

PUBLIC COMMENTS

SB 598

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 29, 2021 8:00 AM

Mary Slaughter

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

Please vote Yes!! Auditable voting systems that also produce a paper ballot to be viewable by the voter would be great! I like the verification. I also like the specification that machines cannot be connected to the internet which allows for many tampering possibilities.

DONNA EYLES

Self

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote yes. A paper ballot that can be review by the voter for accuracy is paramount. Also, voting machines should NEVER be connected to the Internet!!!

Victoria Hanson

self - retired

Corpus Christi, TX

YES – I think this does instill a trust in the voting system, which is so important at this point in time, for voter peace of mind. In addition, it does make the voting system less vulnerable to fraudulent behavior.

Tammy Montgomery

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote yes, but there needs to be a way that the voter can prove what his vote was and there should be a website where we can see that our vote counted the way we wanted. Go further.

Kimberly Bridges Young

Self, Retired

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote absolutely YES for auditable voting systems that also produce a paper ballot that is viewable by the voter. Why not retained by the voter, though? At least this ensures there is a verification even before anything is questioned. I love that this specifies that machines cannot be connected to the internet, which can allow interference by switching votes, eliminating votes and producing votes from outside sources who are hacking into the internet.

Sharon Burnett

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Self

Ingleside, TX

YES! Machines should NOT BE CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET!!! We need to audit our voting processes!!! And a voter deserves a verification of his/her (not they/them) vote! This is SOOO important!!

Thank you,
Kelley Burnett

Frank Holman

Self

Austin, TX

If our election results can not be audited in a reliable and trustworthy method then the election is not valid. Pass this bill to insure our election has integrity.

William Ely

NA

Cypress, TX

I support this bill. Private sector performs these types of audits all the time. They are performed as a check and balance, to ensure financial and operational integrity. We should be doing this to protect the foundation of our Republic. Reporting results can help restore confidence in our elections.

Bonnie Seelig

Self Retired

Spicewood, TX

SUPPORT : Risk limiting audits and an auditable voting systems that create a paper record are necessary for an election cycles. Why would anyone think that man's nature would be honest? Is that the thought process that lead to no one checking the results of elections? That we would have people in charge who actually believe in this dream world only confirms the opinion that dishonesty must be going on from all sides.

No one would think highly of a business who didn't check its systems to determine that they were running as expected or working in an unintended way. Why would you not audit an important system in government as the Election System? The ballots used in voting plus the citizenship and residence of the voters are the two most important areas of concern in election integrity. Yet, politicians and bureaucrats seem to have closed their eyes. It is hard to see when your eyes are closed.

The politicians eyes might be closed, but the citizens' eyes are wide open. Yes, the citizen assumed good, safety protocols were in place. After all, we live in the great state of Texas. The question now is who is going to tolerate this lax system? Who is benefiting from this system? Pass this bill and we'll see who cries out the loudest!

Deborah Kelting Fite, Mrs.

Senate Republican Executive Committeewoman SD7

Houston, TX

Without free and fair elections we do not have our freedom! Election Integrity has ranked highest in Legislative Priorities. An overwhelming percentage of Republicans believe our electoral process is not representing accurate tallies. Kolkhorst SB 598 is an excellent bill that provides transparency and a way to verify that our voting machines have not been compromised. We need to answer the call to our citizens and offer a path to verify the machines.. Otherwise, we could jeopardize the one process that separates America from the world. Freedom' And without the integrity of our voting system we risk citizens not wanting to

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participate. Please vote favorably on SB 598!

Bill Sargent, Former Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections, Galveston County

Self

Galveston, TX

I oppose this legislation.

Under Section 2 Section 129.003 (d)(e) and (f) it requires all counties that currently use non-paper trail DRE voting equipment to convert to paper backup equipment.

The Secretary of State's office tells me that there are NO federal funds available to fund the retrofit AND that there are NO state funds available either.

This bill will cost my county almost \$4 million in order to comply. That my friends is one heck of an unfunded mandate!

Last session I estimated before the Senate State Affairs committee that statewide this mandate would cost about \$150 million, whereby Senator Hughes said I was wrong, it would be closer to \$200 million. If we are going down this road, which I do not object to, somebody needs to talk to Greg Bonnen of the Appropriations Committee to ensure that funds are set aside and earmarked in the Secretary of State's budget to pay for this retrofit.

This bill also prohibits the use of any voting equipment that is capable of being connected to the Internet or outside communications equipment.

It is my understanding that the Secretary of State has not, and will not, approve and certify equipment with this kind of functionality.

Bill Sargent, Former Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections, Galveston County

Self

Galveston, TX

As an added comment,. and after re-reading the bill, I will be testifying "ON" the bill instead of Opposing it. This is because of Section 4 of the bill.

The saving grace is found in Section 4 where it states that the Secretary of State is ONLY REQUIRED to implement only if the legislature appropriates the money for doing the retrofit.

Personally, I would prefer a change to the wording of that section to say "The Secretary of State SHALL NOT – as opposed to is ONLY REQUIRED to implement this provision because SHALL NOT is mandatory as opposed to ONLY REQUIRED which is permissive. In any event, the addition of the Nelson Amendment is a vast improvement to the bill as originally filed in the Senate.

