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To Chairman Longmuir and members of the Political Subdivisions Committee, this is the testimony of a constituent from central North Dakota who has been paying a great deal of attention to election security issues throughout the country and most recently even our neighbor to the south, Brazil. I write in support of this bill and urge a “do pass” recommendation from this committee.

First of all, I want to express gratitude to the bill’s sponsors for listening to constituents’ heartfelt concerns about election security. By mandating a randomized, automatic audit using paper ballots and individual vote counts for one smaller county and one larger county, the state’s auditor will be able to verify the results of a substantial sampling of the larger election.

Elections have trended away from smaller subdivision polling places to larger vote centers, and electronic tabulators have replaced human agents counting ballots. These trends have solved some inefficiencies but simultaneously introduced new cybersecurity concerns and heightened fears about election integrity. This bill will provide much needed assurance of election systems integrity by comparing *actual* vote totals not just numbers of ballots run through the machines.

Perhaps some would believe that such measures are a costly waste of time and resources, but all good business and government services benefit from effective oversight measures to bolster public confidence and to detect system malfunctions. Whatever the fiscal impact of this bill, it will be a wise investment. The old adage, “Trust but verify” is what is at stake with this bill. The only regrettable feature of this bill is that the work of a manual recount won’t commence until after certification.