



U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

*Voting Section - NWB.
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20530*

FEB 2 2006

VIA FACSIMILE AND FIRST-CLASS MAIL

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Attorney General
55 Elm Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06141-0120

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State
State Capitol, Room 104
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

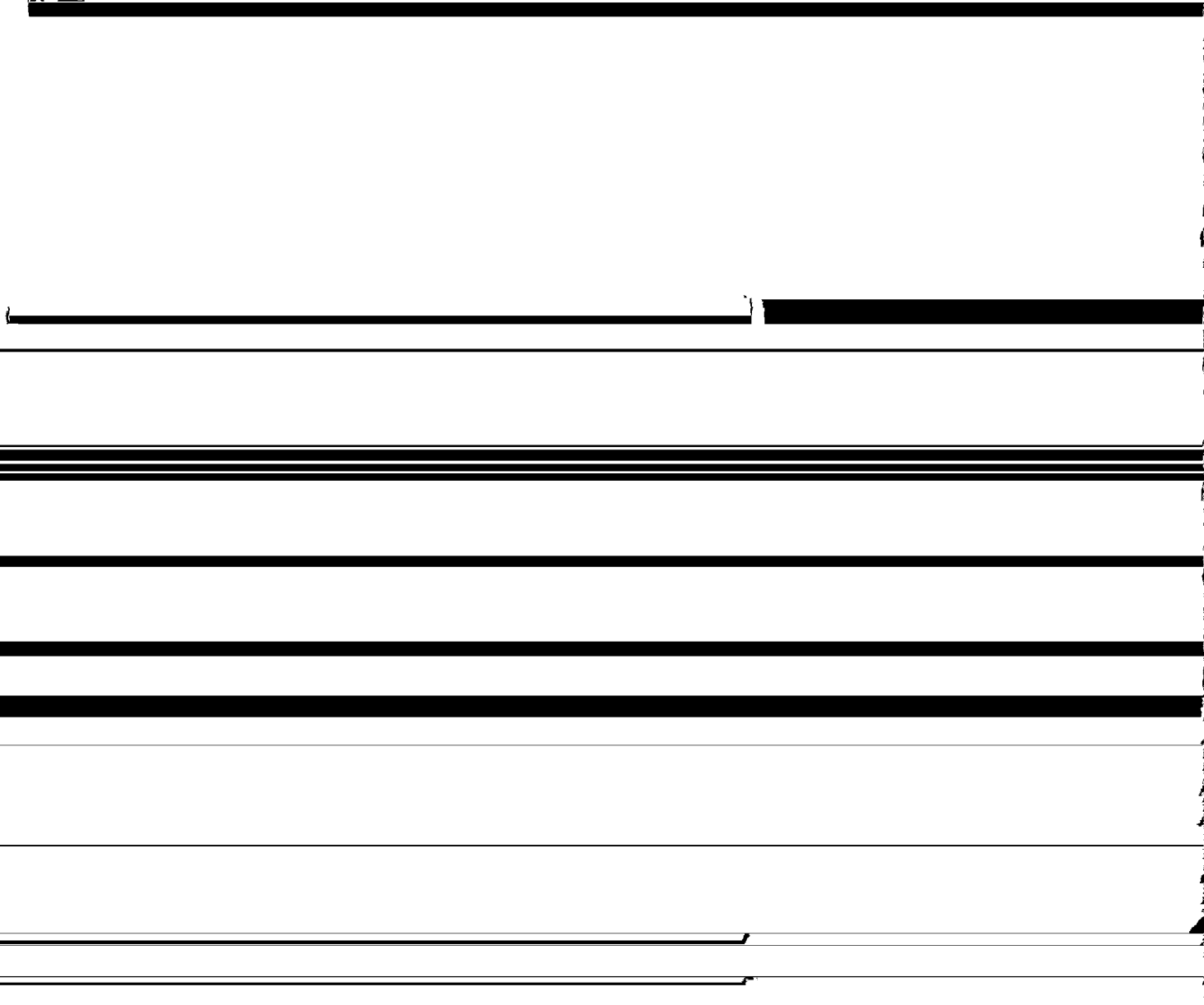
Dear Attorney General Blumenthal and Secretary of State Bysiewicz;

This is in response to your January 13, 2006 letter to the Department of Justice concerning the State of Connecticut's compliance with the voting systems standards requirements of Section 301 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 ("HAVA"), 42 U.S.C. 15481.

As we have discussed, we are fully prepared to work out the terms of an agreement between the Department and the State concerning actions Connecticut will take to comply fully with HAVA's voting systems mandates. Toward that end, the information provided in your letter is very constructive. You have set forth a process for attempting to satisfy the accessibility requirements of Section 301(a)(3) of HAVA, 42 U.S.C. 15481(a)(3), which includes issuance of a new request for proposals (RFP) for the purchase of accessible machines for each polling place in the State and a proposed timetable for vendor response, evaluation of bids, negotiation of contracts and machine delivery and placement. We believe that this proposed schedule holds great promise for achieving HAVA's accessibility goals in time for Connecticut's 2006 federal elections. We view the State's determination that it need not require full face ballots for such

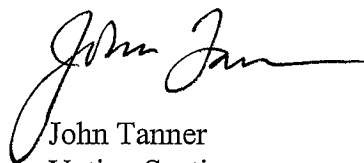
replacement machines, as well as the State's determination that it will be open to proposals for a wider variety of replacement machines, both as very positive developments.

We acknowledge the challenge faced by Connecticut in achieving full compliance with HAVA in the face of the problems which have arisen recently involving the State's last voting machine RFP. Of course, the RFP results have set the State back in its efforts to replace its existing voting machines. We believe, however, that the barriers to HAVA compliance in the 2006 federal elections can be overcome. We were pleased to read the statement of Secretary Bysiewicz in her January 24, 2006 commentary published in the Hartford Courant, in which she indicates that Connecticut is a "national leader in voting rights" and that the "central ideals of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 - allowing those with disabilities to vote privately and independently, and requiring a paper audit trail for all elections - can only be attained with new technology." We also believe that recent news reports of previously undetected failures in a



We would be happy to meet with you at an early date to discuss such a proposal. United States Attorney Kevin O'Connor has graciously offered to host such a meeting. Please contact Brian Heffernan (202-514-4755) of the Voting Section to continue our discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Tanner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John Tanner
Voting Section
Chief