

**Drop boxes: H.B.6870, Recanvasses: H.B.6871 – Opposed As Is, Need Work**

**Government Administration and Elections  
Testimony – March 10, 2023**

**Luther Weeks, Chair  
Luther@Weeks1.net  
334 Hollister Way West, Glastonbury, CT 06033**

**Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks from Glastonbury<sup>1</sup>, a Computer Scientist, Executive Director of Connecticut Voters Count, the Connecticut Citizen Election Audit, and Convener of the National State Audit Working Group. I am a Certified Moderator and election day official since 2008. I have observed about a half dozen recanvasses from a distance and officially represented candidates and referendum advocates in seven recanvasses. This is my own testimony, not endorsed by any organization with which I may be associated.**

**H.B.6870 drop box pickup.**

**A common error in Connecticut law is not requiring two officials when handling and transporting ballots, absentee ballot applications, and absentee ballot envelopes.**

**When emptying drop boxes, two officials should open the boxes and transport them to secure storage in the municipal clerk's vault – preferably two officials of opposing parties. Both should sign a log with the date, time, and location of the drop box. The log should list the materials retrieved by type:** Absentee ballot envelopes by district, absentee ballot applications, and any other miscellaneous materials. Such logs should be available for public viewing at the clerks' office during all normal office hours. Better still, posted online immediately.

**Better still the same procedures should apply to all transport of ballots, application materials, and registration forms, by the clerk's office and registrars' office from and to the mail room, polling places, other voting and counting locations, post-election audits, recanvasses, and anywhere else ballots are unsealed until they can legally be permanently unsealed.**

**H.B.6871 recanvasses.**

**Section 1**

**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.**

**Note: For several reasons, new tabulators should be implemented no earlier than 2025. When we select and implement new tabulators we will likely need two or three tabulators in many polling places. Even though new tabulators provide several improvements, they are significantly slower reading ballots. Reading time is dependent on the number of ballot sides and the number of bubbles. Ranked Choice Voting would also likely expand the number of tabulators required because of the increase in ballot sides, columns, and bubbles. Tabulators would best be paid for by the State rather than municipalities.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Text in **bold** are prepared remarks intended for delivery in oral testimony.

## Sec 2

**Nothing is sadder for me than to watch from the sidelines as recanvass procedures are not followed and no party or candidate observers understand the process well enough to recognize which procedures are not being followed** (Most frequently that two individuals are not both reviewing each ballot to judge that it can be read correctly by a tabulator.)

**The Recanvass Procedure Video should be made available to the public and a link to it provided for each notice of a recanvass.**

**The act does not recognize that for primaries there are generally no opposing party officials available for recanvass.**

Each party, candidate, or interest should be allowed to appoint a point person who can designate observers and can ask a reasonable number of questions of the moderator.

## Sec 3 (a) (1)

**Should specify that the absentee ballot applications and moderators' returns brought to the recanvass be open to public inspection at the recanvass, including for recording them, via photo or video.**

**Notice should just be given to party chairs, but also to every candidate in a race to be recanvassed** and where known, leaders of groups for and against referendums to be recanvassed.

**At a recanvass each party, candidate, or referendum side should be allowed a minimum of one observer for each counting team for ballot or envelope counting** (Without that number it would be impossible to determine if ballots are classified or counted accurately.)

**In several places, tabulators, absentee ballots and write-in ballots are mentioned, however all such references should cover all ballots whether polling place or centrally counted, including originally hand counted, early voting, election day registration, or same day registration ballots.**

In Sec. 2 (b)

There is an archaic existing "he" that should be replaced by the modern "they".

Another instance where "party representative" should be expanded to "party representative, candidate representative, and referendum representative".

All tally sheets, forms, tabulator tapes, and final totals, should be open to public inspection for a reasonable time for all party representatives, candidate representatives, and referendum representatives can inspect and record them, including via photo or video.

**Thank You**