that buying the ES&S ExpressVote XL system was the best option for Northampton County. As I mentioned during the last council meeting, I found much of the information, particularly the costs, greatly misleading. A report with more realistic calculations is attached, along with two final tally sheets and the Clear Ballot proposed contract for Northampton County.

The County Council should be concerned that the Election Commission relied on this incorrect information when making their decision and not an independent assessment. As my report shows, the Clear Ballot system does not cost over $1.2 million more than the ES&S system over 10 years (before additional negotiation with ES&S), it costs $1.2 million less. The administration's **final negotiated totals** show Clear Ballot's cost projections as double what they actually are, instead of nearly $1 million less than those for ES&S.

The following report with more realistic calculations is attached, along with two final tally sheets and the Clear Ballot proposed contract for Northampton County.

Please don't hesitate to contact me anytime if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Janis Hobbs-Pellechio, president, SAVE Bucks Votes ("Secure, Accurate, Verifiable Elections")

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Go to www.SAVEBucksVotes.org for more detailed information on the most important criteria to use (according to cybersecurity and election experts) when choosing the best voting system. You can also compare how all the voting systems available meet or fail to meet those criteria on "The Solution" page.

Explanation of Revised Cost Projection Estimates for Clear Ballot

Paper: $440,166 (original estimate $1,130,000)

A common misconception is that the Pennsylvania Election Code requires pre-printing ballots for 110% of registered voters. Section 1007 says that the county "shall provide for" 50 ballots for 45 registered voters. It is intended to make sure that ballots do not run out. When it was written in 1937, extra paper ballots needed to be pre-printed because printing was a time and labor intensive process which required manual typesetting. Photocopiers, computer desktop publishing, and personal printers were invented decades later.

In the modern era, counties have easier ways to "provide for" enough ballots. Many counties, such as Lancaster and Montgomery, purchase a ballot-on-demand printer (around $5,000). This video shows the Lebanon County Election Director saying that the Dept. of State gave them approval to use a ballot-on-demand printer (at 8:42): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRlyGGuepgk&feature=youtu.be&t=522. In addition, any polling place equipped with a ballot marking device from Clear Ballot or Hart Intercivic can print additional unmarked ballots on demand using blank paper; any places using ES&S or the other vendors cannot.

A better guideline for pre-printing paper ballots is to calculate an average of the previous three comparable elections plus 10%. This is a recommendation in the 2018 PA Senate commissioned JSGC Report on Voting Technology and the basis of proposed PA Senate Bill 418.

Calculations of averaging comparable 10 years of Presidential, midterm and municipal votes in general and primary elections is too long to lay out here, but I can bring or send a separate printed report for any who wish to review it. The 10 year estimate is 1,143,290 ballots. 110% would be 1,257,619 ballots.

Ballot cost (highest estimate) is $0.35 each. A 2016 invoice shows that Chester County purchased 390,000 ballots from ES&S for $0.28 each.

If Northampton paid the higher price:

$0.35 x 1,257,619 ballots = $440,166. (Lower price @ .$0.28/ballot = $352,133)

Additional Scanners: $0 (original estimate $627,000)

The Clear Ballot proposal includes 170 optical scanners and 170 ballot marking devices. This is 17 spare optical scanners and 17 spare ballot marking devices. Most counties have been purchasing 5-10 extra optical scanners so 17 are more than enough. No additional scanners need to be purchased.

Privacy Voting Booths: $18,360 to $88,128 (original estimate $600,000)

The Clear Ballot proposal already includes privacy voting booths for the 170 ballot marking devices. The only additional purchase would be for privacy booths for hand-marking ballots, either free-standing or table-top.

Lawrence County is purchasing 260 Poll Master II regular voting booths (first image) for $144 each to use in 75 precincts (3.5 booths/precinct). http://www.ncnewsonline.com/news/county-oks-buying-voting-booths/article_43251ba3-f32f-5f93-999d-82bd1f44fa3f.html. The average is $504 per precinct.

If Northampton used the Lawrence County model: 153 precincts x 4 booths @ $144 = $88,128

Montgomery County is purchasing 5 privacy screens for each precinct: 2 will be free-standing cardboard (second image), 3 will be table-top plastic screens (third image). PrintElect sells the free-standing cardboard booth for $30 each and the table-top plastic screen for $20 each. There are less expensive options available. [https://www.printelect.com/shop/index.php/voting-booths-and-accessories/voter-s-choice-voting-booths-and-accessories] The average is $120 per precinct.

If Northampton used the Montgomery County model:
153 precincts x (2 booths @ $30 + 3 booths @ $20) = $18,360

Pens: $0 to $12,240 (original estimate $30,000)

Optical scanners can read the marks made from nearly any kind of pen. Montgomery County will be using regular Sharpies (Amazon: 12 for $8, $0.66/pen) and is planning to provide 2 boxes per precinct ($16). Monroe County says William Penn Printing Company includes all the pens they need for **free** when they order their election supplies.

Each of the 3-5 privacy booths needs one pen, plus spares. 12-24 pens per precinct is more than enough.
If Northampton buys 1 new box per precinct each year: 153 precincts x 1 box @ $8 x 10 years = $12,240

Printer Ink (ADA): $25,245 (original estimate $160,000)

Clear Ballot printers use commercially available printer toner. The Brother Laser Printer (HL-L2340DW) shown in the Clear Ballot proposal has an official toner cartridge that costs $55 on Amazon [https://www.amazon.com/Brother-Cartridge-TN660-Replacement-Replenishment/dp/B00LJO8EQS/] but other vendors offer compatible cartridges for as low as $13 [https://www.amazon.com/Ink-Replacement-MFC-L2700DW-MFC-L2720DW-MFC-L2740DW/dp/B00NY6OLCK/].

A toner cartridge rated for 5,000 prints can print 2,500 double-sided ballots. Toner does not dry out over time like ink. The new printer will include a starter toner cartridge. My calculations for the Brother printer toner (which seems to be rated better) assume the starter cartridge lasts 1 year and any replacement cartridges last 3 years.

If Northampton buys the official toner:

153 precincts x $55 toner x 3 times over 10 years = $25,245

Ballot Bags

I also wanted to address some concerns I heard about the ballot bags, ballot weight and the handling of ballots at the precinct.

Clear Ballot provides two ballot bags with each scanner, and each bag can accommodate 1,000 ballots. A full bag will weigh about 30 lbs (24-38lbs depending on the paper stock used), but using projected voter turnout and two bags per polling place they are unlikely to be full. Many precincts in lower turnout elections won't even have enough ballots to fill half of one bag. Clear Ballot also has a prototype for a ballot bag with wheels and a telescoping handle.

The claim that the ExpressVote XL is the only voting machine that does not require handling the ballots at the precinct is not correct. The Clear Ballot ClearCast optical scanner uses a ballot bag attached to the scanner that can be removed, then closed up and secured with the ballots inside without any handling of the ballots. The entire locked bag is taken to the election board office.