



2018 Voting Equipment Grant Account Update

History of the Problem

Following the 2000 election, the federal government passed the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), which provided one-time federal funds to purchase election equipment across the United States. That election equipment is aging and, unfortunately, most Minnesota counties have used the HAVA funds available to them and the federal government has indicated that it does not intend to provide any additional funds.

The Presidential Commission on Election Administration identified the nation’s aging voting equipment as an “impending crisis” in January 2014.¹

To address this issue, the Office put together a working group of city and county leaders, election officials, and legislators from across the state to develop solutions to bring to the legislature.

Legislative Solution

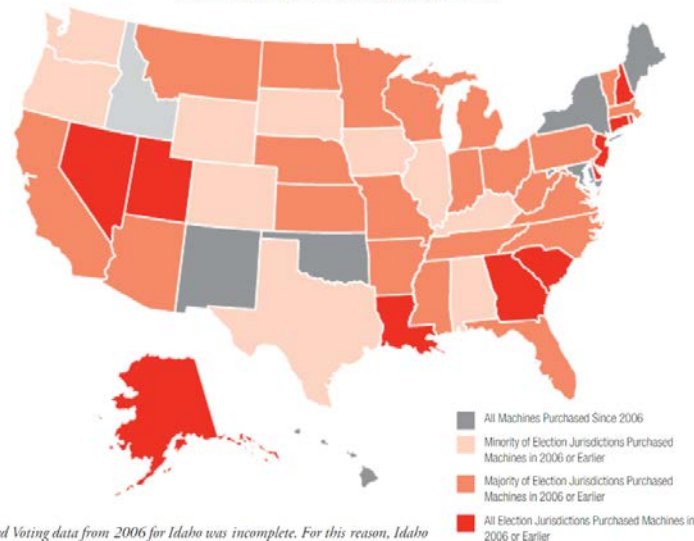
In 2017, the legislature authorized a grant fund of \$7 million to offset the cost of new voting equipment purchases for counties, cities, towns, and school districts. These funds were authorized to offset up to 50% of the cost of optical scan precinct counters, optical scan

central counters, or assistive voting devices; or up to 75% of the cost of electronic rosters. The bill was chief authored by Rep. O’Driscoll and Sen. Kiffmeyer.

Grant Application and Approval Process

The Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State accepted grant applications for the \$7 million in available matching funds through December 15, 2017. At the close of the grant application period, the Office received grant applications from 85 counties and 17 municipalities, for a total request of over \$13.3 million in grant matching funds. Between December 15, 2017 and January 19, 2018, the Office of Secretary of State reviewed applications for completeness and prepared grant contracts and grant award allocations. Because the amount of grant requests exceeded the amount of available grant funds, grant awards were pro-rated based on the number of precincts in the jurisdiction.

Machines At Least 10 Years Old in 2016



**Verified Voting data from 2006 for Idaho was incomplete. For this reason, Idaho is not included in this analysis. In Colorado, Oregon, and Washington, this analysis applies to central count machines for processing mail ballots. Otherwise the analysis applies to polling place equipment.*

