



# Swiss Voting System Report Short Form



## Swiss Voting System Freedom of Voting

**This short form of the Swiss Voting System report contains 15% of the original Swiss Voting report, all the chapter titles and some basic information. It gives you an idea about how it looks and what it is based on.**



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## 1. Executive Summary

This report shows how the voting and election system of the United States of America could be improved considerably in terms of accuracy, cost effectiveness and last but not least, how the confidence of the voters in the elections can be nourished.

The report provides a detailed description and analysis of the voting and election systems of Switzerland. Starting with historical background information and an outline of the constitutional rights for the political participation of the citizens, the specific procedures of the voting and election system are presented. As many real life problems only arise when one is faced with the details, special attention is given to all relevant practical questions that public authorities may be confronted with. Answers are given to issues such as the set up of polling stations, the graphic design of ballots and voter registration cards, the means and modes of collecting votes, ways of counting the votes, principles of secrecy, security and quality control, as well as information on required investments for and the running costs of different voting systems.

However, this report does not only provide a detailed description and analysis of the voting and election systems of Switzerland. By adapting the Swiss Voting System to a specific and real example of an election which took place in the United States, a demonstration of the feasibility and advantages of the solution presented here is given. This report does not only represent theoretical concepts, but also real hardware. This means that also included in this report are envelopes, ballots and voter registration cards which are adapted to the circumstances in the United States of America. The core of the Swiss Voting System is a paper based ballot concept. There is one separate ballot per issue. Voters can cast their votes at polling stations or by mail.

Although the Swiss Voting System may at a first look rather cumbersome and complicated, it may be surprising to note that the administrative cost for one counted vote is about ten times cheaper in Switzerland than in the United States. And what looks cumbersome and complicated in fact derives its effectiveness and efficiency mainly from its simplicity. This report shows how the voting and election system of the United States of America could be improved considerably in terms of accuracy, cost effectiveness and last but not least, how the confidence of the voters in the elections can be nourished.



## 2. Introduction

Elections and votings are the basis of a democracy. They formalize the participation of all citizens in the political process. Elections and votings have both a practical relevance as well as a symbolic importance for creating and maintaining democratic statehood.

The technical problems which occurred in the U.S. 2000 Presidential did not only highlight to America, but to the whole world, how crucial it is to have an election and voting system which works smoothly and without any failure. Since then, a number of initiatives, for example the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), have been undertaken to improve this situation.

This report contributes to the process of improving election and voting systems. It has been designed especially for the circumstances in the United States of America. However, most of the suggestions made in this report can also be implemented in any other country.

Departing from the success story of the Swiss Voting system, we show with many practical examples how the American voting system could be considerably improved in terms of accuracy, secrecy, security and last but not least in terms of cost effectiveness.

To some Americans, it might be somewhat awkward to receive recommendations from abroad, since the American Constitution is considered to be the oldest republican and democratic constitution of modern times. However, taking into account the strong intellectual influence Switzerland had on the U.S. Founding Fathers, one can say that this small country in the heart of Europe is perhaps most apt to provide valuable input for improving the voting system of the United States of America.

This report is the first product of the Swiss Voting System. Further reports on more specific issues, focused also on other countries, are in the planning stages. The Swiss Voting System also offers certification of voting systems and polling stations. For successful implementation, the Swiss Voting System offers hands-on consulting services which include the training of election officials, the design of voting material and the supervision of elections. Elections and votings allow feedback from the voters as well as from the government. The authors of this report are also looking for a two-way communication with the readers. We are looking forward to receiving feedback on this report in order to further improve it for the benefit of the U.S. citizens.

This report has been created based on the belief, that correct and accurate elections and votings are the basis of a democracy. Once the voters loose confidence in the voting and election system, almost all confidence for the state is lost. This report shall contribute to the establishment and the maintenance of a world which cherishes democracy and freedom for all citizens.



### 3. Switzerland, History of Democracy and Voting

#### 3.1 Political Structure of Switzerland

In the thirteenth century, the territory which we now know as Switzerland was mainly occupied and ruled by the Habsburgs. Three villages around the Lake of the Four Cantons forged an alliance against the Habsburgs and declared eternal support to each other. This episode is considered the birth of Switzerland and took place on August 1, 1291. In the "Federal Letter," (see picture below) which was composed in the same time, the three villages agreed on a minimal legal system and on mutual military support.



