



May 8th, 2025

Commissioners of the EAC
Technical Guidelines Development Committee of the EAC
Executive Leadership of the EAC
Testing and Certification Division of the EAC

Dear Leaders of the Election Assistance Commission,

As you consider the currently pending RFI for VVSG 2.0 Requirement 5.1-D, I write to urge you to ensure that the major accessibility advances of VVSG 2.0 are not inadvertently rolled back.

VVSG 2.0 is poised to meaningfully improve accessibility for American voters by giving every voter the chance to verify and cast a ballot secretly and independently, even for voters who cannot physically handle the paper ballot. With these advances, VVSG 2.0 obviously helps voters who have limited use of their hands. Just as importantly, VVSG 2.0 lets blind or visually impaired voters independently and secretly verify their paper ballot – something they often can't do on VVSG 1.0 BMDs which typically provide only independent and private ballot marking.

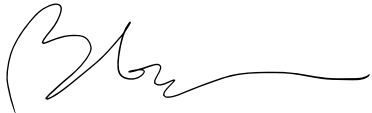
If, in response to the RFI for requirement 5.1-D, the Election Assistance Commission were to authorize, as part of a complete VVSG 2.0 system, the inclusion of a Ballot Marking Device that **does not support** private and independent verification & casting for all – a so-called VVSG1-style BMD – we can predict the natural outcome. A VVSG1-style BMD will be substantially less capable, and thus smaller in size and lower in cost. As jurisdictions cannot be compelled to purchase every component of a certified system, VVSG1-style BMDs would naturally and overwhelmingly outsell VVSG2-style BMDs. Thus, in practice, authorizing a VVSG1-style BMD almost certainly ensures the commercial inviability of VVSG2-style BMDs. This will result in the rollback of important accessibility advances of VVSG 2.0.

This isn't just a market dynamic issue. The major accessibility advance of VVSG 2.0 is that no voter should be left "stuck" at the conclusion of their BMD voting session, unable to verify or cast their ballot without seeking assistance. If VVSG1-style BMDs are allowed in a VVSG 2.0 system, even if VVSG2-style BMDs exist alongside them, then millions of voters across the country will mistakenly use the VVSG1-style BMD

and, once again, find themselves stuck at the critical moment of ballot casting, unable to proceed without giving up the privacy of their ballot. This is qualitatively different from the decision a voter makes at the beginning of their voting session between hand-marked vs. machine-marked options – a choice that never leaves the voter forced to give up their privacy.

We urge you to ensure that, for VVSG-2.0 systems, ***every Ballot Marking Device should be privately and independently usable by voters of all abilities for the complete voting session.*** Otherwise, the important accessibility progress achieved by VVSG 2.0 will be effectively rolled back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Adida', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Ben Adida, PhD
Executive Director
VotingWorks