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**For Immediate Release**  
**May 17, 2018**

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## **Board of Elections Announces Installation of New Cyber Security Protection System**

**(Columbus)** The Franklin County Board of Elections announces the installation of a new network intrusion detection system designed to provide even greater cyber security protection to Franklin County's cybersecurity defense system. "We are excited to be able to take advantage of the cybersecurity resources of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to enhance the security of our election system in Franklin County," stated Board of Elections Director Ed Leonard. Leonard noted that the new election-specific network sensor, called an Albert sensor, is in addition to existing cybersecurity network monitoring sensors already in place on the Franklin County data network. Though it is important to note that its voting machines and election management software systems are not connected to the internet or the county's data network, the Board's voter registration system and other election software are connected to the county network.

In mid-March 2018, the Ohio Secretary of State's Office (SOS) introduced Franklin County Board of Elections officials to representatives of the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC), which is funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. After a webinar outlining all of the resources available through the EI-ISAC, the Franklin County Board of Elections agreed to participate in the program. FCBOE Deputy Director David Payne stated, "When we were made aware of additional resources available to add more layers of cyber security it was a no-brainer 100% bi-partisan decision!" In a program to secure voter registration databases, Franklin County, as one of Ohio's five largest county boards of election, is eligible to obtain an Albert sensor at no cost to monitor internet accessible elements of the elections infrastructure.

Albert is a unique network monitoring solution that provides automated alerts on both traditional and advanced network threats, allowing organizations to respond quickly when their data may be at risk. Albert was originally modeled on the Einstein system that provides cybersecurity monitoring at the federal level. It is currently deployed in over 50 states and territories, and several local governments and public critical infrastructure operators.

The Albert solution utilizes a unique and targeted signature set to ensure sensors rapidly recognize and alert on potentially malicious traffic occurring on the network. When the sensor identifies suspected malicious cyber activity, an analyst at the EI-ISAC's 24x7x365 Security Operations Center verifies the alert is legitimate and sends out an event notification.

The new relationship with the EI-ISAC also allows Franklin County to access other cybersecurity related resources such as:

Incident Response and Remediation – The EI-ISAC has teams available to provide forensic analysis of a cyberattack, provide a report of what happened, and provide support to respond to a cyber-related incident.

Threat & Vulnerability Monitoring – EI-ISAC analysts work with trusted affiliates to conduct research and gather intelligence about cyber threats targeting government or government-affiliated systems. Notices are sent to impacted members with recommended remediation steps and offers of technical assistance. Members are also notified on a monthly basis about outdated software that could pose a threat to assets.

Best Practices Clearinghouse – The EI-ISAC serves as a clearinghouse for sharing news about best practices in the cyber-defense field with particular emphasis on the elections field and provides Franklin County access to implementation tools.

Election-Specific Threat Intelligence – The EI-ISAC provides members with timely alerts containing intelligence and security recommendations on ongoing cyber incidents, threats, actors, trends, or patterns affecting the elections community.

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