Over the centuries, more and more cities and cantons joined the Helvetic Confederation, which was able to defend its independence in a number of very bloody battles. However, after the occupation of Napoleon, who introduced several laws which are still visible today, it became obvious, that the political organization of Switzerland needed to be modernized. The mutual influence between the United States of America and Switzerland in modeling their constitutions was considerable, In particular Adams and Jefferson were highly inspired by the Swiss jurists and natural law philosophers Jean Jacques Burlamaqui (1697-1748) and Emer de Vattel (1714-1767), who lectured in Geneva and Neuchatel respectively. In return, the Swiss constitution from 1848 was partly based on the American constitution from 1787. For these reasons, it is not a surprise, that at that time, the United States of America and Switzerland considered each other as "sister republics." In fact, after the United States of America, Switzerland is the second oldest federally structured country in the world. For more on the political structure of Switzerland, see appendix.

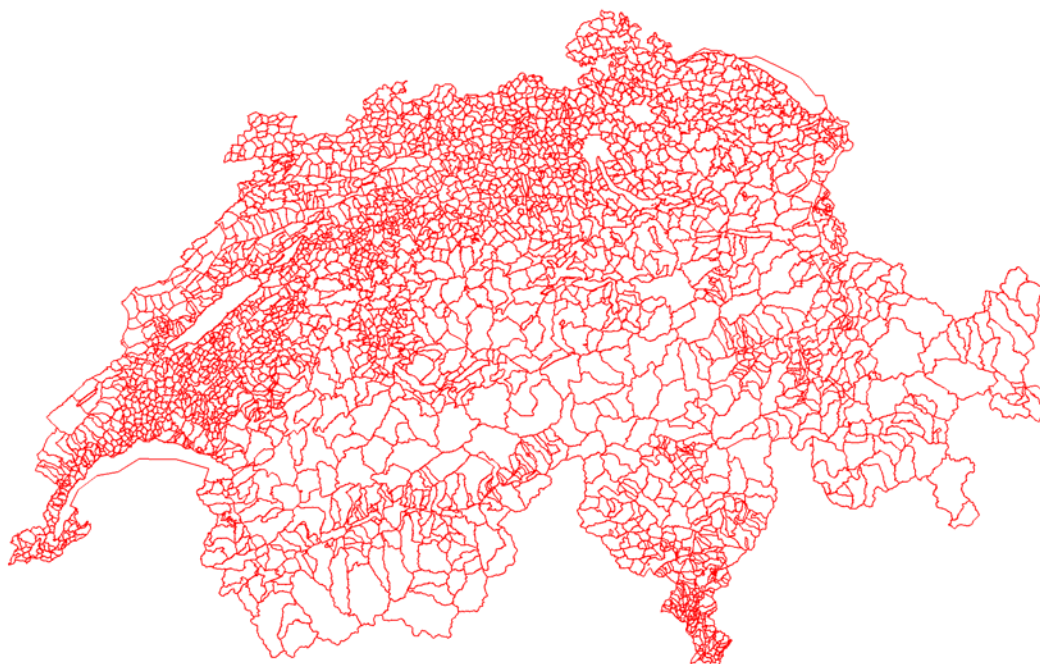
The similarities between the two former “sister republics” are still evident today. Like the United States of America Switzerland is a nation based on the will of the people who are neither ethnically, linguistically nor religiously unanimous.



The federal structure consists of three levels; the federation, the cantons and the communities.

Since 1978 Switzerland has consisted of 26 cantons. Most of the cantons still have the same form as when they joined the Federation. There have been some divisions of cantons and/or barbers of territories, nevertheless each canton has its own constitution, parliament, government and courts.

The cantons are divided into communities. There are about 3,000 communities with considerable autonomy. They are allowed to levy taxes and to organize their communal issues independently. The map below shows the communal division of Switzerland.



### **3.2 Voting in Switzerland**

This chapter gives you a brief rough process of the voting system in Switzerland. How do Swiss people vote? How do the polling stations work? Questions like that will get answered.



