



**Testimony from Verified Voting**

To the Committee on GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS  
Connecticut General Assembly, regarding:

**Proposed Bill No. 901**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING POST-ELECTION AUDITS**

11 March 2013

# Written

**OPPOSITION TO ONE PORTION OF BILL NO. 901 – Relying ONLY on machine-tabulated audit tabulation is too risky. A portion of manual tabulation serves an essential role.**

Chairs Musto and Jutila and Members of the Committee, Verified Voting urges the Committee to retain the manual count in Section (d) of the proposed bill. (restore to previous language)

The manual audit serves an essential role of ensuring that humans have checked the tabulation and not just machines. Machines are subject to a wide variety of types of errors, many of which are unanticipated or are not caught in pre-election certification checks. For instance, errors in ballot definition files, pens used for marking, and vote-interpretation and tabulation algorithm files are all known machine errors that have gotten past certification in the past.

These are examples of errors that would likely get past a second machine tabulation, as the new bill language proposes. Additionally, we've all learned that we can't anticipate all the threats to machine performance so we should expect new threats and have procedures in place to catch those errors.

Manual counts offer that assurance. We know that manual counts can be burdensome but they don't have to be. Outstanding improvements to time, cost and efficiency have been developed recently for risk-limiting, post-election manual audits. The improvements can be supported by a combination of machine-assisted tabulation and a smart, statistical comparison audit conducted manually.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence-Based Elections, PB. Stark and D.A. Wagner, 2012  
<http://statistics.berkeley.edu/~stark/Preprints/evidenceVote12.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Risk-Limiting Post-Election Audits: Why and How, 2012  
<http://statistics.berkeley.edu/~stark/Preprints/RLAwhitepaper12.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> American Statistical Association letter supporting "Risk-Limiting Post-Election Audits: Why and How" 2012  
<http://www.amstat.org/policy/pdfs/StarkEtAlLetterOfSupport.pdf>

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We applaud the General Assembly for recognizing the value of post-election audits and urge it to consider these innovations that make post-election audits both more effective, and more efficient, at the same time. That comes from blending the benefits of both machine tabulation and human tabulation most efficiently.

We look forward to any opportunity to work with Connecticut to improve post-election audits. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can answer any questions on this matter.

Very truly yours,



Dan McCrea

Verified Voting

[dan@verifiedvoting.org](mailto:dan@verifiedvoting.org)

Cell: 305-984-2900