



Susan Bysiewicz
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

March 5, 2008

Mr. Luther Weeks

Dear Mr. Weeks:

I have received and reviewed the "Petition to Enhance Confidence in Connecticut Elections by 2008" signed by you and a number of concerned citizens in our state. I understand that this petition was promulgated and circulated by Mr. Luther Weeks, Founder, CTVotersCount.org. I am very grateful for your time and dedication, and I expect that you will have a continuing significant role as we refine our election process. We still have a lot of work to do and we need concerned citizens like you to stay involved. Thank you for your efforts.

As you know, the federal Help America Vote Act ("HAVA"), passed after the 2000 Presidential election, has mandated a number of changes in the administration of our elections. It requires states to provide technology that is accessible for people with disabilities, and it also requires a paper trail for every vote cast to ensure accuracy and security.

We are very proud to have met and exceeded HAVA's requirements. Since November 2006 a telephone-based system has allowed hundreds of people with disabilities – for the first time in seventy (70) years – to come to the polling place to cast their votes. We are extremely proud that our state has made this significant step toward making elections truly accessible. We are continuing to explore other technology that will open access to the polls even more for our voters.

Second, as of November, 2007, Connecticut joined half of the jurisdictions in the country by replacing lever voting machines with "optical scan" voting machines. Optical scan technology is well established and reliable. It satisfies Connecticut's law that voting technology create a voter-verified paper record. This record not only gives voters confidence that their votes will be counted and recorded correctly, but it also makes recounts and audits much easier. Finally, optical scan voting machines are easy for voters; they are straightforward to fill out, and since many voters can vote simultaneously in privacy booths, long lines at the polls are avoided.

Finally, we were delighted that the legislature passed the first-ever audit bill in the State of Connecticut last session. Consistent with your petition, the proposal I submitted called for a 20% audit and for all races to be audited. I understand that a number of different constituencies (cities and towns, other computer experts and others) were involved with legislators in debating this policy issue and, although it does not go as far as I would have liked, it is a positive step for our state.

I share your belief that we should make our audit law the strongest in the nation and ensure that its size and scope is adequate to achieve its goals and I look forward to further refining the law based upon our experience over the past two elections. For example, I have supported eliminating the exemption in the current law for precincts that are the subject of a recount.

We have attended a number of public hearings conducted by the GAE Committee of the legislature and I have testified in support of an Independent Audit Board. I think such a board would go a long way in minimizing costs and increasing efficiency, consistency and accuracy in the audits. Finally, please be advised that we have funded all of the audits conducted to date through the use of federal funds and will continue to do so as long as funds are available for such use.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your concern for the integrity of our election process in Connecticut. I hope that you will continue to stay involved as we prepare for the Presidential election in November.

Sincerely,


Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State of Connecticut