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804-730-9600
www.roll-call.com
Richmond, VA



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MODERNIZING THE VOTE: WHY LEGISLATURES NEED PURPOSE-BUILT DIGITAL VOTING SYSTEMS AND DISPLAY BOARDS

In today's political climate, public trust in government institutions hinges on transparency and accountability. Nowhere is this more critical than in the legislative process, where split-second votes can reshape policy for generations. As citizens demand greater visibility into how their representatives do business, modern legislatures are discovering that the tools used to record and display votes are just as important as the votes themselves.

Real-Time Transparency: Voting Display Boards

Modern voting display boards are more than just sleek additions to the chamber wall. Digital voting display boards demonstrate the potential for technology to improve efficiency and integrity in legislative decision-making. They ensure votes are accurately recorded and transparently displayed, fostering trust in the democratic process. They are real-time engines of transparency, designed to show legislators, staff, media, and the public exactly how decisions are made – accurately and instantly. When integrated properly, digital voting systems can also reduce human error, speed up legislative workflow,

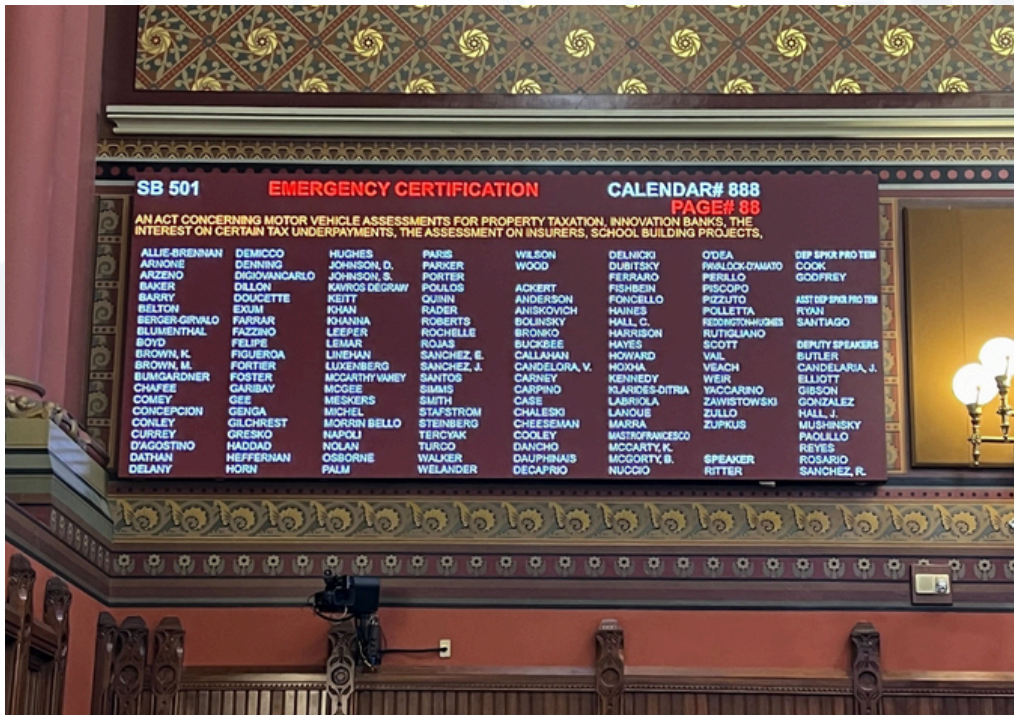
and improve public confidence. Gone are the days of tallying paper votes or interpreting inaudible cassette audio recordings. Today's digital voting boards reflect each legislator's vote – yes, no, or present – the moment it is cast. For example, in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, the implementation of chamber-wide voting displays has brought a new level of transparency and speed to the process. Visitors in the gallery can now track votes as they happen, while reporters can accurately relay results with minimal delay.



