



# NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY CENTER

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

*Utah County expanded mobile voting for the November general elections and broadened eligibility to the disabled community*

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**Mobile Voting Pilot**

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**PROVO, UT, Tuesday, November 12, 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 for Utah County’s 2019 municipal primary and general elections. The November general election is the second time Utah County has implemented a mobile voting solution for overseas voters and the first time in U.S. elections for voters who identify as disabled. Eligible voters filled out an absentee ballot request, completed their identity authentication and verification on the Voatz application, and submitted their ballot for the election. Voting began on September 20 and continued through 8:00 p.m. MT on Election Day, November 5, 2019.

In this Utah County pilot, 140 voters were eligible to participate and 64 voters successfully submitted their ballots using the Voatz mobile voting application. This election marks the first time in a municipal election that voters with disabilities were able to participate, and the first time a rank-choice ballot was submitted using their mobile device. All mobile ballots produced a paper ballot for tabulation at the jurisdiction, which will be used alongside the blockchain data in a post-election audit to verify all ballots were submitted and recorded correctly.

Today, the NCC announced a public demonstration of the audit process, which can be attended in person or watched via webcast. This marks the fifth time the NCC has managed a remote independent audit of all ballots submitted via smartphones and secured using a geographically distributed blockchain-based infrastructure.

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

**WHEN:** Tuesday, November 12, 2019, from 10:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m. MT

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

**VIDEO RELEASE:** <https://www.facebook.com/UtahCoElections>, Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 8:00 a.m. MT

This audit is open for remote participation by interested auditors and citizen volunteers. The volunteers will independently perform the audit of all submitted ballots via an audit tool. 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.

This pilot marks the sixth mobile voting pilot nationwide for UOCAVA voters, who otherwise rely on email or postal mail to submit their ballots, which makes it difficult to participate and preserve voter anonymity. 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 mobile voting 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 over any other.

## **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 for the August primary and November general elections. 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 does not 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 sixth blockchain-based mobile voting pilot for overseas citizens in a government 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);
2. A voter who self-identifies as having a disability; and
3. 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. In addition, all mobile votes produce a paper trail for tabulation and post-election auditing. 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 the 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 more than 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 that leverages military-grade technology (including biometrics and a blockchain-based infrastructure) to increase accessibility and security in elections. Voatz has run more than 50 elections with cities, universities, towns, nonprofits, and both major state political parties for convention voting. Last year, Voatz partnered with [West Virginia to empower deployed military and overseas citizens to vote, marking the](#) first mobile votes in U.S. history. [In 2019 Voatz expanded its pilots to Denver](#) and [Utah, both of which held citizen's public-facing audits, hosted by the National Cybersecurity Center](#). All pilots increased turnout and in the case of Denver, 100% of voters responding to a post-election [survey](#) said they preferred this method of voting to any other. Learn more [here](#).

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