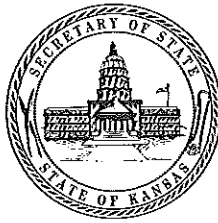


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STATE OF KANSAS
House Committee on Elections

Testimony on HB 2543

Kris W. Kobach
Kansas Secretary of State

February 12, 2016

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 2543. This bill, if passed, would require a manual, i.e. hand count, of a defined percentage of election results. This audit would take place in every county after every election and would occur between Election Day and the date the county board of canvassers meets to certify the official election results. The audit would be open to the public. And the results of the audit would be presented to the county board of canvassers to include in the official county canvass.

I strongly support this bill. I have worked tirelessly to ensure that Kansas elections are SAFE, secure, and accurate. This bill is consistent with my work in combatting voter fraud. By requiring a hand review of every ballot cast, even ballots that are cast on electronic machines, the public will have greater confidence in the accuracy of the voting systems being used in this state. If a discrepancy is uncovered, this bill, through rule and regulation authority, would allow me to require further audits to ensure the accuracy of the election results.

Kansas is currently in the minority of states that do not require a post-election audit of election results. Some states have audits that before votes are cast, others have audits that occur weeks after the election had been certified. I believe conducting an audit immediately after Election Day and prior to the certification provides the most confidence to the voting public.

This bill does allow me to adopt rules and regulations governing the conduct and procedure of the audit. This will allow me to work with the county election officers, and the general public, to ensure the procedures used will work both in Johnson County, and in Greeley County, and have roughly the same impact on those offices. I am proposing that one percent of precincts be audited in some capacity. In some counties, that could be the entire ballot, in other cases, it may only be one race on some ballots. Those decisions will be made in consultation with county election offices.

Lastly, this bill does not go into effect until July 1, 2017. I believe this will allow my office sufficient time to work with county election offices in setting procedures in place for the audit. This will also allow county government the opportunity to assess the potential fiscal impact and budget accordingly.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill this afternoon, and I stand for questions.