## 4. Why Swiss Voting System Report?

### 4.1 What the Voters Want

Every voter wants to be convinced of the properness of election outcomes. The outcome should not only be accepted by the respective representatives and election supervisors, but also by the general public. The confidence of the voters in the correct determination of voting results is a central concern of any democratic system. People need to know that the election is fair and that all their votes count.

### 4.2 Current Situation in the United States of America

In the presidential election of 2000, approximately four to six million votes were lost. This concerned everyone, especially voters who wanted to vote but could not, or those who felt that their votes were not counted.

Losses mainly occurred for two reasons; registration problems and ballot problems. Some voters could not cast their ballots because they had not received their registration cards. Others went to the polls and discovered that their name was not on the list of registered voters for their precinct. Still some voters cast their ballot and did not realize that their vote went uncounted due to human failure in correctly filling out the ballot or ballot defects or human. These facts lead to voter anxiety with regards to the approaching election in November 2004.

The three most frequent answers registered voters gave to the question “Why didn’t you vote?” were; firstly that they were too busy or had time-conflicts with work or school. The second most frequent reason given was illness or disability, and the third most common answer was that they were not interested in the election and felt that their vote wouldn’t make any difference. The voting situation in the U.S. therefore, does not truly reflect the will of the people. However voting in Switzerland does reflect the will of the Swiss citizens.

### 4.3 Swiss Voting System

Switzerland is known for accuracy and reliability in its products and services. Like its chocolate, army-knives and watches, the Swiss voting system is also highly prized by the people of Switzerland.

Within the Swiss voting system, the voter can freely decide for himself which method of voting best suits his needs

In Switzerland voting occurs four to five times per year. For this reason it is very important to have an efficient, trustworthy and valid voting and election system which is comprehensible to all citizens. It would not be possible to have the frequency and freedom of voting in Switzerland if it were not effective and with



reasonable costs.

The main aim of the Swiss Voting System is therefore to provide the quality and reliability associated with Switzerland to people around the world by means of an efficient and time tested paper based voting system.

#### **4.4 About the Swiss Voting System Report**

Swiss Voting System takes the best of voting in Switzerland and condenses it into a compact and thorough report. Then we make this report available to all persons who are strongly involved in voting and election procedures.

Dozens of voting systems available in Switzerland were reviewed by the Swiss Voting System team, but only examples from the best ones were used for the Swiss Voting System Report. In addition a vast amount of research on U.S. voting systems was conducted, including its development in the past four years. Accordingly we have developed a very comprehensive product, “The Swiss Voting System Report.”

Proper usage of the guidelines shown in this report ensure that the freedom of choice exists for every voter. Additionally the Swiss Voting System Report contains information on how to make the voting process up to 10 times cheaper.

Equipped with easy to read texts and figures, the Swiss Voting System Report contains a set of guidelines with which the polling stations may comply, partly comply or not comply with. If a polling station complies with our standards the polling station is allowed to use the **Swiss Voting System Freedom of Voting®** symbol. Wherever this symbol is present voters can be assured that their vote will be accurately counted, processed and reflected in the final election results.

#### **4.5 Fulfillment of the "Swiss Voting System Freedom of Voting®"**

The three main objectives being traced with Swiss Voting System Freedom of Voting® are the freedom of choice, the freedom of secrecy and security and the freedom and right to information.

Freedom and right of choice means that every voter has the choice of voting by mail or in person at the polling station. At the polling station the voter has another choice. Either he can fill in the ballot by hand and cast it into the ballot box or he can chose to vote electronically. If the voter chooses to vote electronically all his ballots must be shredded and thrown away. The voter thus has the choice of where and how to cast his ballots. Freedom and right of security means that all information about the voter is kept secret.

When casting a ballot all personal information which could lead to the voter identity is stored separately. The voter's name cannot be found on the official cast



ballots or voting envelopes. No one can draw conclusions about the voter or the voting pattern from the ballots or the envelopes. This is either because the voter registration card is separated from the ballots or because the voter registration card is actually just a registration number without name or signature on the envelope. But not only is it impossible to draw conclusions about the voter. Another element of the right of security is that no single polling station or counting center should cover more than 2% of the citizens of the whole country. This also applies to E-Voting.

