

OSET Institute Announces 2nd Version of its Acclaimed “Critical Democracy Infrastructure Briefing”

Palo Alto, CA—May 7, 2020—The OSET Institute announces the publication of its second edition of the widely read “Critical Democracy Infrastructure Briefing,” nineteen months in development. While the second edition benefited from many developments since the first edition in September 2017, with a historic election less than 6 months away, the Institute wrapped up research, and brought this edition to production as quickly as possible.

The second edition picks up where the first concluded, incorporating progress in legislation, states’ efforts, and cybersecurity developments. The content was reorganized and updated for easier reading. This edition restructures background content into three Appendices summarizing the process of elections, explaining election infrastructure, and providing an overview of critical infrastructure. The key development for this second edition, backed by over two years of the critical infrastructure designation implementation and formation of corresponding efforts to treat election infrastructure as critical infrastructure assets, is the development of a fresh set of recommendations in Section 4.

“We were pleased and surprised by the interest in the original edition of this Briefing in 2017,” explained one of the paper’s four co-authors and OSET Institute Chief Operating Officer, Gregory Miller. “The first version of the CDI Briefing remains one of our top three all-time downloads, and we received a number of useful comments and suggestions that drove development of this second edition.” The target audiences for this Briefing are election professionals in general, and all those engaged in election administration policy research and development—at state and federal levels. It also provides a solid primer for media and other researchers engaging on this timely topic.

This edition considers that most readers understand the general nature of election technology, processes of election administration, and the critical infrastructure designation—at least at a high level. “Those who read this Briefing top to bottom will agree how imperative it is to have a substantive conversation about the need to completely re-invent our nation’s—in fact, the world’s—election technology infrastructure,” observed co-author and OSET Institute Chief Technology Officer, John Sebes.

“Speaking of reinvention, this Briefing casts an important light on a pivotal participant in all of this,” noted co-author and OSET Institute Global Director of Technology & Standards, Eddie Perez. “And that player is the Election Assistance Commission.” There are a number of reasons—market dynamics and industry fundamentals—that have frustrated innovation, and the EAC plays a vital role in helping set standards, guidelines, and federal certification for voting equipment. “The EAC requires some

reinvention of its own, or the critical infrastructure designation will be meaningless at some point,” Perez continued.

Once again, the Institute is honored to have William P. Crowell, former Deputy Director of the National Security Agency (NSA) provide the Foreword to this Briefing. Mr. Crowell offers a keystone comment: “The earlier we make the decision to reinvent future election systems at some present cost, the better off we will be.”

The Briefing is available online at the OSET Institute’s research page on the Web, and blog posts will appear along with other social media intended to catalyze conversation. The paper may be directly accessed here: <https://bit.ly/OSETcdi2>

About the OSET Institute

The OSET Institute is a tax-exempt 501.c.3 non-profit election technology research, development and education organization based in the Silicon Valley. A team of veteran technologists leads the Institute with extensive hardware, software, and systems design experience from well-known companies including Apple, Mozilla, Netscape, Facebook, and Sun Microsystems. The Institute’s mission is to make election technology more verifiable, accurate, secure, and transparent as a matter of national security in defense of democracy. Work is based on open source principles to treat this critical government technology as an imperative publicly available asset.

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