



John Bonifaz
for Secretary of State

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Bonifaz Endorses Open Standards for Digital Democracy

BOSTON – Voting rights leader **John Bonifaz**, Democratic candidate for Secretary of State, has endorsed the adoption of open standards based data formats – including the Open Document Format for office automation – for software used by Commonwealth government organizations. Open standards insure that data formats are fully documented and available for use by any person or company without licensing fees.

“We should not allow Microsoft or any other corporate entity to dictate how our electronic archives are stored,” said Bonifaz. “These changes cannot be made overnight, but we must take practical steps to ensure the integrity and accessibility of digital public information.

“Use of open standards based data formats will foster government transparency and accountability, ease citizen access to public information, create greater competition for government business, improve interoperability between applications and organizations, and ensure the archival integrity of digital information.”

Bonifaz supports adoption of the Open Document Format (ODF) for office automation software, created by the IT industry consortium OASIS. He does not, however, endorse the 2007 ODF compliance deadline proposed by the Romney administration in August 2005.

“We need to ensure that the software requirements of the Commonwealth’s disabled community are sufficiently met by available ODF compliant software,” Bonifaz said. “We also need to provide practical guidance and affordable solutions for state agencies and municipalities. These are not simple issues and it is not enough for the Secretary of the Commonwealth to promulgate legal requirements or policy advice. He or she must work collaboratively with agencies and municipalities to determine reasonable and effective practices for the creation and retention of digital documents.”

In addition, Bonifaz rejects a proposed amendment to Section 4 of Senate Bill 2256 that would transfer information technology policy making authority from the executive branch to the Secretary of the Commonwealth and an IT advisory panel.

"Rather than dictating from the chair of a central committee, I would work with our municipalities and state agencies to outline a clear and sensible approach, one that develops flexible and dynamic guidelines that will allow for a diversity of solutions and open the door to greater efficiency and transparency in Massachusetts government."

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