



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
Public Hearing March 9, 2015

Testimony on Raised Bill SB 1041

An Act Concerning Post – Election Audit Integrity and Efficiency.

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and Members of the GAE Committee

My name is Sue W. Larsen. I am Chairman of the ROVAC Legislative Committee and here to speak on SB 1041. Last year ROVAC spoke in favor of SB 901. SB1041 has some similar language which ROVAC supports but there is additional language included which we feel goes beyond the intent of the audit process.

The bill removes manual audit and allows for electronic or any other methodology that may be developed in the future. ROVAC supports technology and this is an area that would make a difference in the accuracy, timing and costs.

We support the reduction of audits from 10% to 5%. The audit was developed to test the tabulator so voters would develop a trust for technology as we moved from lever machines to tabulators. We believe the tabulators have proved themselves accurate and therefore reducing to 5% makes sense.

Reducing the number of times a municipality is selected to a maximum of 4 is supported by ROVAC. Municipalities with 20 or more districts have taken the brunt of this. They are selected multiple times while municipalities with 1 polling place very rarely get selected. This leaves the large municipalities carrying the burden both financially and manpower. Attempting to budget for audits is difficult because there is no way to know how many audits to plan for. Each manual audit consists of two people per team. Depending on the size of the district, the registrars will determine the number of teams needed.

Currently the tabulators are sealed for 14 days. This bill recommends 30 – 60 days. The timing is too long. There are several incidences in which municipalities need the tabulators for special elections, referendum that occur within 30 – 60 days. Sealing the ballots for 30 – 60 days is not an issue.

Where ROVAC has the strongest issue is that the audit was designed to test the tabulator. This bill includes hand counted ballots. Hand counts are done that way because there is an issue with the ballot that the tabulator could not handle. The ballot needed two sets of eyes to determine the voter's intent or lack of intent. This bill turns the audit of the tabulator into an audit of the election. The whole purpose of the audit changes. ROVAC is most definitely not against the public viewing of the audit procedure. Transparency of the process is critical. However, making the audit available in a standard computer-readable format for the public may have unintended consequences for the candidates and the election process.

We urge you to carefully consider this bill. ROVAC is more than willing to work with the members of GAE to craft language that will make the audit of elections more efficient. As Registrars of Voters, we honor the trust placed in us by the voters in the administration of the election process.

Thank you for allowing this testimony.

Sue W. Larsen, Registrar of Voters South Windsor
ROVAC Legislative Chair