

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6871

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION RECANVASS PROCEDURES.

Vote Date: 03/15/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/10/2023

File No.: 287

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This Bill calls for at least one voting tabulator be used in each voting district, as it has been previously noted this will stop several problems that have arisen in previous elections, due to lack of vote tabulators. Secondly this bill also requires the Secretary of the State to develop an instructional training video on recanvass procedures, to train recanvassing staff on proper procedure to ensure a more efficient recanvassing process. Third this bill also allows recanvasses to be conducted five business days after moderators submit duplicate lists to the Secretary and prohibits recanvasses later than twelve o'clock noon on any such day. Finally, this bill also provides that party representatives present at recanvasses have a right to view each recanvassed ballot to be able to discern the markings on each ballot, in order to ensure Bi-Partisanship, and the transparency.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Secretary of state, Stephanie Thomas, Office of The Secretary of State: The Secretary of state, strongly supports HB-6871, urging that section one, allowing for at least one vote tabulator per district, will prevent issues that have been faced in previous elections. The Secretary also is in support of Section 2 which would have her office provide materials and training for recanvass policy and procedure, but notes that this will require a "Modest Fiscal Note". While the secretary does offer support for this bill, she urges some minor changes in lines 46-47 of section #3 which states that changing recanvasses be conducted "five business days after moderators submit duplicate lists to the Secretary". The Secretary also asks that effective dates in section #1 be changed too July 1st, 2025. Finally, the Secretary concludes her testimony by offering support to the Bill with their requests.

Representative Vincent J. Candelora, Eighty-Sixth Assembly District, Republican

Minority Leader: Representative Vincent J. Candelora and the Republic House Caucus offer their support for the passage of HB-6871, citing that it makes "Important changes to the election recanvass process". The Representative notes how he has personally canvassed many recounts and how each one has been a slightly different experience. He states that "Consistency and clarity are desperately needed in this area of the law". The Representative then calls for an open recanvass process, citing that "an open process is a fair process". The Representative is also in favor of the publishing of an instructional video, citing its importance to both the poll workers and the average voter. He concludes his testimony by thanking members of the committee for considering his testimony and urges support for HB-6871.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Linda Dalessio, Taxpayer: Linda Dalessio supports HB-6871

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Timothy De Carlo, Registrar of Voters from the City of Waterbury, Chair of the New Haven County ROVAC Association, Chairman of ROVAC Legislative Committee: Mr. De Carlo, as well as ROVAC, stated their staunch opposition to HB-6871, citing lines 15-19 which as Mr. De Carlo puts it "would require Registrars to use one voting tabulator per voting district when conducting a recanvass of an election". Mr. De Carlo then informs members of the committee that once a district has been canvassed a new memory card may be installed, and the tabulator may be used in another district. ROVAC respectfully asks that members of this assembly and members of the GAE committee reject this change as it is simply not feasible without the addition of finding additional tabulators. Mr. De Carlo and ROVAC also ask that members of the committee reject changes in lines 101-103, citing that "101 through 103 would allow any party representatives to view each ballot that is being recanvassed. This change will drastically slow down the recanvass".

Luther Weeks, Executive Director, Connecticut Voters Count: Mr. Weeks opposes HB-6871, citing his issues with Section #1 that "The number of tabulators required should include one for each central count location, plus at least one spare for each three or less polling place and counting locations". He cites his problems with section #2, asking that recanvass procedure videos be made available to the public, and noting that the act does not recognize primaries of opposing parties, which are not available.

Debbie Esposito: Ms. Esposito stated her Opposition to HB-6871, believing that "There should be no legislation that removes the ability to hand-count ballots"

Reported by: Thomas Togneri

Date: 03-15-2023