Wesley Bowen

Self

Dallas, TX

I am in support of this bill. I am the Ballot Integrity Chair for the Dallas County Republican Party. We have had an ongoing problem in Dallas County with irregularities in the elections and candidates feeling like the process failed their campaign, and their only option is for a recount which would be so costly that it is not practical. The waivers that the SOS continues to make to the Election Vendor in conflict with the Texas Election Code makes it harder for watchers to hold the process accountable. The most recent example is the SOS allowing ES&S and the Dallas County Election Dept to not be required to use sequentially numbered ballots. Another example is the waiver that the county is no longer required to produce an audit log that details activity down to precinct levels. Presently, if there are problems and/or irregularities during the election, the only recourse is a recount. A recount for a smaller race under countywide vote centers, is always cost prohibitive for the candidates of local elections, since a

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hand count for the entire county would be required. Otherwise, scanning all of the ballots again would likely produce the same results if there was electronic manipulation in the tabulation process. Please vote favorably to pass this bill.

Lisa Nilsson

Self, Joshua Committee

Boerne, TX

I strongly support this bill. I served as a watcher in the recount of the CD23 race in Bexar County in July 2020. I also served as a poll watcher in Bexar County Central Count on November 3rd and 4th, 2020.

As we all know, there are allegations in several swing states of the switching of votes in electronic voting tabulators related to the Trump/Biden 2020 race. Even though the news media has strongly repeated the message that these claims are false, calling them "disinformation", the fact is, these claims have not been properly investigated. This is one reason that there is now widespread distrust of the election process and the validity of the outcome of the 2020 Presidential race in America. It is my hope that that race will be properly investigated soon. But regardless of that, this bill is critical in helping restore the trust of voters in our electronic counting systems. I'm very glad that we have paper ballots as part of the voting system, but if there is not an official recount, there is never a chance to check the ballots against the reported totals. A routine and random audit as described in this bill is an important deterrent to anyone who might wish to tamper with the votes. It is also very important that vote-counting machines are not able to communicate with the internet in any way. This bill addresses that important fraud deterrent as well. I only wish all these important measures could be applied statewide for the 2022 election. Please make our votes more secure by supporting this bill.

Beth Biesel, Elections Integrity Chair

Texas Eagle Forum

Dallas, TX

Texas Eagle Forum appreciates the good intentions of the State Affairs and Election Integrity Committees to provide election audits. Unfortunately, the premise of this bill is built on the ill-advised acceptance of electronic voting systems. Proper audits begin with paper poll books, hand marked paper ballots, and vote tabulation that is based solely on a hand count of paper ballots. TEF does not support this bill.

Carrie Moore

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

VOTE YES! Every election should be able to be easily audited. Not being linked to the internet is great!

Liudmila Kuptsova Homen

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

~~YES~~

Paper trail and auditable voting machines REDUCES opportunities to manipulate votes.

We CANT AFFORD more people questioning whether their vote counts. Please, ensure no one can hack the machines via online access!

Vote YES

Richard Smith

Self

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Corpus christi, TX

Yes.

shawn flanagan

self/retired

corpus christi, TX

please vote yes, this system will improve election integrity by producing a paper ballot trail.

Larry Ringler

Self

Portland, TX

Vote YES! It's imperative that our voting system provides a paper ballot that the voter can see. It also should allow voters to keep their ballot. Preventing voting machines from connecting to the Internet is an excellent feature.

Paul Laudadio

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

YES!! Absolutely we should have auditable voting systems that produce a paper ballot viewer by the voter to confirm his/her legitimate vote!! Voting machines MUST NOT be connected to the internet to prevent intrusion in the voting system.

Tommie Lee

TL Electric

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote Yes!!!! Paper ballot is the last absolute proof of being able to find fraud in an election. Look at Arizona and Georgia! You might not be able to find the person or organization that put that vote into place but you can achieve an accurate vote Count. Texas and all states needs a Absolute real and true vote count!!!!

Paul Laudadio

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

YES! Absolutely voting systems should be auditable with paper ballots being produced to be viewed by the voter! The voting machines should absolutely NOT be connected to the internet, inviting fraud and hacking intervention!

Julie Kellogg

self

Corpus Christi, TX

YES, YES, YES, for auditable voting systems that also produce a paper ballot! This ensures there is a verification even before anything is questioned. This specifies that machines cannot be connected to the internet, this is a huge deal. In Nueces County we only have touch screen, no paper backup, the machines are all internet connected, there is no way a recount could happen here. I asked this question when I was voting and was told "you

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see your vote on screen." Internet connections get hacked, which as we all know allows fraud by switching votes, eliminating votes and producing votes from outside sources who are hacking into the internet even from foreign countries.

Lesha Roberts

self

Hockley, TX

Texans are fed up with voter fraud and we demand real change. We WILL NOT forget 2020. We WILL NOT move on. We DEMAND enforcing laws on the books and passing legislation to make elections safer and harder to cheat. We need much stronger penalties for voter fraud. Ballot Harvesting should be illegal and NO drop boxes! One Person One Vote. Our elected officials need to do their job and protect voter integrity. And we need to do away with machine voting and go back to paper ballots!