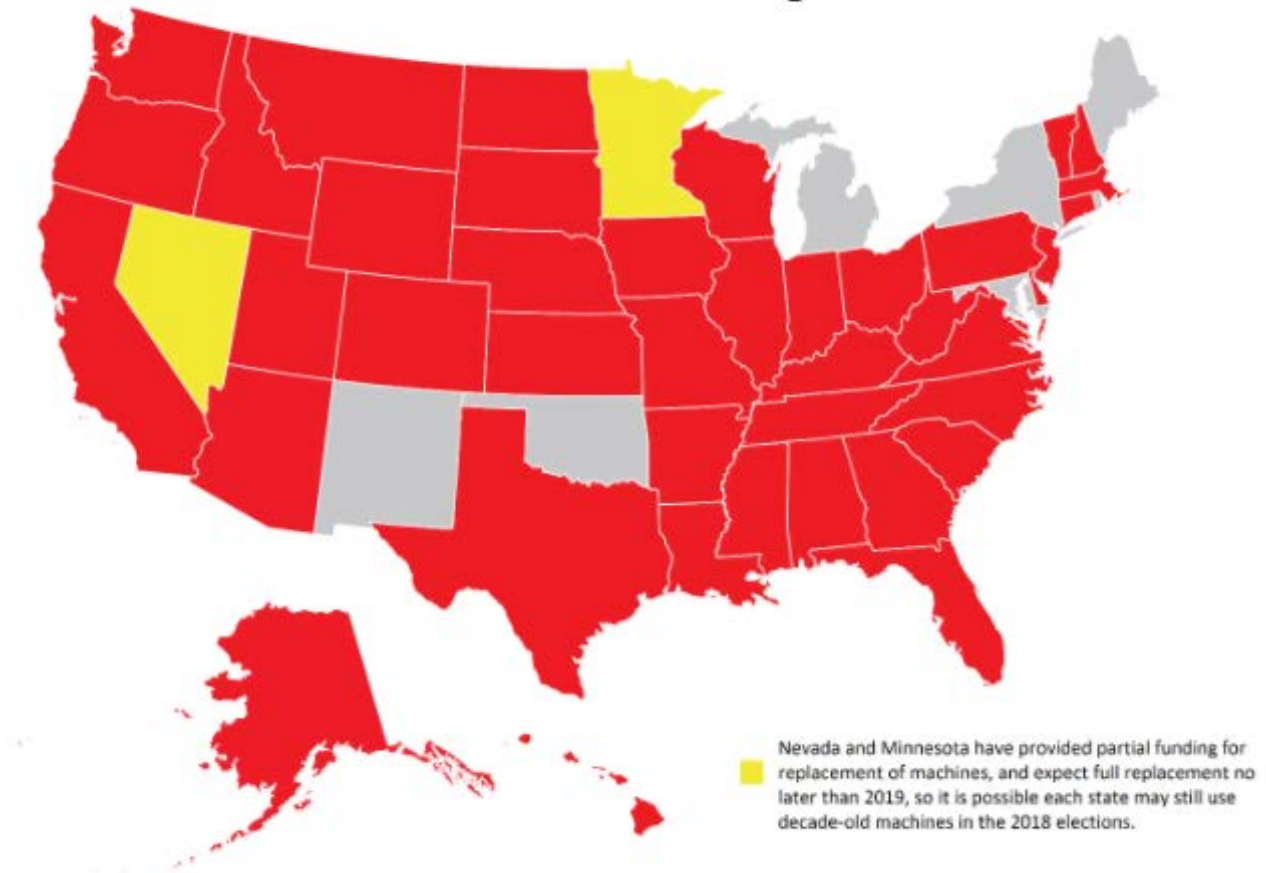
¹ The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration, January 2014, https://www.nased.org/PCEA_FINAL_REPORT_JAN_2014.pdf

² America’s Voting Machines at Risk, Brennan Center for Justice, <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/americas-voting-machines-risk> (image)

The final \$7 million grant allocation was split between 102 jurisdictions with \$4,572,977.68 allocated to optical scan central counter, or assisted voting devices, and \$2,427,022.32 allocated to electronic rosters. Jurisdictions must purchase the new equipment by the summer of 2019.

Minnesota should be proud to be one of the few states leading the nation on election issues, including addressing the issue of outdated voting equipment. On February 18, 2018 the Brennan Center for Justice published another article highlighting the need to update our nation's election infrastructure, including voting equipment. This article now showed **Minnesota as one of only a small number states addressing the issue of ageing election equipment.**³

States with Decade-Old Voting Machines



With local governments requesting nearly double the total amount available, **election equipment replacement will likely be an ongoing need for Minnesota.** However, the \$7 million grant fund is a step in the right direction for election integrity by ensuring that Minnesotans are voting on modern, secure, and reliable election equipment.

³ Cybersecurity Threats Loom, Nation's Outdated Election Infrastructure Must Be Upgraded, Brennan Center for Justice, <https://www.brennancenter.org/press-release/nations-voting-infrastructure-outdated-vulnerable-cyberattacks> (image)