



# NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY CENTER

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## National Cybersecurity Center to Host Public Demonstration of Audit for Utah County Mobile Voting Pilot

**PROVO, UT, Wednesday, September 4, 2019** – The [National Cybersecurity Center](#) (NCC), a national non-profit for cybersecurity advocates, along with Voatz and Tusk Philanthropies, announced in July a collaboration with the Utah County Elections Division to implement mobile voting in its ongoing municipal elections. Eligible overseas Utah County voters were able to participate by opting in to return their ballots electronically via an app on their smartphones. Voters filled out an absentee ballot request, completed their identity authentication and verification on the Voatz application, and submitted their ballot for the election. For the municipal primary election, voting for overseas voters began on June 28th and continued through 8:00 p.m. MT on Election Day, August 13, 2019.

As part of the pilot, the NCC is managing a remote independent audit of all ballots casted via smartphones and secured using a geographically distributed blockchain-based infrastructure. Today, the NCC announced a public demonstration of the audit process, which can be attended in person or watched via webcast.

**WHAT:** Public Demonstration of Mobile Voting Pilot Audit

**WHEN:** Wednesday, September 4, 2019, from 9:30 a.m. -11:00 a.m. MT

**WHERE:** Utah County Elections Office, 100 East Center Street #3100, Provo, UT 84606

**WEBCAST:** <https://www.facebook.com/UtahCoElections>

The mobile voting pilot is available to Utah County troops and overseas citizens serving abroad, who have traditionally relied on using paper absentee ballots, making it difficult to participate in elections. According to the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission, in 2016 nearly 300,000 overseas voters requested ballots but were unable to return them to their county clerks in time to be counted. Historically, overseas voter participation hovers at 7 percent turnout. According to the Federal Voting Assistance Program, turnout would increase to 37.5 percent if logistical barriers were removed for these voters (i.e. challenges with mail, fax, etc.).<sup>[1]</sup> In a pilot conducted earlier this year with overseas and military voters from Denver County, the addition of mobile voting as an option increased turnout by 100 percent. In a survey completed by these overseas Denver voters, 100 percent of respondents said they preferred the mobile voting method to any other.

NCC is conducting a public audit of the mobile ballots received during the municipal primary election. The audit will be open to interested auditors and citizen volunteers. The volunteers will then independently perform the audit of all submitted ballots via a tool provided by Voatz. This audit is the next step toward the eventual goal of being able to conduct an end-to-end voter-verified election that can be routinely and quickly audited by independent organizations. If you are interested in participating as a volunteer auditor, please fill out the form at [this link](#) to receive more information.

## **BACKGROUND**

**Proof of Concept:** The pilot offers blockchain-based mobile voting to active-duty military, their eligible dependents and overseas voters registered in Utah County for the municipal primary elections in Eagle Mountain, Highland, Lehi, Mapleton, Orem, Pleasant Grove, Santaquin, and Springville, as well as City Council seats 3 and 4 in Provo in August 2019 and November 2019. In addition to having the option to cast their ballot via the blockchain-based mobile application, eligible military voters in Utah County can choose to cast their vote through the standard electronic remote absentee ballot system. The traditional electronic remote absentee ballot system currently offered to overseas military voters doesn't ensure anonymity and relies on email or postal mail for ballot return.

Voatz is the technical provider designing the system. With this pilot, they will have launched the third pilot blockchain-based mobile voting solution for a municipal election. They are experienced in the field of voting technology and have run several elections for state party caucuses, conventions, union votes, and university elections using an app for phones and tablets.

**To Be Eligible to Vote Using This Solution, An Individual Must Be:**

1. Deployed and overseas military personnel and their families, other qualified overseas voters (as applicable under the UOCAVA); and
2. Eligible to vote in Utah County.

**Mobile Voting Powered by Biometrics, Smartphone Hardware, and Blockchain Technology:** Voatz's secure voting application is powered by biometrics, smartphone hardware and blockchain technology. Because blockchain is a distributed ledger of transactions, mobile votes become immutable and tamper-proof once recorded. Blockchain-based mobile voting solutions can help meet many of the most urgent challenges in election administration by adding security, accuracy, elimination of human error, voter anonymity, faster results, increased trust in institutions, audit trails, and transparency.

**Oversight:** The coalition approach ensures inclusivity and diverse perspectives. Partners in the effort combine expertise in election systems, blockchain, research, communications, and managing the deployment of successful proofs of concept. The initiative is strictly nonpartisan and is open to engagement with civic innovators, technologists, academics, and philanthropic leaders.

**About National Cybersecurity Center:** The National Cybersecurity Center (NCC) is a member-driven national community of cyber influencers from government, academia, industry, and military conceived in 2016 that exists to help secure the world using knowledge, connections, and resources to solve global cybersecurity challenges and develop a protected cyber ecosystem. An independent and non-profit think tank based in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the NCC provides cybersecurity leadership, services, training, and policy advisement and awareness for public officials, business executives, and the workforce. NCC's support to the Space ISAC will create a public-private alliance to serve the commercial sector, academia, government, and military and empower people to secure commercial, international, and military space communications from attacks on our global space assets. NCC also leads a collaborative effort to use blockchain technology to develop a secure mobile voting app and offering blockchain training. Discover the NCC at [cyber-center.org](http://cyber-center.org).

**About Utah County:** Utah County is Utah's second largest county with over 600,000 residents. Located just south of the Salt Lake City area, Utah County is home to a growing technology industry which has driven economic growth in the state. With two universities, there is a strong contingent of young voters who fill the ranks of dozens of software startups. The county is home to companies like Adobe, Domo, Entrata, IM Flash, Instructure, Nature's Sunshine, NuSkin, Qualtrics, Vivint, and many others. The Utah County

Elections office is under new management through a newly elected County Clerk Amelia Powers who has committed to revolutionize local government powered by innovative digital services and blockchain technology.

**About Tusk Philanthropies:** Tusk Philanthropies was created by Bradley Tusk, Founder and CEO of Tusk Holdings & Tusk Ventures, for the purpose of working on reducing hunger throughout the United States by providing greater access to programs like school breakfast and to dramatically increase voter turnout and participation in U.S. elections through mobile voting, beginning with qualified military service members. Mobile voting is a non-partisan initiative designed to not favor any one candidate or party but to expand voting options to increase participation in our electoral process. None of the Tusk entities has a financial interest in Voatz or any other voting technology company.

**About Voatz:** Voatz is an award-winning mobile elections platform backed by military-grade security and cutting-edge technology (including biometrics and a blockchain-based infrastructure). Voatz enables voting via compatible smartphones and tablets to increase accessibility and security in elections. Since 2016, Voatz has run numerous elections with towns, cities, states, both major state political parties, universities, and unions. In 2018, Voatz ran the first mobile blockchain vote in US federal election history in partnership with the State of West Virginia to empower deployed military personnel and overseas citizens (UOCAVA) to vote in the primary and midterm elections (24 counties). In 2019, the County of Denver selected Voatz to enable UOCAVA citizens to vote in its municipal general and runoff elections, where it led to a more than 2x increase in participation among deployed military and overseas citizen voters. Learn more at <https://voatz.com>.

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