

TESTIMONY
March 12, 2010

Connecticut Government Administration and Elections Committee,

Senate Bill 364 appears to be based on the flawed premise that simply rerunning paper ballots through vote counting scanners used for the initial count can replace the manual audits currently required by law. Unfortunately, this assumption is wrong. Because the proposed rescan is not an audit, it will not achieve the goals for which the manual audit was intended. I urge the legislature to retain the manual hand counts in the existing audit legislation.

The primary purpose of post-election audits is to check tabulation results reported by computerized voting systems, just as the purpose of a business audit is to check financial results reported by that business. Post-election audits are motivated by the knowledge that computers can and do fail. This is not some abstract theory. There are real world examples of ways in which computerized voting systems can miscount election results.

Once a computer has been programmed, it will essentially produce the same result every time it is given the identical input, even when using a different computer of the same model, with an identical or similar memory card. This means that if a voting system contains incorrect or election-rigging software, rerunning the same ballots through an identical compromised counting system will result in the same incorrect tally.

That is why computer experts call for manual audits of voting systems. They know that both software errors and clever election-rigging software can be difficult to detect.

We need to hold our elections to the same standards that we demand of our businesses. This means that we must conduct routine post-election manual audits of election outcomes.

Sincerely,

Barbara Simons, Ph.D.

For identification, only:

Barbara Simons is on the Board of Advisors of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and the Board of Directors of VerifiedVoting.org. She was a member of the workshop, convened at the request of President Clinton, that produced a report on Internet Voting in 2001. She also co-authored the report that led to the cancellation of Department of Defense's Internet voting project (SERVE) because of security concerns. Simons, a former ACM President, co-chaired the ACM study of statewide databases of registered voters, and co-authored the League of Women Voters report on election auditing. She is co-authoring a book on voting machines with Doug Jones. Simons is retired from IBM Research.