



February 15, 2016

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Budget Support for Open Source Voting System Project

Dear Mayor Lee and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

I am writing to encourage you to fully fund in this year's budget the start of a project to develop and certify an open source voting system for use in San Francisco starting in June 2020, as described by the San Francisco Elections Commission's unanimous November 18, 2015 resolution.

The Board of Supervisors already supports open source voting systems. In December 2014 the Board unanimously passed a resolution supporting the creation of an open source voting system. Thank you to the Board for its past leadership on this issue.

As the CEO and co-founder of GitHub, which was founded and is headquartered in San Francisco, I have watched the world of open source grow and thrive over these past few years. Our community of software projects has grown from a handful of projects to over 30 million in the past eight years. What was once a fringe movement is now a de facto standard. Companies such as Microsoft, Apple, and Oracle not only support open source software but promote and release it at an increasing rate. The world is moving towards open source, and our city would make a strong statement that helps strengthen its leadership position by championing a move towards open source in software that serves the public.

I strongly support the development and adoption of an open source voting system. Such a system would not only be more transparent. It would also be more affordable and more flexible. Elections are public processes and the foundation of our democracy. It makes sense for our voting equipment to be a shared and fully transparent public resource.

San Francisco is a leader in public policy and good government, and the San Francisco Bay Area is a world-wide center for technology and innovation. Open source voting is at the intersection of both of these areas.

San Francisco has a tremendous opportunity through this project to improve not just San Francisco elections but to benefit the entire country as a whole. San Francisco's voting system would be open and affordable to all jurisdictions in the country.

Again, I encourage you to fully fund open source voting in this year's budget.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Wanstrath', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Wanstrath
CEO and Co-Founder
GitHub, Inc.