

HOUSE GOVERNMENT & VETERAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE AUSTEN SCHAUER, CHAIR

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BY

ERIKA WHITE, STATE ELECTION DIRECTOR

Chairman Schauer and members of the committee, I'm Erika White, State Elections Director for the Office of the Secretary of State. I am here in support of SB 2175 which strengthens our initiative of "trust and verify" of the election administration procedures established in North Dakota through a continued robust post-election audit process.

I want to be clear that North Dakota's election tabulation systems are extremely secure and operate with 100% accuracy. County auditors across our state conduct extensive logic and accuracy testing before each election to ensure ballot tabulators are accurate – there is zero tolerance for discrepancies. This bill simply builds upon the post-election verification to ensure the public that their vote is counted the way they intended it to count. We trust our election system. SB 2175 simply allows for another layer of verification. Here is a brief overview of the bill:

The changes in subsection 5 outline when the county is to conduct the post-election audit and which polling location the county auditor and election board are auditing. Additionally, it directs the county recorder to deliver the necessary ballots for the audit to be completed.

Subsection 6 outlines a few key elements:

- The county auditor must select an election board pursuant to 16.1-05-01, which is the same process they follow when selecting election boards for polling locations in their county.
- The county auditor must notice the time and place of the post-election audit.
- The election board shall review one contest from each of the following categories: federal, statewide, legislative (if appearing on the ballot), and a county contest.
- In the rare instance a discrepancy exists, the secretary of state may order additional post-election audits and the audit shall serve as the official record for canvassing.

Subsection 7 outlines proper delivery and securing of ballots with the county recorder after the audit is complete. It also directs the county auditor to submit their post-election audit report to the secretary of state for publication.

We collaborated with county auditors across our state to develop this language. We wanted to ensure this process would be meaningful and allow North Dakota to showcase that we do have the best process in the country, while simultaneously allowing for flexibility when counties are completing other post-election processes before County Canvassing. We've garnered support from counties across our state who agree that this bill strengthens our shared initiative of "trust and verify" for North Dakota's election system and procedures.

Chairman Schauer, members of the committee, thank you for your continued support to ensure North Dakota elections are held with security and integrity. I urge a **DO PASS** recommendation on SB 2175.