

Observations on Conny McCormack by S.L. Myers

It's interesting. Back in November of 2000 during the Bush-Gore recount, while "hanging chads" fluttered in Florida, Conny McCormack [confessed to a Washington Post reporter](#) that "If she had \$100 million, she said, she would buy more modern, touch-screen computer voting machines."

That would fix everything. For the vendors.

[In 2001, testifying before the Carter-Ford Election Reform Commission](#), Conny cited a citizens' poll "verifying" the excitement over the new touch screens (on page 16) Here's the excerpt:

**Congressman Panetta:** *Let me ask Ms. McCormack. If you had the opportunity or funds to be able to replace all of the paper ballots in L.A. County would you do that with the scanners?*

**Ms. McCormack:** *Not with the scanners but with the touch screens. Yes. I absolutely would. We had a survey of our 21,000 people that voted on the touch screen. Of the 9,000 that filled out a survey—99 percent, which was the same percent that Michelle\* had—were absolutely thrilled or liked it better or much better than the punch card... There are always some people that feel like computers are scary. But the testing process and the software requirements are incredibly rigorous for a process like this. Believe me, we are not going to send out inaccurate software.*

(\*Michelle Townsend, Riverside County's Registrar of Voters, abruptly quit her job in June 04 after a controversial election and recount. Not only were there significant problems with the electronic voting machines, but some [very suspicious "help" from Sequoia technicians](#) on election night.)

And what happened to Conny's \$100 million dream??

[In this 5/27/04 interview with Andrew Gumbel for Citybeat](#) *"Until California's Secretary of State (Kevin Shelley) intervened earlier this month and decertified all touchscreen machines in the wake of serious failures encountered during the March primary election, Conny McCormack was planning to spend more than \$100 million on a countywide Diebold touchscreen network."*

Oh, and about that "inaccurate software" that was not going to be part of the touchscreens that Conny touted to the Carter-Form commission?

In the same Gumbel interview, [McCormack responds to charges](#) that she asked Diebold to make software changes in L.A. County for the 2003 Davis recall election without getting the changes certified. Gumbel reports that Conny "offered no denial of the charge that she had circumvented the legal requirement for certification; when pressed on the issue, she ended the conversation."

Perhaps now is the time to note that, in 1985, the Texas Attorney General hired an independent expert to assess the merit of the "computerized voting machines" in response to charges of fraud that arose from the mayoral race. Conny Drake McCormack was Dallas County Elections Administrator.

*"One of the expert's findings was that that the voting system Dallas used last year lacked adequate safeguards against fraud."*

From "Texas Looks into Reports of Voter Fraud," NY Times, Sept.23, 1985(pdf. Attached)

Indeed, Conny Drake McCormack left her post as Dallas Elections Administrator under a cloud, after weathering investigations by the U.S. Justice Department, the Texas Secretary of State, and the

Dallas DA. There was evidence of ballot shortages and illegal voter fraud warnings in 30 minority districts under Conny's watch.

The Dallas Morning News of March 31, 1987, (see pdf.) that reports McCormack's departure also gives details of the "Get Conny Drake" bill that was introduced in Austin in 1983, proposing that county commissioners gain the power to fire election administrators. It was unsuccessful.

However, in Los Angeles, where Conny McCormack continues her unrelenting support for touchscreen voting machines, the commissioners have that power to hire and fire the Registrar.

Perhaps now is the time to take a hard, objective look at how efficiently and effective our election system is working under McCormack's leadership.

In the past, we have had only Conny Drake McCormack's word for it. The Registrar of Voters in Los Angeles does not track the election day incident reports from voters who call in to the LA County Board of Elections to report troubles at the polling places.

That may explain an interesting contradiction in reporting the problems that occurred on 11/07/06:

After that election, the Los Angeles County Election Protection Task Force compiled incident reports from trained poll monitors, poll workers and the EIRS call number. Among the findings, was that 32.8% of the precincts included in the report had problems with the new ES&S INKAVOTE Plus Precinct Ballot Counters. That's 99 machines in 282 precincts that the Task Force Covered.

[Yet, here is what Conny McCormack had to report to the media:](#)

*"McCormack said she was pleased with Tuesday's roll-out of the new scanning equipment. Out of 5,028 polling places in the county, 'only a couple of hundred' had machines that weren't working, she said."* Santa Clarita Valley News, November 7. 2006

"Only a couple of hundred..." Let's extrapolate the Task Force percentage and suggest that perhaps, the number is more like 1500 machines that failed to work. Who's paying for this 25 million dollar mistake? The taxpayers. Who's responsible? Conny McCormack.

(Judy Alter's analysis of the machine breakdown is attached, 'Report on ES&S Inkavote Plus...')

Finally, it is rumored that the LA County Supervisors are considering a lawsuit against Secretary of State Debra Bowen in relation to her orders to submit Los Angeles' early voting touchscreen machines to the testing/certification process.

If Conny McCormack is advising this action, the Los Angeles County supervisors should stop in their tracks and investigate the source.

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Enclosures:

- 1) Diebold Sales Brochure
- 2) Washington Post 11/19/2000
- 3) Carter-Ford Testimony, 4/12/2001 p.16
- 4) Citybeat, 5/27/04
- 5) Citybeat, 6/24/04
- 6) NYTimes 9/23/86
- 7) Dallas Morning News 3/31/87
- 8) LA Task Force Report/Analysis 2006
- 9) Santa Clarita News, 11/07/06
- 10) Report on ES&S Inkavote Plus PBR & ADA UNIT

