

***** NEWS RELEASE *****

*From the Office of Secretary of the State
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**SEC. BYSIEWICZ PROPOSES MANDATORY AUDITS FOR
20% OF ALL OF POLLING DISTRICTS IN FUTURE
ELECTIONS**

**IF ADOPTED CONNECTICUT WOULD BE ONLY STATE IN NEW ENGLAND WITH
MANDATORY AUDITS OF VOTING MACHINES**

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz joined State Sen. Edward Meyer, State Sen. Gayle Slossberg, Joyce Hamilton-Henry of DemocracyWorks, and town clerks from across Connecticut today at a new conference to announce a new legislative proposal that would make Connecticut a national leader for verifying election results.

Sec. Bysiewicz's proposal, which she'll testify in support of tomorrow at the Government Administration and Elections Committee public hearing, would require Connecticut to conduct random audits of 20% of all polling districts in future statewide elections. If adopted, Connecticut would be the only state in New England and one of only 13 across the nation to require audits. The 20-percent requirement in Connecticut would be among the highest in the nation.

Under the proposed bill, the voting districts would be chosen at random - in a public drawing - by the Sec. of the State and all audits would consist of hand counts, conducted in public by local Registrars of Voters. If the manual hand counts cannot be reconciled with the machine count, the Sec. of the State could order additional investigation or order a full recount of the office or a partial recount of the remaining district.

"Having the right technology in place is just one part of the equation if we are to maintain integrity in the voting process," said Sec. Bysiewicz. "This new legislation

would ensure that regular and thorough audits are conducted and that voters can have the highest confidence that their vote is being counted.”

Hon. Herb Rosenthal, First Selectman, Newtown, and President, Connecticut Conference on Municipalities said, “I want to take this opportunity to personally commend Secretary of the State Bysiewicz for her continued efforts to ensure the integrity of Connecticut’s new voting technology. Her legislative proposal calling for random audits in a sampling of our towns and cities will clearly strengthen voter confidence in future elections.”

Sen. State Donald DeFronzo said, “This measure will add a high degree of confidence to our new voting system. These procedures will allow us to insure that the optical scan voting system is safe, reliable and secure.”

State Sen. Gayle Slossberg said, "There is nothing more vital than the integrity of our voting system. The general public has to have confidence that the votes they cast will be counted."

Christina Spiesel, of True Vote CT said, “The enactment of a voter verified paper trail requirement was one piece of the puzzle. Now legislation is being introduced to provide for mandatory audits of a statistically significant sample of voting machines. The audits are the next important piece of the accuracy and security puzzle to be put into place.”

In addition, Sec. Bysiewicz ‘s proposal would formalize her office’s partnership with the University of Connecticut’s Voting Technology Research (VoTeR)Center, which has helped evaluate, test, and audit the new voting technology. Alexander A. Shvartsman, with the VoTeR Center, said, “As computer-based voting technology is maturing it is important to ensure dependable and secure use of voting equipment. Computerized optical scanning equipment, with its voter-verified paper trail, offers a solid basis for modernizing elections, yet any computerized equipment can malfunction or be compromised, and it is important to have explicit procedures governing its use. We believe that Connecticut is among the leading states in the Nation with a methodical approach to modernizing elections, and we are privileged to be a part of this effort.”

Currently, the U.S. Congress is considering the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2007 (Holt Bill) – which includes an audit provision. If adopted, audits would be required for all federal offices on the ballot. Audits would include all ballots (machine counted, absentee ballots, overseas ballots and provisional ballots) and would the number would be based on a formula: (1) If margin of victory is less than 1%, then 10% of total precincts will be audited. (2) If margin of victory is 1-2%, then 5% of total precincts will be audited. (3) If margin of victory is greater than 2% then 3% of total precincts will be audited.

The Holt Bill also applies to optical scan machines and requires any machine used have a voter verified paper record, which in the case of an optical scanner is the actual ballot. Connecticut has already adopted such provisions and by the end of April will have optical scan machines with paper records in place in all 169 towns and cities.

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