

## H.B. 5026

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
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Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount. Particularly relevant today, as Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Election Audit Coalition, in 2010 I organized the Bridgeport Citizen Recount. Today, I am speaking for CTVotersCount.

This written testimony details and expands on my ad-hoc verbal testimony. I have suggestions for improving this bill, which I support:

First, expand the bill to explicitly include “elections, primary elections, and special elections” such that there is no question that it covers all three. The term “elections” is ambiguous.

Second, limit the bill to requiring that only entire elections, primary elections, or special elections can be rescheduled. If only a single municipality were allowed to reschedule an election, primary election, or special election that covered a wider territory, then voters in that municipality would have enhanced power knowing the results in other municipalities prior to voting, while voters in the other municipalities would have their vote’s value diminished.

Finally, consider expanding the bill and the Secretary of the State’s power to counteract unnatural disasters. Provide the Secretary of State, in any election, primary election, or special election, for any reason, to call for a discrepancy recanvass. Currently only a single individual in each municipality, the Head Moderator, may call for a discrepancy recanvass. That is insufficient.

For example, in 2010 the then Secretary of the State, stood by helplessly along with voters and candidates as chaos reigned in Bridgeport due to a mistake, followed by multiple insufficient remedial actions by local officials. The Secretary attempted, but was not empowered to call for a post-election audit – even that would actually have been ineffective – it would not have found the problems associated with ballots originally hand counted, incorrectly. The situation could have been remedied if the Secretary had the power to call for a city-wide recanvass.

Having only one person with the responsibility to call for a discrepancy recanvass, creates opportunities for all sorts of similar errors of omission, local pressures, perceived pressures, or commission. Given the chaos, long hours, media attention and other pressures it is understandable that a Head Moderator might not recognize or seriously consider the remedy of a discrepancy recanvass. A Secretary of the State should have the prospective, objectivity, and authority required to intervene in such a situation.

This was one of the remedies recommended by the Coalition in the Bridgeport Recount Report:  
<http://www.ctelectionaudit.org/bridgeport-recount-report/>

*Adoption of emergency plans: It’s important to note that, simply printing more ballots only reduces the chance of the specific problem that occurred in Bridgeport. There are other causes that could result in a municipality having to scramble to photocopy ballots or perform hand counting such as a massive power failure or ballots lost in a fire, flood, or accident shortly before or during Election Day...*

- *In addition to head moderators, the Secretary of the State should have the power to order discrepancy recanvasses...*

Thank you.