



DENISE W. MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

For Immediate Release:
December 8, 2016

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CONNECTICUT DEBUTS ELECTRONIC AUDIT OF ELECTION RESULTS

HARTFORD: The Connecticut Secretary of the State launched a new electronic system this week that will allow towns to audit election results. The electronic scanners—which are faster and cheaper than traditional hand counts—will be used to audit seven polling locations this week.

Secretary of the State Denise Merrill said, “Every year we randomly draw towns to have polling locations audited and it is the lottery that no one wants to win. The audits are time-consuming and require towns to spend hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars that were not budgeted at the start of the year. The electronic auditing system is exponentially faster than the traditional hand counts and will spare towns the cost of hiring staff. This is a big step forward.”

Vernon registrar of voters, John Anderson, said, “I found this process to be easy and so much faster than hand counting. We processed nearly 3,000 ballots in just over three hours with a 15-minute break along the way. I’ve been involved in hand counted audits with far fewer ballots that took nearly all day and required us to hire as many as six additional staff members. Hand counts also have a high degree of re-counting due to errors. The savings in time and personnel are tremendous. I would highly recommend this process to any town afforded the opportunity.”

The system works by feeding the marked ballots into a scanner that can read the coordinates of the markings to calculate vote counts, which are then compared with the optical scanner’s results. The results of audits will be analyzed by the University of Connecticut, the Secretary of the State’s Office and the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

By law, five percent of the polling places that use optical scan machines are subject to an audit. There were 747 polling places that used optical scan machines on November 8 so last month the Secretary of the State chose 38 primary as well as alternate locations. The towns that were chosen

to have selected voting precincts electronically audited were South Windsor, Meriden, Vernon, Washington, Stonington, Danbury and Colchester.

The entire process is open to the public.

The scanners were developed and programmed by the University of Connecticut's Center for Voting Technology Research. It was funded with a grant from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.