Massachusetts House of Representatives 1.5mm LED Voting, Message, and Video Chamber Display



Maryland House of Delegates 1.9mm LED Voting, Message, and Video Chamber Display

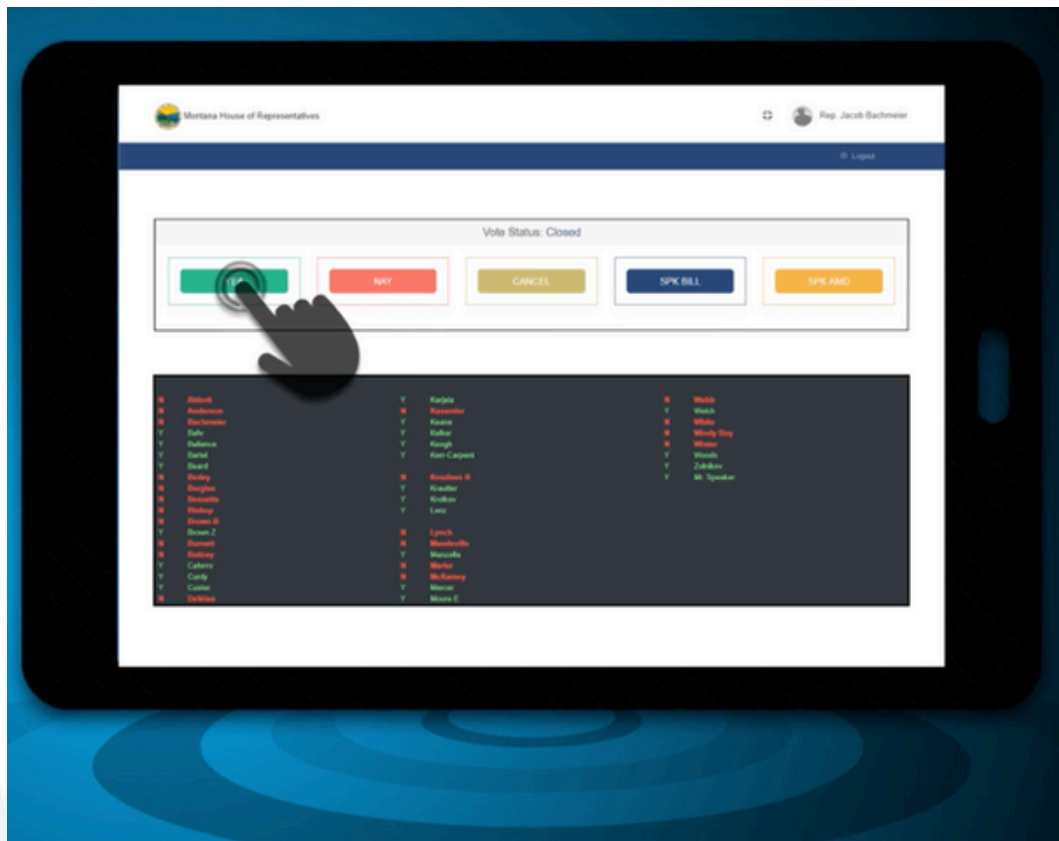


Connecticut House of Representatives 1.9 mm LED Voting, Message, and Video Chamber Display

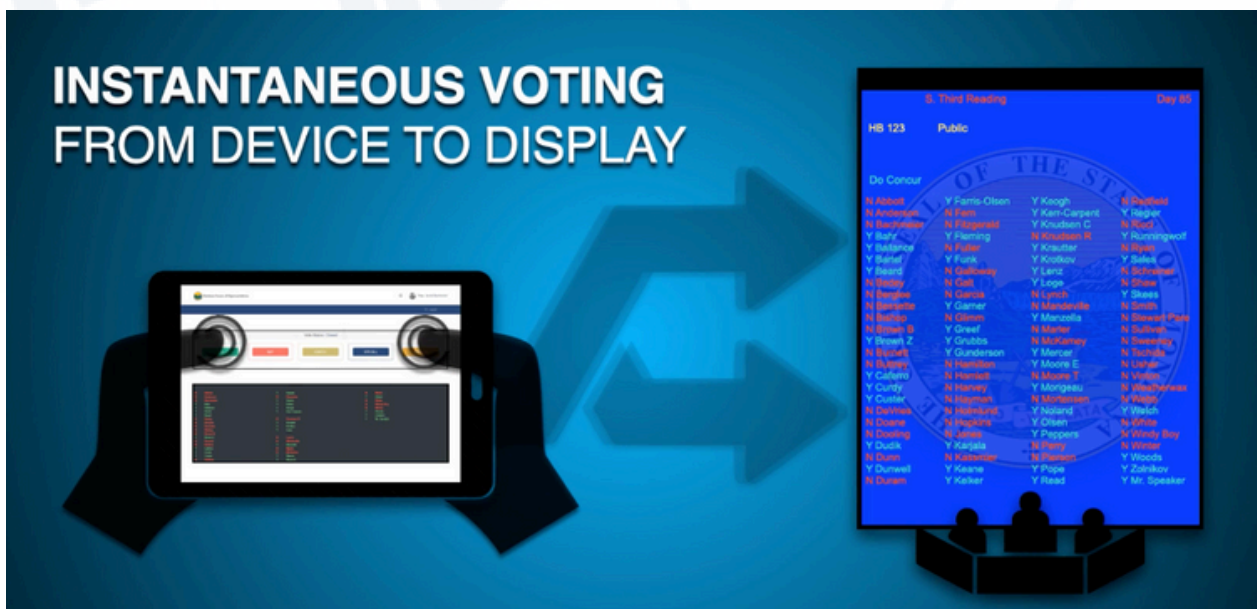
Modern and Efficient: Virtual Voting Console

