

BEN YSURSA  
SECRETARY OF STATE



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SECRETARY OF STATE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### PRESS RELEASE

Secretary of State, Ben Ysursa today entered into a contract to purchase one voting assistance terminal for each polling place making it possible for voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently as other voters.

“Many people with disabilities, particularly for visually impaired voters, have not been able to experience the same privacy and independence the other voters take for granted,” said Secretary Ysursa. “This is a better way to provide for the inclusion of voters with disabilities in our state.”

The Secretary of State has entered into a \$6 million contract with Election Systems and Software (ES&S) to purchase 932 AutoMARK voting devices in order to meet the Help America Vote Act requirement to provide at least one accessible voting device in each polling place by 2006. Funding for the purchase was provided by Congress.

To use the AutoMARK, the voter inserts an optical scan ballot into the device, which then displays the information on a screen or, at the voter’s option, speaks the ballot through a headset. The voter then makes his or her selection by touching the screen of the display or using a Braille marked keypad. The AutoMARK marks the selection on the ballot and returns the ballot to the voter to be deposited in the ballot can.

“AutoMARK allows voters with disabilities to mark their ballots without relying on someone else to help them, if they choose. Of course election judges will still be available to help- people who want their assistance. As Idaho’s Chief Election Official, I am please to announce this enhancement to improve accessibility to our election process”, Ysursa stated.