

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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February 9, 2023

**Via Electronic Mail Only**

Boris Brajkovic, Election Director  
Montgomery County Board of Elections  
18753-210 N. Frederick Avenue  
Gaithersburg MD 20879-3121

Dear Boris:

Thank you for forwarding the request by the members of the Montgomery County Board of Elections for more information about the “Albert sensor” and how we protect the information systems and data we use to conduct elections and sharing the constituent’s letter that prompted the request.

In 2018, the State Board of Elections (SBE) began receiving network security monitoring and intrusion detection services from the Center for Internet Security’s (CIS) Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC). These services are widely recognized best practices for users of information systems, as they help entities identify malicious activities and provide network security alerts. To provide these services, the MS-ISAC provides a sensor - called Albert - to collect network traffic data (**not** election data) and uses this data to look for specific patterns and known malicious activity in the traffic. The Albert sensor cannot block or alter network traffic and cannot see the contents of encrypted traffic. You can learn more about the Albert sensor from the attached document and from [CIS’ Albert Network Monitoring and Management webpage](#).

Contrary to the information on the constituent’s letter, MS-ISAC shares information with entities receiving its network security monitoring and intrusion detection services. We receive monthly reports on the network traffic MS-ISAC analyzed. These reports include information on identified incidents and events and compares the network traffic analyzed that month against traffic analyzed in prior months. We also receive from MS-ISAC’s Security Operations Center actionable alerts of malicious activity. Since the Albert sensor does **not** collect election data, Amazon Web Services - used by CIS to store netflow data - does **not** have access to or store election data.

Each odd-numbered year, SBE hosts a mandatory meeting for members, election directors, and staff of the local boards of elections. At this meeting, there will be at least one session about how we protect our election systems and data. This session will be an opportunity for all members, directors, and staff to learn - or as the case may be, learn more - about the multi-pronged, “best practices” approach we use to protect and monitor our election systems and data. In light of the upcoming biennial meeting, I will defer providing to the

Letter to Mr. Brajkovic

Page 2

February 9, 2023

members of the Montgomery County Board of Elections the requested information now and look forward to sharing this information with the members of all of the local boards later this year.

As you know, State and local election officials work continuously and tirelessly to ensure that elections, election systems, and election data are accurate. Maintaining accurate voter registration data occurs daily, and there is at least one ballot tabulation audit performed after each election to confirm the accuracy of the voting system. SBE's website includes information about [how election officials in Maryland maintain voter registration data](#) and how [post-election audits confirm the accuracy of the voting system](#).

I hope this information is useful to you and the members of the Montgomery County Board of Elections, and we look forward to sharing an overview of how we protect election systems and data at this year's biennial meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda H. Lamone".

Linda H. Lamone

Enclosure: CIS' *About the Albert Sensor*