Legislative chambers that have implemented digital voting systems consistently report faster vote processing, significantly fewer recording errors, and improved public confidence in the accuracy of legislative proceedings. These systems are not just helpful, they are expected. Citizens demand transparency, and lawmakers strive to ensure the record reflects their intentions. A robust digital voting system and display boards, backed by reliable software and support, makes that possible. Given these clear advantages, the question becomes how to best implement such systems. While some legislatures consider developing solutions internally, purpose-built systems from specialized providers often deliver superior results.

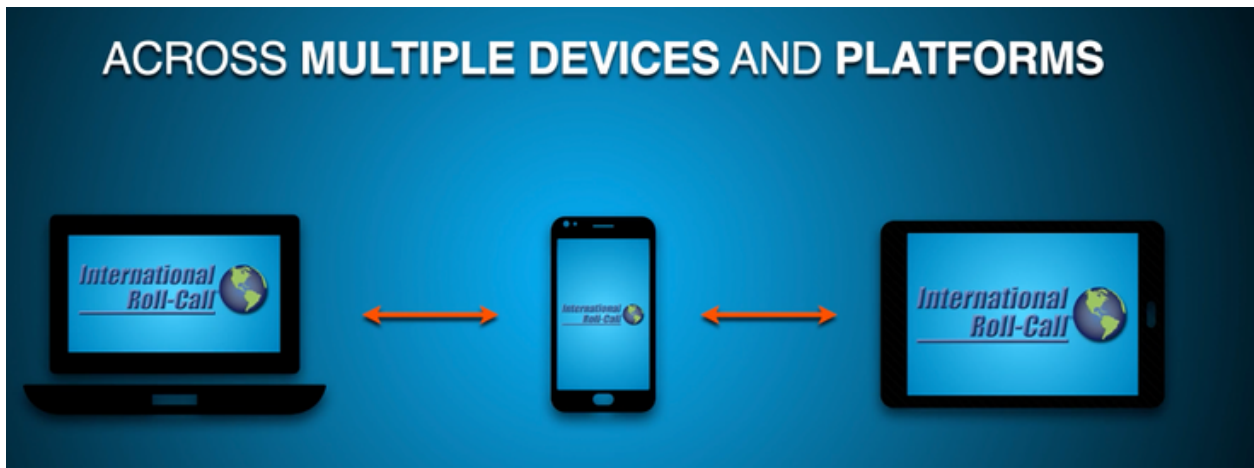
For example, IRC's Virtual Voting Console (VVC) was specifically created to give legislators seamless remote voting capabilities via a secure and user-friendly virtual interface, integrating directly with IRC's xmLegislator™ system to mirror the functionality of in-chamber voting consoles. This approach leverages IRC's decades of legislative technology expertise to provide a solution that avoids the risks and limitations of in-house development. While the benefits of digital voting systems are clear, many struggle with the best and most economical way to implement them.



VVC Voting Console Interface and Member Vote Display



The VVC user interface screen can provide customized functionality and information including Vote Status indication (Vote Open or Vote Closed) and Vote Totals



The VVC system is uniquely designed with the intention to provide seamless remote voting capabilities via a virtual voting interface on multiple devices and platforms

Why Not Just Build In-House?

