



# ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT

## County of Hidalgo

YVONNE RAMÓN  
Elections Administrator

January 9, 2017

Honorable Judge Garcia,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Mr. Chris Moody's email to you. It is important that you and the Hidalgo County Commissioners know that the decision to select Hart InterCivic as our new voting equipment partner has been an ongoing effort of research and diligence. We started this undertaking since the latter part of 2014, and although we were customers of ES&S, Hart demonstrated exceptional support and professionalism, right from the start.

We offered two public demonstrations to each of the vendors, giving each the same opportunity to show their equipment. Members of the public, the media, poll workers, elected officials and all, were invited to attend these demonstrations. I also held a demonstration for our poll workers and for members of the elections department, as their needs are different from the actual voter.

I respond to Mr. Moody's bullet points below. I've given each a title, as it is important that each response I have made is clear:

- **Price:** Hart has performed numerous cost comparisons against our competition over the years. Two things stand out: 1) when looking at a line item quote and including all items from the vendors, the purchase price is almost the same; 2) when looking at the total cost ownership (TCO) over a 10+ year period, Hart offers a lower TCO. This is a testament to our ongoing operational costs being lower than our competitor.  
Hart offers finance options.  
If a vendor is offering payment of an invoice far into the future, please verify there are no additional charges that will be passed on to the County for the extended terms (ie, charging interest).
- **Paper Trail:** The Verity solution (paper and electronic) includes a paper trail.
  - a) The paper ballot in our paper system is the paper trail.
  - b) The printable cast vote record in our electronic system is the paper trail. The printable cast vote record can be printed for every vote on each voting device, should the County choose.
- **Poll Workers:** It is not ES&S that is easier on our poll workers but it is actually Hart's system that is much easier on poll workers to setup, manage and close down. Hart's system is much smaller and more lightweight. The Hart equipment uses one Controller and each voter is given a unique voter code, eliminating errors caused when poll workers choose the wrong precinct for each voter. When both companies were invited to participate in two open house demonstrations, Hart consistently demonstrated setting up and closing down. I do not know why Mr. Moody states that members of my staff "confirmed that Hart did not demonstrate their system this way," as it was ES&S that never demonstrated this. I am offended that Mr. Moody would state that Hidalgo County would "go into buying



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a system without truly knowing what the effort is for our poll workers.” Our own Hidalgo County poll workers were invited to a demonstration by both companies, and it was our own Hidalgo County poll workers that helped us decide to recommend buying Hart voting equipment.

- **System:** The Verity electronic system offers the Controller model. This feature is unique to Verity and provides centralized command and control of the attached voting devices during programming, voting and after polls have closed. This feature allows for greater election staff productivity, faster reporting of results and lower risk of error because only one device (the Controller) has to be programmed, opened and closed at each polling location. Only closing one device in each polling location allows for faster results. Poll workers no longer have to go to each voting device to close polls and retrieve the media device.
- **Number of Elections:** Hart can and does state its legacy system, the Hart Voting System, has been used in thousands of elections across the U.S. Competition rightfully states the same for their legacy system. What should be a concern is if the competition is claiming that the system they want to sell to the County today has been used in hundreds or thousands of elections across the U.S. If this is the claim their system is old technology using some of the same devices and parts that were used in the legacy system. Why would the County want to invest in old technology? Any new technology introduced in the market, if it is indeed newly designed, developed and manufactured, as is Verity, has not yet been used in thousands of elections. Hart can state that the Verity paper solution, Hart’s latest technology introduced in the market, has been used in binding elections in five states – Minnesota, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Virginia – and the Verity electronic solution will be used in the May 2017 Texas elections.
- **Financial:** Hart is and has been financially sound for years. This company has been in business for over 100 years and fostered numerous relationships with business and financial institutions across the state and country. These partnerships offer the opportunity to seek guidance and opinions on any business related matter, if it is ever needed.
- **Stability:** Hart’s legacy system, the Hart Voting System, has been in use since 2002. There are, and never have there been plans to announce end of support for the legacy system. There are numerous customers across the country who will continue to use the Hart Voting System for several more years. It is anticipated there will be some customers who will use the legacy system for the next General election in 2020. The plans are to have this same philosophy for Verity customers – they will support Verity for as long as our customers are using the product.
- **ADA Compliance:** As Hidalgo County officials, staff, poll workers and voters saw throughout the various Verity demonstrations that took place in Edinburg, the Verity ADA device (Verity Touch with Access) is the lightest, easiest to use ADA solution in the industry. Weighing approximately 6 lbs compared to the competitors approximate 56 lb device, the Touch with Access provides a private, secure voting experience to any voter, regardless of their abilities. And the Touch with Access can be easily managed by older poll



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workers throughout the day, without having to worry about transporting a bulky, large system to the curb, as would be required when using our competitor's system.

- Trade-In Value: Mr. Moody's comment, "we buy back your current system allowing you to save even more," is insulting, as the attached quote from ES&S shows that they offered Hidalgo County only \$149,375.00, compared to Hart's trade-in amount of \$ 750,000.00. This considerably larger trade-in value from Hart was quoted, right from the start. There was no need to haggle or negotiate, as Hart valued Hidalgo County from the start. I was disappointed at the ES&S allowance, especially because they would have been the company to reap benefit from the continuous use of the iVotronic voting equipment.

Although we have been an ES&S customer, we have not been a "valued" customer, as Mr. Moody states. Hart, on the other hand, was supportive and knowledgeable of their company and of Hidalgo County's needs.

