
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6871

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION RECANVASS PROCEDURES.

SUMMARY

This bill modifies several procedures for election recanvasses (i.e., recounts). Specifically, the bill:

1. requires that recanvasses be done no later than five business days after moderators submit the duplicate lists of votes to the Secretary of the State (SOTS), rather than five business days after the election as current law provides;
2. requires that recanvass officials meet by 12:00 p.m. on recanvass day (no time is currently set in law);
3. authorizes party representatives to view each ballot to discern its markings as it is being recanvassed; and
4. makes technical changes.

The bill also requires SOTS to develop an instructional training video on recanvass procedures based on the Recanvass Procedure Manual's August 2012 revision. Under the bill, SOTS must (1) publish the recanvass procedures instructional video on its website, (2) revise it whenever the procedure manual is revised, and (3) distribute it to recanvass officials. These officials must view the video before starting a recanvass.

By law, SOTS must approve the number of voting tabulators provided for elections by each town's board of selectmen, city's common council, or borough's warden and burgesses. The bill eliminates a provision giving registrars of voters discretion to determine the number of voting tabulators that will be available at a special

election, but requiring at least one for the municipality or one for each voting district. Instead, the bill requires at least one voting tabulator be used in each voting district for all elections.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Recanvass Procedures

After a primary or election, a recanvass of the vote generally takes place when there is a discrepancy, close vote, or tie. The recanvass procedures differ depending on the circumstances under which the recanvass was triggered. A recanvass must be open to the public and, under current law, convene no later than five business days after the applicable primary or election.

Generally, when a recanvass is triggered, the town clerk and registrars of voters must impound the relevant election materials and tools. The recanvass officials must then meet and recount the votes to determine if the original canvass was correct or if a discrepancy remains. If the recanvass reveals the original canvass was incorrect, the recanvass return is substituted for the original return and has the same force and effect as an original return (CGS §§ 9-311 through 9-311b and Conn. Agency Regs., § 9-242a-28).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/15/2023)