

# Government Administration and Elections Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6575

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING RISK-LIMITING AUDITS FOR ELECTION RESULTS.

**Vote Date:** 3/31/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/10/2021

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would establish a working group to look at the practicality of using risk-limiting audits to determine the accuracy of elections in Connecticut. The bill requires the working group to submit to the Government Administration and Elections Committee a report with its findings by January 31, 2022.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

**Denise W. Merrill, Secretary of the State, Connecticut:** Secretary of the State, Merrill, testified that they proposed this bill to examine and test the possibility of creating a system of post-election risk-limiting audits. They explain that this bill would, “create a study committee to determine the feasibility and practicability of Connecticut implementing risk-limiting audits, including needs related to equipment, procedures, and statutes. This bill would also create a pilot program to test one or more methods of risk limiting audits in the 2021 municipal elections”.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Judy Lhamon, VP Advocacy, League of Women Voters of Connecticut:** Lhamon testified that this bill should help build confidence in elections conducted by Connecticut’s elections officials, and identify any areas that need attention.

**John Marion, Executive Director, Common Cause, Rhode Island:** Marion testified that certain risk limiting audits can help prevent and address various issues that may arise in the

election process including ballot polling, ballot comparison and batch comparison. They explain that if this legislation were to pass, the Rhode Island Board of Elections, “should be able to provide it with information about the cost the state has incurred to plan and execute the two risk-limiting audits conducted so far...Additionally, groups and individuals involved in the Rhode Island audit implementation work group would be willing to testify on a variety of topics, including the statistics, software, sampling method, ballot accounting, and other aspects of RLAs”.

**Dennis Mema:** Mema testified in support of HB 6575.

**Cheri Quickmire, Executive Director, Common Cause in Connecticut:** Quickmire testified that they support the bill to help ensure our election results are as accurate as possible. They explain that Rhode Island has successfully implemented risk-limiting audits in the last two elections. Quickmire explains that these audits will give our elections more protection and our voters more confidence.

**Peter D. Spain:** Spain testified in support of HB 6575.

**Dr. Philip B. Stark, Board Advisor, The Open Source Election Technology (OSET) Institute:** Stark testified that risk-limiting audits allow elections to be conducted in a way that gives the public convincing evidence that the results of the election are correct. They recommend that legislation be passed requiring the Secretary of the State, “to develop regulations for the secure, verifiable custody of voted ballots (including protocols for using seals, transporting ballots, and storing ballots), and regulations for “compliance audits” to ensure that eligibility was determined correctly and that the security of the physical ballots was maintained”. They also suggest passing legislation requiring risk-limiting audits for all statewide contests and risk-measuring audits for all other contests based on the ballots selected for the risk-limiting audits, as well as developing a publicly owned, open source voting system. Stark explains that there is no perfect way to count votes but utilizing evidence-based elections requires local election officials to provide the electorate convincing evidence.

**Luther Weeks, Executive Director, CTVotersCount:** Weeks testified that risk-limiting audits can help contribute to justified confidence in elections. They explain that aspects of the bill that they believe need to be clarified or addressed; “I recommend that such a Task Force take advantage of some of the expertise, experience, and software available to help develop valuable prototypes and effective laws”.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Expressed

**Reported by: Jenna Schwerdtle**

**Date: 03/31/2021**