Freedom and right of information finally means that the voter, at every stage of the election, can receive up to date information about the election. The voter has the right to be informed objectively about the voting topics. He also has the right to have sufficient information on how to vote. But not only does the voter want to be informed during the election, he also wants to be informed about the results. He wants to know if his vote was counted. Therefore each polling station has to publish its final results.

If these three main objectives are accomplished the voters regain and maintain their confidence in voting and every voter knows for sure that his vote was counted.



## **5. Facts & Figures**

In this chapter there are Facts about Switzerland and the USA as well as the comparisons of these two countries.

### **5.1 When does the Counting Begin?**

### **5.2 Would the Swiss Voting System work in the U.S.?**

### **5.3 Statistics concerning the voting population**

#### **5.3.1.1 Number of Residents per State**

#### **5.3.1.2 Number of Eligible Voters**

#### **5.3.1.3 Number of Registered Voters**

#### **5.3.1.4 Number of Voters in the last national election in Switzerland**

#### **5.3.1.5 Number of Citizens Abroad**



## **6. The Complete Processes**

In this chapter the complete procedures of the Swiss Voting System are described. You find designs of ballots, envelopes and voter registration cards from Switzerland, transferred into English and adapted to the USA

### **6.1 The Swiss Voting System: How it Works**

#### **6.1.1 General Comments**

#### **6.1.2 Voting at the Polling Station**

#### **6.1.3 Voting by Mail**

#### **6.1.4 Printing of Official Voting Documents**

#### **6.1.5 Examples: Basel and Zurich**

### **6.2 The Swiss Voting System: How it Looks**

#### **6.2.1 The Ballot Design**

#### **6.2.2 The Envelope and Registration Card Design**

### **6.3 U.S. Election Transferred into a Swiss Ballot**

#### **6.3.1 Introduction**

#### **6.3.2 Original Official Ballot**

#### **6.3.3 Our Suggestion**

In the following we present you with an example of a complete Swiss Voting System Envelope including contents Description of the Envelope and Instructions on how to use it

### **6.4 Sample Envelope with Voting Material**

#### **6.4.1 Description of the Envelope and Instructions on how to use it**

#### **6.4.2 Envelope New Model Face**

#### **6.4.3 Envelope New Model Backside**

#### **6.4.4 Contents of the Envelope**



## **7. Computing, Calculating and Publishing**

This chapter contains an example of a complete election, including all figures and costs. We will highlight not only the election processes, but will also simultaneously indicate the actual expenditures.

### **7.1 General**

### **7.2 Example of Basel-City**

### **7.3 Description of the Chart**

#### **7.3.1 Polling station**

#### **7.3.2 Voter Registration Cards**

#### **7.3.3 Cast Ballots**

#### **7.3.4 Empty Ballots**

#### **7.3.5 Invalid Votes**

#### **7.3.6 Valid Ballots**

#### **7.3.7 Nominated Candidates and Write-In Candidates**

### **7.4 Counting and Tabulating**

In this subchapter all the processes of how and where the counting took place are described in more detail

#### **7.4.1 Tabulating the Results**

#### **7.4.2 Costs**

#### **7.4.3 Estimate of Costs in General**

#### **7.4.4 Numbers of Persons per Day**

#### **7.4.5 Workload in Man Hours**

#### **7.4.6 Direct Dedicated Costs in US Dollars**

#### **7.4.7 Direct Dedicated Costs in US Dollars per Voter**

### **7.5 Costs are even lower!**

### **7.6 How Voting by Mail Has Changed**



## **8. Swiss Voting System Compliance**

### **8.1 General**



#### **8.1.1 What is the benefit of a Certificate?**

#### **8.1.2 Liberty and Restriction**

### **8.2 The Standards**

#### **8.2.1 Voter has Choice of the Voting Method**

#### **8.2.2 Secrecy and Security**

##### **8.2.2.1 Security of the data transmission**

#### **8.2.3 The Right to Information**

### **8.3 Rights to Use the "Swiss Voting System Freedom of Voting®"**



## **9. How can a reliable election also be inexpensive?**

### **9.1 Answer: If you do it like the Swiss.**

This text was one of the easiest to write. Our simple answer is a concentrated form of everything that is written in this report including some answers to previously unanswered questions.

