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**GAE PUBLIC HEARING  
PROPOSED BILL No. 55  
2/14/05 TESTIMONY**

My name is George Barnett. I am a CPA and I have spent more than ten years of my career as a corporate auditor. As an ex-auditor, I understand the importance of original source documents to back up computer generated reports. Public auditors of major corporations require source documents to verify financial results and will not attest to the accuracy of financial statements without such documents. This is why I am strongly in favor of proposed Bill No. 55, which requires an “individual, permanent voter-verified paper record for each elector casting a vote on the machine.”

It is critical to understand the term voter-verified paper record. Voter-verified means that voters can verify a paper ballot before casting their vote. This can be done by the voter marking the ballot or by viewing a paper receipt before the ballot is cast. Voter-verified paper ballots (VVPBs) are most often used with manual paper voting systems and optical scan voting systems. While VVPBs can be used with direct recording electronic (DREs) systems, DREs that use VVPBs are generally more expensive and subject to more breakdowns than other voting systems.

When VVPBs are used with optical scan systems, voters mark paper ballots to indicate how they wish to vote. The VVPB is then scanned into an optical scan voting system, which records the vote electronically and spits out the VVPB. The voter-verified paper ballots are kept by the precinct as a permanent record that shows the intent of the voter by the mark made on the ballot by the actual voter. If the optical scan machine malfunctions or there is a very close race, the voter-verified paper ballots can be used as back up or to perform a meaningful recount. So to recap, a voter-verified paper ballot, in an optical scan voting system, is a ballot that is manually marked by the voter before it is processed by the optical scan machine. The voter-verified paper ballot is then retained in the precinct that it was cast in and it can be used for a recount in a close race or to verify the accuracy of the voting system. Voter-verified paper ballots can be used in manual paper systems, optical scan systems and in some direct recording electronic (DRE) systems, which generally use touchscreen voting machines.

The state currently has an RFP to purchase DRE or touchscreen voting systems. These systems may provide a paper report that shows all the activity on the system for the day but there is no requirement in the RFP or in state law that they use VVPBs. While many people, when they hear that the DRE system provides a paper report, believe that this is a sufficient safeguard over the voting process, voting experts agree that this is not enough. **THE ACTIVITY REPORT ABSOLUTELY DOES NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARDS OVER THE VOTING PROCESS AND DOES NOT PROVIDE VVPBs.** These paper reports generated by the DRE touch screen systems after the polls close do not allow voters to verify the accuracy of their intended vote before the ballot is cast. This is why proposed bill No. 55 is so important and needs to be passed.

It is also important to note that when VVPBs are used the local precincts maintain the ability to perform meaningful recounts and to double-check the accuracy of the voting systems. If the machines malfunction or if the vote is close enough to trigger a recount, the VVPBs can be used to determine the outcome of the election. If Connecticut chooses DREs without VVPBs, that ability will be lost. Counting will be done by partisan, private companies, which use proprietary tabulation programs to count our votes. In addition, these companies do not allow election officials, or anyone else for that matter, to review the software used to count our votes. Do we really want to “privatize” our voting system? Voting without a VVPB is analogous to never balancing your checking account and trusting the bank to accurately calculate your balance. Is this how we want future elections in CT to be controlled? In the state of Maryland over 400 volunteer poll watchers observed over 200 problems with electronic voting systems in the November 2004 election. Their first recommendation to correct these problems: require a voter verified paper audit trail. A comprehensive report detailing the problems in Maryland is included in my written testimony.

In conclusion, I would like to quote two computer and election system experts who both strongly favor the use of VVPBs. The first expert is Chuck Herrin. Mr. Herrin is a conservative, republican computer security expert who is a certified systems auditor who has spoken in front of the North Carolina congress and many other groups about voting issues. His testimony is included in my written testimony. From Mr. Herrin’s website, [www.chuckherrin.com](http://www.chuckherrin.com):

**“As of right now, 11-23-2004, there is no conclusive evidence that massive voter fraud took place, but there is overwhelming evidence that the weaknesses in our voting system could have allowed it. I hope it didn't happen, but the simple fact is that whether it did or not, our election systems, particularly those using DREs, appear to have been designed specifically to allow fraud, rather than prevent it.”**

Ellen Theisen is the second expert. She is the co-founder of Voters Unite, [www.votersunite.org](http://www.votersunite.org), and she has a BA in mathematics and an MA in religious studies. Ms. Theisen has written software documentation for 22 years and is the author of “Myth Breakers: The Truth About Electronic Elections”. She had this to say about DRE voting machines in a May 25, 2004 letter to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, which I am submitting with my written testimony:

**“Auditable, less expensive, more reliable voting systems are available. Optical scan systems with a disabled-accessible ballot-marking device,..., are significantly less expensive and more transparent. In addition, they provide a permanent source document - as is required by any valid auditing system.**

**The many complex, interrelated problems inherent in electronic voting make it very clear that election integrity is not served by electronic voting. I urge you to advise against it.”**

VVPBs must be an integral piece of any voting system that our state uses in the future. Please do everything possible to pass Bill No. 55. CT voters deserve to have auditable and transparent elections that are controlled by our state and not by the privately held partisan companies that provide the DRE voting systems.

