



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

MARCH 11, 2013

Tim De Carlo, Registrar, Waterbury

Testimony in SUPPORT of Raised Bill No 901 AAC Post-Election Audits

Senator Musto, Representative Jutila and Members of the GAE Committee, my name is Timothy De Carlo, and I am the Registrar of Voters from the City of Waterbury, as well as a member of ROVAC Legislative Committee. I am here today to testify in support of SB 901.

ROVAC is in support of changes to Section 1. Section 9-320f of the general statutes. This bill as proposed would make three distinct changes to the current statute. The first would be limiting the amount of polling places selected for a post-election audit to no more than three per municipality. The second would be auditing five percent of the total voting districts statewide and the third would be allowing for future technological advances, when available to be used in future audits.

The current law mandates that all polling precincts in a municipality be placed in a lottery to determine which polling precincts will be chosen for a post election audit. Many of Connecticut's larger cities currently have over 20 polling precincts, while smaller towns maintain only 1 polling place per municipality. This creates an unfair balance when towns are drawn at random for the post election audit.

During the past post-election audit of 2012, 75 polling places state-wide were randomly selected. Of that number seven towns were selected multiple times, including the city of New Haven which was chosen 6 times, Stamford 4 times, and West Haven 3 times. These cities, due to their population, have a much larger body of voters than smaller towns. Therefore, the cost of an audit varies greatly from town to town. During an audit, teams of two people recount, by hand, each ballot that went through the voting tabulator on Election Day. If a large town or city has multiple districts chosen, this normally amounts to many thousands of ballots being hand counted. This also impacts a municipality's budget and can lead to great financial stress on a larger town or city. Last year Connecticut held three elections, each one with a post- election audit. It is very difficult for towns to budget the money for an audit as some towns will not be chosen while others could see six or more audits.

The language in this bill is attempting to remove the unfair disadvantage that larger towns and cities face and put all of Connecticut's municipalities on a fair playing field when it comes to the number of precincts each municipality can have selected for audit post election.

Currently Connecticut conducts post-election audits of 10% of the total precincts statewide. SB 901 would change the amount to 5% of the total precincts. ROVAC supports this measure. The tabular voting system that Connecticut is currently using has proven during the past five years that it is an accurate system capable of producing accurate results.

ROVAC also supports changes to the statute to allow for future non-manual hand counting of ballots for post-election audits. This bill would allow the Secretary of the State's office to implement newer cost saving technology in the future for post-election audits. ROVAC supports the use of new technology that not only streamlines post-elections audits but also helps to curb the costs that are associated with them.