

Colorado Governor Ritter Acknowledges Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell for *Pro Bono* Contribution

News

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Denver: On May 15, 2009, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter signed into law a bill that places Colorado at the forefront of election reform efforts nationwide and serves as a model for other states. House Bill 1335 phases out discredited direct-record electronic (DRE) voting systems and mandates that by 2014 Colorado elections will be conducted with paper-based voting systems. In addition, the new law mandates that Colorado implement state-of-the-art, risk-based election audits to ensure that Colorado elections are free from fraud and enjoy the full confidence of Colorado voters.

House bill 1335 originated as recommendations from the specially appointed Colorado Election Reform Commission (CERC). The recommendations were supported by more than three years of *pro bono* work by a legal team led by Paul Hultin of Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell that started with a trial victory in *Conroy v. Dennis* in 2006. The WTO lawyers represented the *Conroy* plaintiffs, a non-partisan group of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. With the support of nationally renowned computer scientists, the *Conroy* plaintiffs successfully sued the Colorado Secretary of State in a case that challenged the certification and use of

DRE voting machines as unreliable and insecure. *Conroy* led to emergency legislation in 2008 that provided for interim certification of DREs for the 2008 election only. The case also prompted the establishment of CERC to study issues related to electronic voting and to make recommendations to the 2009 legislature. Mr. Hultin was appointed to CERC and, along with Larimer County Clerk and Recorder Scott Doyle, developed the bi-partisan recommendations that were ultimately signed into law by Governor Ritter.

The *Conroy* case and the resulting election reform efforts in Colorado have attracted attention from the press and the election reform community nationwide. At the bill signing, Governor Ritter acknowledged WTO for the *pro bono* contributions it has made on behalf of Colorado citizens over the past three years.