Some states have experimented with leveraging their internal IT departments to build and manage legislative voting systems. While this may appear cost-effective at first, it is often a false economy. State IT departments excel at managing enterprise-wide systems and infrastructure. However, legislative voting systems require highly specialized expertise in parliamentary procedure, real-time display technology, and chamber-specific integration. These niche requirements often fall outside the core competencies that state IT teams are designed to handle, creating a potential mismatch between available resources and specialized needs

Developing a reliable, rules-compliant legislative voting system from scratch is not a one-time project. Doing so requires:

- Professional staff with legislative experience and knowledge that can be conveyed to technical staff for wireframes and development;
- Software developers who possess a deep familiarity with parliamentary procedure and voting logic;
- Hardware engineers and technicians for design, procurement, installation, diagnostics, and chamber integration;
- Session-day support personnel who are available on-demand during live votes; and
- Ongoing maintenance and feature development, including integration with streaming media platforms and journal systems.

When comparing the total cost of ownership, the economics favor external partnerships. Building an in-house legislative voting system requires multiple full-time specialists in a niche field, plus ongoing development and maintenance costs. These ongoing personnel expenses often exceed the total cost of a comprehensive external solution by a significant margin.

Building this capability in-house requires either significant retraining of current staff or hiring specialists in legislative technology—a niche field with limited talent pools. This approach carries substantial costs beyond initial salaries, including benefits, ongoing training, and the management infrastructure needed to support a highly specialized team. Given these challenges with internal development, many legislatures are discovering that specialized partnerships offer a more strategic approach toward comprehensive voting solutions.

Why International Roll-Call® Corporation Is More Economical and Effective

Working with an outside vendor like International Roll-Call® Corporation (IRC) offers a turnkey solution without the ongoing personnel overhead. IRC has already invested in the development, testing, and refinement of its legislative platform. That means state legislatures can benefit from:

- Lower upfront development costs, since the system isn't being built from scratch;
- No long-term staffing costs such as salaries, benefits, or retraining for turnover;
- Predictable pricing with maintenance, upgrades, and support included in a service contract;
- Faster deployment timelines, reducing the downtime and delays that often plague in-house builds; and
- Proven reliability, with successful installations across multiple chambers and committee rooms.



Testimonial

I appreciate you and your team's support throughout the year and especially as we head into session. We had an issue with the display boards in the House so I contacted Ryan. He responded immediately to help get the issue resolved. We did get the opportunity for Ryan to chat with staff to walk them through how the system works and discuss an upgrade to the wiring system for the desk buttons we are investigating. You hire the best people and you can tell they love what they do.

Susan W. Kannarr, J.D.
Chief Clerk, Kansas House of Representatives



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Email info@roll-call.com

Most importantly, IRC provides dedicated legislative expertise—a specialized focus that complements existing state IT capabilities while addressing the unique demands of legislative chambers. These advantages make a compelling case for external partnerships, but the benefits extend beyond mere cost savings.

A Smarter Investment in Democratic Infrastructure

At its core, modernizing the vote is about ensuring that every lawmaker's voice is heard, recorded, and displayed with transparency. Legislatures that invest in proven, specialized partners like IRC are not just upgrading their technology—they are upgrading democracy itself. At its core, modernizing the vote is about ensuring that every lawmaker's voice is heard, recorded, and displayed with transparency. Legislatures that invest in proven, specialized partners like IRC are not just upgrading their technology—they are upgrading democracy itself.

In choosing a purpose-built solution to improve efficiency and integrity in legislative decision-making over an in-house product, legislatures ensure votes are accurately recorded and transparently displayed, fostering trust in the democratic process. A more economical, reliable, and scalable system allows their internal IT teams to focus on broader statewide needs. Because when the vote counts, how the vote is counted—and who you trust to build it—matters exponentially.

By partnering with proven specialists like IRC and our technological partners in indexing, audio-visual, and display technology, legislatures can implement robust, reliable systems that facilitate accuracy, transparency and secure record-keeping allowing lawmakers and legislative staff to focus on creating, and implementing public policies that serve not just today's needs, but tomorrow's democratic challenges.

Our dedicated team works hand-in-hand with legislative staff to ensure that IRC's voting systems are tailored to the precise operational and procedural needs of each chamber. From implementation to training, and ongoing support, IRC is a trusted partner in transforming the efficiency, accuracy, and transparency of voting processes in legislative bodies.