Comm Secy

STATE ADMINISTRATION

Exhibit No. 4

Date 1/16/09

Bill No. SB 155

SB 155 Require post-election audits of machines
Senate State Administration, Room 335
January 16, 2009 @ 3 PM
Secretary Linda McCulloch's Remarks

Good morning Mr. Chair, members of the committee.
For the record, I am Montana Secretary of State Linda McCulloch.

I am here today to support Senate Bill 155, an act requiring a random-sample audit of vote-counting machines a a federal election.

I would first like to thank Senator Mike Cooney for sponsoring this legislation, and for demonstrating a commitment to Montana's election process. Of course, Senator Cooney served as Montana's Secretary of State for 12 years.

The purpose behind this bill is to confirm the accuracy of the vote count and the integrity of the elections system, so that voters in the state of Montana have confidence that their vote has counted AND that the outcome of the election reflects the will of the people of the state of Montana.

Following the federal election in 2000, citizens became acutely aware of the varied problems that can occur in the voting process.

The Help America Vote Act or HAVA, which was signed into law in 2002, was drafted as a result of these problems and recently there has been a nationwide push to conduct post-election audits to further improve voters' confidence in each state's voting machines.

I want to stress that this bill audits the voting machines. It does not audit practices in the offices of the Clerks and Records. We have so many close races in Montana that we know from experience that our Clerks and Recorders are doing a fine job in each of our counties.

The post-election audits outlined in this bill would be a hand-count of randomly selected races and precincts in each county that uses vote tabulating equipment.

This hand-count would supplement existing testing procedures, and will reinforce confidence in Montana voters that their votes are being counted accurately.

Senate Bill 155 is a collaborative effort between the office of the Secretary of State, the Montana Association of Clerks and Recorders and the League of Women Voters.

After conducting research and review on legislation other states have enacted, as well as on literature regarding this issue, Senate Bill 155 was drafted to make Montana elections more transparent.

This bill is a good thing for Montana voters, because it reinforces Montana's fair and accurate elections.

It is a good thing for election administrators and Clerks and Recorders, who sometimes take the heat for mistakes that are actually caused by technology.

And it is a good thing for the state of Montana, because Montana is a leader in independence and open government.

Thank you for your time.