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Connecticut's Elections and Security: Frequently Asked Questions

The citizens of Connecticut have every right to seek assurances that our elections are secure and that their votes will be counted in November. Below is a list of frequently asked questions about elections and security.

Who is in charge of elections administration?

The Secretary of the State is Connecticut's chief elections official, however, elections are locally administered by registrars and town clerks thus it is not necessarily a single system.

What is the elections infrastructure comprised of?

Elections are broadly composed of two parts: 1) registration/voter file and 2) elections.

1) Voter registration and the voter file

When someone registers to vote—either by paper, online, in person, at the DMV or another registering agency—that information is transmitted to the local registrar of voters, who inputs the voter's information into a database. A paper backup of the registration is retained.

2) Elections machinery

The actual elections and primaries employ paper ballots and optical scanners/tabulators (with memory cards) to ensure that votes are counted accurately.

The optical scanner/tabulator counts the vote, which is stored on a memory card that is locked behind a tamper proof seal. The cards are audited before and after every election to look for any signs of tampering.

The marked paper ballot goes through the machine and drops into a locked bin. The marked ballots are kept in the event that a recount is required.

None of these pieces of equipment are connected to the internet.

Isn't there an online system that shows results?

Yes. However, these results only reflect the data entry of the counts of the paper ballots.

Is the voter file on the internet?

No.

Could someone have their registration erased from the voter file?

That is extremely unlikely. There are paper backups of registrations as well as other records.

Is there any review of the paper ballots?

Yes. Five percent of the polling places that use optical scan machines are subject to an audit, which is analyzed by the University of Connecticut, the Secretary of the State's office and the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

What about Election Day problems?

The Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission staff a hotline (866-SEEC-INFO or elections@ct.gov) where problems can be reported on Election Day. In addition, the Connecticut Bar Association has made Election Day volunteer attorneys available to look into problems.

Is hacking a concern to elections officials?

Officials are fully aware that elections infrastructure could be a target of hackers and other entities that seek to disrupt democracy. Nationally, secretaries of state are in regular communication with federal authorities to help us detect threats and vulnerabilities.

In the meantime, we must not let cyber-criminals erode trust in the electoral system. We want the public to have confidence in the process and to be assured that in November their votes—and their votes alone—will decide the next president of the United States.