

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2527

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government, Elections & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to evaluating random check procedures for ballot counting equipment.

Brief Description: Evaluating random check procedures for ballot counting equipment.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, McBride and Shea.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 1/24/18 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Secretary of State to survey and report on procedures for random checks of ballot counting equipment adopted by each county canvassing board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; McDonald, Ranking Minority Member; Kraft, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregerson, Irwin, Johnson and Pellicciotti.

Staff: Desiree Omlı (786-7105).

Background:

There are two types of audits conducted for an election. One type of audit is a random check of the ballot counting equipment used to tabulate ballots. The random check may be conducted at the discretion of the county auditor, or upon mutual agreement of the political party observers. Under the random check process, a manual count of ballots is compared to the machine count. The size of the random check may involve up to either three precincts or six batches, depending on the ballot counting procedures in place in the county. The check

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must be completed no later than 48 hours after election day. The county canvassing board of each county must establish procedures for the random checks.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary of State (Secretary) must, by November 1, 2018, survey all random check procedures adopted by each county canvassing board. The Secretary must evaluate the procedures to identify best practices and discrepancies. By December 1, 2018, the Secretary is required to submit a report to the Legislature that includes recommendations for adopting best practices and uniform procedures used by county canvassing boards for random checks.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2018.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This will provide greater transparency in elections and will lead to best practices in auditing. It is hard to obtain each county's procedures because they are not posted. Some procedures are not best practices. For example, one county selects a person to pick a contest to audit, which is not random. In addition, in King County, a general election initiative was audited, but no candidate races were. Candidates should have better options when they have questions about the audit or procedures adopted. The bill will result in greater uniformity in statewide procedures and movement towards best practices.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Kirstin Mueller, League of Women Voters of Washington; and Denice Carnahan.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.