



I am Rita Blouke here on behalf of the LWV of Montana to speak in support of SB 302. The League is a nonpartisan organization whose membership is open to both men and women. We have been working for voting rights and fair elections since our founding. In order to ensure integrity and voter confidence in elections, the LWV supports the implementation of voting systems and procedures that are secure, accurate, re-countable, and accessible. We also think procedures need to be simple to follow and to be user-friendly.

The League supports SB 302 because, in many ways, it makes voting more accessible for those who rely on an absentee ballot. It helps those who happen to be in a remote place overseas or any elector who needs more than 30 days to receive and return a ballot. And it assists those who want to apply for an absentee ballot, but who must rely on the kindness of someone other than a relative. We think it is important that the bill specifies that a person who collects these applications for another person must, under penalty of law, deliver them to the elections office. We would like to suggest clarification in Section 3.(b) since we believe it could be a matter of opinion as to who is "known" or who is "obviously" mentally incompetent. We would suggest that you consider wording such as "a person who is known to be judged mentally incompetent by a court".

We also support SB 302 because it will increase the confidence of voters in the outcome of our elections. The importance of this can not be overstated. The security and accuracy of elections absolutely requires that we know the computerized systems are working on Election Day. Besides the extensive pre-testing that election officials already do before elections, we support additional testing and random audits of each kind of equipment to ensure voters that there are no hidden computer codings. We would suggest a slight amendment to ensure that testing also covers electronic vote tallying systems. It is unclear to us if the bill would require the testing of each electronic unit on election day (which we believe is unrealistic) so we would offer some clarifying language at the end of our printed testimony.

The League also supports the requirement in this bill that all voting systems record votes on paper. We think this provides flexibility in the purchase of new voting equipment to accommodate voters with special needs as required by HAVA, while ensuring that, in the case of an official recount or an audit, Montana would actually be counting votes and not just re-running an electronic tally.

Please support the integrity of elections by ensuring that our voting systems in Montana are secure, accurate, re-countable and accessible. Please vote for SB 302.

Thank you.

Suggestions for Amendments:

Replace

"(1) (b) A third party may not collect an absentee ballot application from a person who is obviously or is known to be mentally incompetent."

with

"(b) A third party may not collect an absentee ballot application from a person who is known to be judged mentally incompetent by a court."

Section 6) We think clarification is needed in response to these questions: Will testing apply to electronic vote tallying systems too? Is SB 302 calling for the testing of all electronic units on Election Day? What is a reasonable frequency for doing random spot testing of units? So we would suggest:

Replace

"(2) If any type of direct recording electronic voting system is approved pursuant to 13-17-101 after meeting the requirements of 13-17-103, provision must be made to ensure that, at a minimum, each system is tested and certified as follows:

- (a) upon delivery;
- (b) no more than 30 days prior to the election; and
- (c) on election day.
- (3)(same as in SB302)

with

"(2) If any type of electronic voting or tallying system is approved pursuant to 13-17-101 after meeting the requirements of 13-17-103, provision must be made to ensure that, at a minimum, each system is tested and certified as follows:

- (a) each unit, upon delivery and no more than 30 days prior to an election of all units
- (b) one sample unit per county, on Election Day
- (3)(same as in SB302)