



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 12, 2012

Romney, Obama Share Donors & Ties to Spanish Vote-counting Co.

Bain Capital, the private equity firm [founded by Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney](#), has ties to the Spanish company that manufactured the voting machines that will be used across the country in November.

Scytl is a Spanish tabulation company that has entered into [contracts with several American states and municipalities](#) in recent years to handle the counting of votes in local and national elections.

For example, the state of Florida was using Scytl to tabulate election results, but later rescinded the contract after uncovering evidence of significant risks in the methods the Barcelona-based company was employing.

According to the report issued by the Florida Department of State:

Our findings identified vulnerabilities that, in the worst case, could result in (i) voters being unable to cast votes, (ii) an election result that does not accurately reflect the will of the voters, or (iii) disclosure of confidential information, such as the votes cast by a voter.

Then in 2010, the Scytl system in use in Washington, D.C., was hacked. As part of an effort to determine the reliability of the devices, the D.C. Board of Elections & Ethics reportedly “encouraged outside parties to hack and find flaws in its new online balloting system.” Answering the challenge, students from the University of Michigan successfully violated the site and programmed it to play the University of Michigan fight song every time a vote was cast.

Why should this alarm Americans who don’t live in those jurisdictions? Chiefly because during the midterm elections in November 2010, Scytl was contracted by 14 states to “modernize” their voting apparatuses.

Scytl is set to deploy its software in 900 U.S. jurisdictions. The firm [already handles the balloting for members of the U.S. military](#) and their families living overseas.

During the midterm 2010 election cycle, the following states used Scytl’s technology in tabulating votes: New York, Texas, Washington, California, Florida, Alabama, Missouri, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nebraska, West Virginia, and Washington D.C.

Furthermore, Voter Action, an election integrity advocacy group, filed a complaint with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission in April 2010 alleging that the use of Scytl’s systems in the voting process “raises national security concerns.”

“Foreign governments may also seek to undermine the national security interests of the United States, either directly or through other organizations,” the complaint claimed.

In support of this last assertion, the complaint reveals that Scytl was formed in 2001 as the result of





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work done by a research group at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, work which was financed in large part by the Spanish government's Ministry of Science and Technology.

In light of the foregoing, the identification of those with ownership and control of the company that will be counting the votes for president (and other government officers) in November is crucial to the protection of the sanctity of the election process.

On its website, [Scytl names three entities as investors](#): Nauta Capital, Balderton Capital, and Spinnaker SCR. It is through [Balderton Capital](#) that Romney's Bain Capital has ties to the Spanish company that will be counting thousands upon thousands of votes for president in 2012.

One of the principals in Balderton Capital is Rob Moffat. Here is [Moffat's bio as provided on the Balderton Capital website](#):

Prior to joining Balderton Capital Rob worked for Google in London, as a Manager in their global sales strategy team. Rob's experience at Google included developing growth strategies for a number of Google's new businesses — reviewing potential acquisition targets as well as organic growth options. He also worked on the post-merger integration of DoubleClick in Europe and on long-term strategic planning.

Before Google Rob spent five years at Bain & Company, the management consultancy. His work there included business due diligence for private equity clients, as well as operational & strategic projects across a range of industries in Europe & North America.

Why should such an association be noteworthy? Consider the following information [printed in a story by Politico](#) on who is financing Mitt Romney's run for the White House:

Associates of private equity firm Bain Capital, once run by Mitt Romney, have fueled the GOP front-runner's political fortunes more than any other, asserts a new report by the nonpartisan Sunlight Foundation.

In all, current and former executives and family members of Bain Capital have contributed more than \$2.7 million to Romney's state and federal campaigns, leadership political action committees and Massachusetts gubernatorial inauguration fundraising committee, as well as the independent Restore Our Future super PAC backing Romney's White House bid, according to the report.

Apart from the substantial donations made by individuals associated with Bain Capital (Bain as a separate entity has only donated about \$156,500 to Romney 2012), the money given to the Romney campaign by Goldman Sachs is equally impressive. [According to OpenSecrets.org](#), the mega money house has deposited nearly \$600,000 in Romney's campaign coffer. Not surprisingly, Goldman Sachs has strong ties to Scytl's investor Balderton, as well.

Two of the partners who run Balderton are former Goldman Sachs executives.

[Tim Bunting](#) worked for Goldman Sachs for 18 years, including a stint as vice chairman of Goldman Sachs International.

[Mark Evans](#) spent 15 years at Goldman Sachs in Europe, Asia, and the United States.

While employees of [Goldman Sachs have slacked off recently](#) in their financial backing of Barack Obama, in 2008 employees and principals of the Wall Street behemoth [gave over \\$1 million to help elect the former senator from Illinois](#).

Beyond sharing a source of money with Mitt Romney, President Obama reportedly has ties to vote



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counter Scytl, as well.

There are stories being reported across the Internet that the owner of Scytl is a major donor to the Obama campaign. There is credible evidence that Pere Valles the current CEO of Scytl made the maximum legal donation to the Obama presidential campaign in 2008. This is not so surprising considering Valles has ties to Obama's hometown of Chicago, as is disclosed in [Valles' résumé posted on the Scytl website](#):

Mr. Valles joined Scytl in March 2004 after spending most of his professional career in the United States. Prior to joining Scytl, Mr. Valles was Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer of GlobalNet, a NASDAQ publicly-traded telecommunications company headquartered in Chicago.

Such associations are certainly worth examining very closely before control of our elections is handed over to Scytl, especially in light of Scytl's practice of downloading the votes from each precinct where its devices are in use to a company-owned server where they will be stored. Once the votes are collected, counted, and collated by Scytl and saved on its own proprietary servers, it would be nearly impossible to track any discrepancies between the numbers it reports and the actual vote tallies as taken at the local polling places.

While the ties that bind the presidential candidates of the two major political parties to the foreign corporation that will be managing the counting of votes in many parts of the country are somewhat tenuous, there is certainly enough smoke in this story to validate an investigative search for a fire among the connections and contracts relating to Scytl that could potentially consume the trust the American people have in the fairness of our national elections.

Regardless of the strength of these ties, however, one does get the sense that powerful corporations play a larger role than many understand in not only the choice of candidates, the money collected by those candidates to run their campaigns, but ultimately in the vital act of reporting of how many votes are cast for each of them.



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