### **9.2 Some additional questions**

- Why is voting in Switzerland 30 times cheaper than in the US?
- Why are overall man-hours per eligible voter only 30 seconds?
- Why is the overall cost per eligible voter only around \$1.50?
- Why is no one dissatisfied with the voting and election system in Switzerland? (Which does not mean, that everybody is always satisfied with the results.)

### **9.3 And some additional answers**

**Everybody can concentrate on a very strong election campaign.**



## **10. Customizing Your Swiss Voting System Implementation**

### **10.1 General**

In this chapter we would like to show you the easiest way to implement our guidelines in your precinct, county or state.

### **10.2 Processes**

#### **10.2.1 Voter registration**

#### **10.2.2 Voter Registration Lists**

#### **10.2.3 Voting material**

### **10.3 Acquisition of the Swiss Voting System Freedom of Vote<sup>®</sup> label**



#### **10.3.1 Freedom of choice about how to vote**

#### **10.3.2 Right of Secrecy and Security**

#### **10.3.3 The Right to Information**

### **10.4 Costs of Previously Installed and Purchased Equipment**

### **10.5 More Tips, Tricks and Information**



## 11. Conclusion

Voting is not only processes, voting machines, polling stations and so on. Voting is also a culture. Voting often has a long tradition which forges certain political mentalities and bonds.

There are always two parties involved in voting. The two parties which we refer to here are not political parties, but are the citizens who vote and the government for which these citizens vote. The government is the institution which regulates the elections, makes the laws for it and grants restrictions and liberties. There are the citizens who have to agree with these restrictions and liberties. On the other hand, the citizens are the people who, with the hope of guiding their public institutions to the right direction, actually engage in the political decision making process.

However, it is not the people who introduce new voting systems, but it is the government which actually has to support innovation and, of course, ensure the liberty of the voters.

The voters have to be asked, “Do you agree with the voting system? Do you agree with the entire voting procedures, with the security and the secrecy, with the information you have?” These questions were answered with finality in this report.

These are the main conclusions which can be derived from this report:

1. Both the United States of America and Switzerland can learn from each other.
2. The voting systems between the U.S. and Switzerland are comparable.

As already explained in the chapter “Facts and Figures” Switzerland and the United States of America have quite a few things in common like the autonomy of their many governments and thousands of different voting systems. That means the structures are almost the same except that compared to Switzerland everything in America is about 40 times larger.

Switzerland is a strongly regulated country. Because there are so many people who live in so little space together, there must be many laws, rules, and restrictions. When voting, however, everything is turned around. Examples are; a single page check-list before the elections, no supervising, mostly carried out by voluntary every day people, very cheap and efficient.

The complete opposite, therefore is the United States with its vast amounts of land, few regulations, and very open-minded society. In the U.S., in direct contrast to Switzerland, there is a 30 page check-list for voting, supervised elections, thousands of people who are responsible for the elections, a lot of money investigated in election equipment, certifications of voting systems and much more. Additionally, four billion dollars are spent simply to improve the elections. Switzerland could live 200 years with that money.

This report shows why the satisfaction of the voters is so strong in Switzerland. It



is because the course of the election event is so uncomplicated, efficient and inexpensive.

Is it possible to vote the Swiss way in the U.S.?

Switzerland can be very well compared with Indiana regarding space and number of citizens. Both have about the same space and number of citizens. Also the structure of the 96 counties of Indiana is comparable with the structures of the big counties in Switzerland. There are almost 3000 counties in Switzerland, but a lot of them are very small. This would mean that one could vote exactly as easy in Indiana as in Switzerland.

And if this is possible in Indiana, it should also be possible, to the great satisfaction of the voters, for all United States of America.



## 12. Appendix

### 12.1 Copyright

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*U.S. Code Title 17, Chapter 1, Sec. 102, letter a)*

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#### 12.1.3 Logos

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## **12.2 Political Organization of Switzerland**

### **12.2.1 The People's Rights at Federal Level**

### **12.2.2 Right to unaltered expression of will according to Federal Law**

## **12.3 References**

### **12.3.1 Laws**

### **12.3.2 Materials and Directives**

### **12.3.3 Suggested Readings**

## **12.4 Samples**

### **12.4.1 Envelope Basel**

### **12.4.2 Envelope Zurich (German language)**

### **12.4.3 Envelope "New Model" Florida**

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