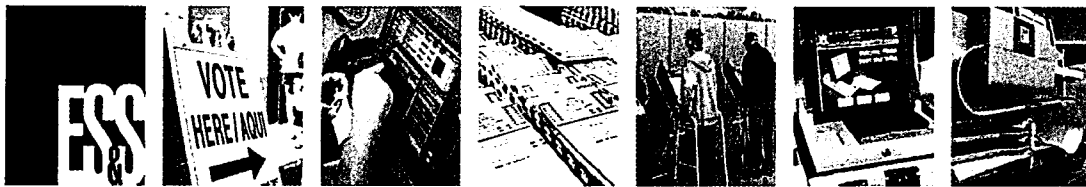
As far as "going down on pricing" and "offering more perks," I ask, why was this not done from the start? This research has been going on since 2014, and only now that Hidalgo County Elections has made a recommendation, and our Commissioner's Court has demonstrated support in said recommendation, does ES&S finally decide to step in and attempt to take action in trying to become our vendor of choice.

I do confirm that Elections viewed a demonstration on December 13<sup>th</sup> from Mr. Moody. I certainly did not comment that I was "unhappy" that ES&S did not appropriately demonstrate this system in the summer, but that in fact his demonstration validated how ES&S had continuously overlooked Hidalgo County Elections. It is important to reiterate that selecting Hart was not because ES&S was not there for me, as this decision is not a personal decision. Both ES&S and Hart had the same opportunities to demonstrate and explain both the new voting equipment as well as the administrative side of the reporting. Allowing Mr. Moody and Mr. Tucker to come in on December 13<sup>th</sup> only served to validate and confirm that the decision to go with Hart InterCivic was in fact the correct decision. I allowed ES&S one more opportunity to showcase their equipment, and after spending a whole day with them, my staff and I stand by our recommendation to purchase Hart Verity voting equipment and become partners with Hart InterCivic. Please know that ten Texas counties have in the last four years left ES&S to join the superior equipment and service that Hart provides, while none have left Hart. Many more are preparing to do the same now.

Lastly, for counties like Hidalgo, who are planning to implement a new electronic voting system, Verity is the only system available in Texas. Moreover, according to the U.S. EAC Certification Program's "Voting System under Test" report, no other vendor has an electronic voting system in the certification process. Once started, that process typically takes 1.5 to 2 years to complete and successful federal certification is required before the system may be submitted for Texas testing and certification. The Texas process typically takes several additional months to complete. It is unrealistic to think that a competing system to Verity Touch will be certified and available to Texas counties before 2018, or soon thereafter.

Respectfully,

  
Yvonne Ramón, Elections Administrator



Hidalgo County, Texas  
**Purchase Proposal Quote**  
 Submitted by Election Systems & Software

Purchase Solution Includes:

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Item Description</u>	<u>Price</u>
<b>Tabulation Hardware</b>		
	<b>Model DS850 High Speed Digital Image Scanner:</b>	
1	Model DS850 (Includes Scanner, Steel Table/Cart, Start-up Kit, Dust Cover, Reports Printer, Audit Printer, Battery Backup, Two (2) USB Cables, and Three (3) 8GB Thumbdrives)	\$111,500.00
1	DS850 Annual License Fee	Included
1	Installation/Training Fee (1st Unit)	\$3,500.00
	<b>ExpressVote:</b>	
825	ExpressVote Unit Including Soft-Sided Case, Detachable ADA Keypad, 4GB Flash Drive, and Headphones	\$3,135,000.00
825	ExpressPass Printer	\$598,125.00
825	ExpressVote Booth	\$495,000.00
500	ExpressVote Ballot Card Stock - 14" (250 per pkg)	\$11,875.00
<b>Software</b>		
1	Electionware Software - PYO Standard (Base Package)	\$48,480.00
1	Synthesized Audio Capability - English Language	\$12,200.00
1	Synthesized Audio Capability - Each Additional Language	\$1,760.00
<b>Election Services</b>		
21	Implementation Services (Does not include Coding, Voice Files or Ballots)	\$33,075.00
X	Project Management	
X	Equipment Operations Training	
X	Poll Worker Train-the-Trainer	
X	Software Training	
X	Public Test	
X	Network Installation - ES&S In House & Shipped	\$1,600.00
3	First Election On-Site Support (One Event includes a person on-site the day before, day of, and day after election)	\$12,375.00
X	Installation/Acceptance Testing	\$86,625.00
X	1 Year Hardware and Software Warranty	Included
	<b>Shipping &amp; Other</b>	
X	Shipping and Handling	\$21,125.00
	Trade-In Allowance. Equipment Being Traded-In by Customer Includes:	(\$149,375.00)
	1-Model 650 Scanner - Infra Red	
	825-iVotronic Terminal (Voter, ADA, and/or Supervisor)	
	825-iVotronic Clam Shell Booth	
	<b>Total Purchase Solution</b>	<b><u>\$4,422,865.00</u></b>

**Footnotes:**

1. This quote is an estimate and is subject to final review and approval by both ES&S and the Customer.
2. Rates valid for 60 days and thereafter may change.
3. Any applicable (City & State) sales taxes have not been included in pricing and are the responsibility of the customer.
4. The quantity of service days reflects a reasonable estimate for implementation and selected ongoing election services. Quantities may change depending on specific Customer needs.
5. Customer is responsible for packaging the trade-in equipment for shipment as well as coordination and cost associated with shipping such equipment to ES&S's designated location, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties.