



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws
In Support of H.574 – An Act to ensure secure voting equipment
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October 5, 2015

A resolution requiring paper ballots was adopted by the League of Women Voters of the United States 2004 convention, and a more comprehensive position was passed in 2006, which “supports only voting systems designed so that:

1. they employ a voter-verifiable paper ballot or other paper record, said paper being the official record of the voter’s intent; and
2. the voter can verify, either by eye or with the aid of suitable devices for those who have impaired vision, that the paper ballot/record accurately reflects his or her intent; and
3. such verification takes place while the voter is still in the process of voting; and
4. the paper ballot/record is used for audits and recounts; and
5. the vote totals can be verified by an independent hand count of the paper ballot/record; and
6. routine audits of the paper ballot/record in randomly selected precincts can be conducted in every election, and the results published by the jurisdiction.”

<http://www.lwv.org/content/voting-rights>

Therefore, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports H.574, as it ensures only paper ballots and voting systems that use paper ballots will continue to be used in Massachusetts. Paper ballots are recountable and can be audited, whereas current paperless voting systems are not. In a recount, paperless equipment can only provide the same numbers. In actual recounts, only paper ballots can be accurately tallied.

Other advantages of paper ballots are greater secrecy, the ability to verify the voter’s intent and accuracy of the vote. Voting on paper ballots saves time and money, since many voters can fill out paper ballots at the same time, and it takes only a few seconds to cast each ballot in an optical scanner. Paperless voting equipment has more costly security needs. Touch screen machines are more expensive and require more machines, since it takes longer for each voter to enter his/her vote. Polling places that employ the touch screen machines have been shown to have long lines of voters, which discourages untold numbers of potential voters from participating.

While we currently vote on paper ballots, there is no existing statute to guarantee that this practice will continue. Therefore, we risk the possibility this could change. This nearly happened when Massachusetts was ordered to provide special voting equipment for the disabled; this included paperless, electronic machines for the blind. Our Secretary of State opted to rent (not purchase) several

types of voting equipment for the disabled, which were tested in a state wide election. All but one of them, a ballot marking device, were found to be inadequate in serving the needs of disabled voters.

Therefore, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts respectfully requests this Committee take a positive vote on this bill and its members work to make it the law in Massachusetts.

Thank you for your consideration.