Rhode Island Model Legislature
Memorandum

TO: All RIML Students, Advisors, and State Coordinators
FROM: Nicholas R. Barrow, Systems Administrator
            Version 1.0.1
RE.:   Secure Motion Voting System

Introduction

I hope this email finds you and your families safe and well during these unprecedented times. For those of you who do not know me, my name is Nicholas Barrow and I am the Systems Administrator for the Model Legislature's digital side, as well as the media consultant for the Rhode Island Council for the Social Studies (formerly RISSA). I also was the Senate President last year, and will be a Freshman at Georgetown University this fall.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, the Model Legislature experimented with a semi-digital platform for the 2019-2020 season, commonly referred to as the "Digital Repository." At this point, I urge you to read the Digital Plan to account for COVID-19, which as available here: https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.68/n5p.0b9.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Digital-Plan_-COVID-19-2.pdf.

This Memorandum is an extension of the COVID-19 Digital Plan; this document will outline the policies and procedures to allow for safe, secure, and accurate voting for all Rhode Island Model Legislature activities, from leadership meetings to the General Assembly.

Usage

The Secure Voting System (SVS) is available for use to all students who are voting members of the Senate or House of Representatives. SVS is not available to students who do not have voting privileges (clerks, pages, and lobbyists).

Requirements

SVS requires users to have a desktop or laptop computer running Windows or MacOS. There are also additional software requirements to deploy the system:

- Updated Java installation.

- Active internet connection.

Installation

There is a separate SVS terminal for every legislative body that needs one. This means that the SVS installation for the Senate will be different from the SVS installation for the House of Representatives. Students should keep this in mind when determining the installation of SVS that they require. To download and install SVS, choose the correct link from the website.

Note: users must be signed in to access the download link(s).

The download will be in .ZIP or .TAR format, both of which are simply compressed archive folders. Drag and drop the downloaded .ZIP/.TAR to a location, such as your Desktop, and extract the contents of the folder (this is usually done by double-clicking on the .ZIP/.TAR). Installation has been completed.

Accessing the SVS Terminal

Every installation of the SVS creates a local terminal for each student to access the system. Students will be provided with a one-time-only username and password to access the system ahead of any scheduled vote. These credentials should be kept secret and confidential by the issued-student, and may only be used by the student assigned said credentials. As always, students are expected to act "in good faith".

To begin accessing the terminal, open the unarchived folder that you created in the installation process by extracting the .ZIP/.TAR. Then, open the "bin" folder. The next step is based on the operating system installed on your compute:
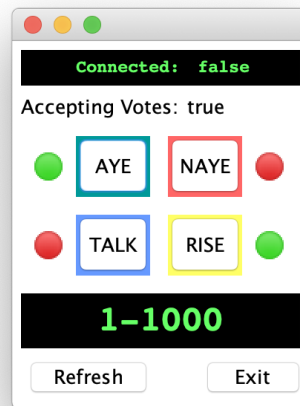
- Windows: double click the file ending in .BAT.

- MacOS: double click the Terminal file.

The SVS Login Terminal will display if the installation was done correctly and proper permissions were allowed. You may also be prompted to sign-in to your @rimodellegislature.com email account. Allow access if prompted. Enter the one-time-only username and password you were provided. Click the "login" button or press the enter key. Your individual SVS Terminal will then

open. Press the "Refresh" button in the bottom left-hand corner to ensure a proper connection; if this has occurred, you will see "Connection: true" at the top of the SVS Terminal.

Using the SVS Terminal

The SVS is nearly identical to the voting machines used when students arrive at the State House (traditionally) for General Assembly Day. A picture of the first iteration can be found below.

There are four main buttons that students will interact with when participating in the virtual sessions:

- "AYE" & "NAYE" — will be used interchangeably; this is what students will press to cast their vote, and is identical to the way the State House voting machines work.
- "TALK" — this is synonymous with the "RECOG" button at the State House; students will press this button to request to speak on a bill.
- "RISE" — this button is entirely new; students traditionally "rise/stand" to arise points of order, parliamentary inquiry, and information, which, for obvious reasons, is not entirely visible over a digital setting. Instead, students will be able to press this button to virtually raise these points.

The green and red lights next to each button indicate whether or not the button is active; green buttons indicate the action has been pushed, while red buttons indicate that the actions have not been pushed.

A digital screen at the top of the terminal indicates the connection status. Below this, the status of the machine (traditionally referred to as "locked" or "unlocked") is visible and controlled by the Administration. Along the bottom of the terminal is a digital board that shows the current status of any unlocked vote.

Note: Students will need to press the "Refresh" button to get updates on pending votes.

The "Exit" button is used to terminate the connection in a secure fashion.

Closing

If students experience problems during any voting days, a hotline number will be set up to help immediately solve these problems. More information will follow on this.

Thanks for your time, and stay healthy!

Best,

Nicholas R. Barrow

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