Written Testimony for the
Senate State and Local Government
February 2, 2023
Erika White, Burleigh County Election Manager

Burleigh County

RE: OPPOSITION for SB 2386

Greetings, Chair Roers, and members of the Committee. My name is Erika White and I am the Election Manager in the Burleigh County Auditor/Treasurer's office. I'm submitting testimony in opposition of SB 2386.

This bill relates to the use of paper pollbooks during an election. It also eliminates the use of the electronic pollbooks which are a vital tool in our elections to ensure voters are casting only one ballot for that election.

Information in the electronic pollbook originates from the Central Voter File. This includes voter data such as name, address, date of birth, drivers license number, and if they have voted in the current election. The electronic pollbooks notify election workers if the voter is in the wrong polling location and tie each voter record to the ballot style the voter should receive at the polling location.

Electronic pollbooks are the only piece of the election system that are connected to the internet. I want to stress that tabulators and ExpressVotes are in no way connected to the internet. Electronic pollbook information is transmitted through secure VPN to and from the Central Voter File every 2 minutes.

When a voter is checked-in at a polling location either on Election Day or during early vote, within 4 minutes, every electronic pollbook within the State of North Dakota is notified that the voter has voted. This is an extremely beneficial process to ensure that each voter in North Dakota is only casting one ballot in each election.

In addition to information being captured and transmitted on Election Day and during early vote, as absentee or vote by mail ballots are returned to the Auditor's office, the office checks-in the voter's ballot and that information is also transmitted to the electronic pollbook. This way, the electronic pollbook knows that the voter has returned an absentee ballot and has voted.

It's also important to note that the electronic pollbook is an excellent tool because it is more up to date than a paper pollbook. Paper pollbooks must be printed at least a week before Election Day and captures a moment in time. So, as voters update addresses with the North Dakota Department of Transportation, as voters are returning absentee ballots or voting early, the

paper pollbook is not capturing those updates. This would make it easier for individuals to cause mischief and vote twice in an election.

In 2018, Burleigh County used a combination of electronic pollbooks and paper pollbooks in the Primary and General Elections. We found that check-in times were faster, election workers made less errors, and balancing voters checked-in to number of ballots cast was more accurate and efficient with the electronic pollbook. Paper pollbooks are difficult for election workers to manage. For example, in District 32, the paper pollbook is 1,176 pages and a Burleigh County, county-wide paper pollbook is 6,156 pages.

Increased voter wait times are also seen when utilizing paper pollbooks and create a bottleneck at check-in. I've included line optimization modeling, created by Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in Exhibit A of this testimony. This line optimization tool assists election officials in determining the amount of resources needed at polling locations with a goal to decrease voter wait times.
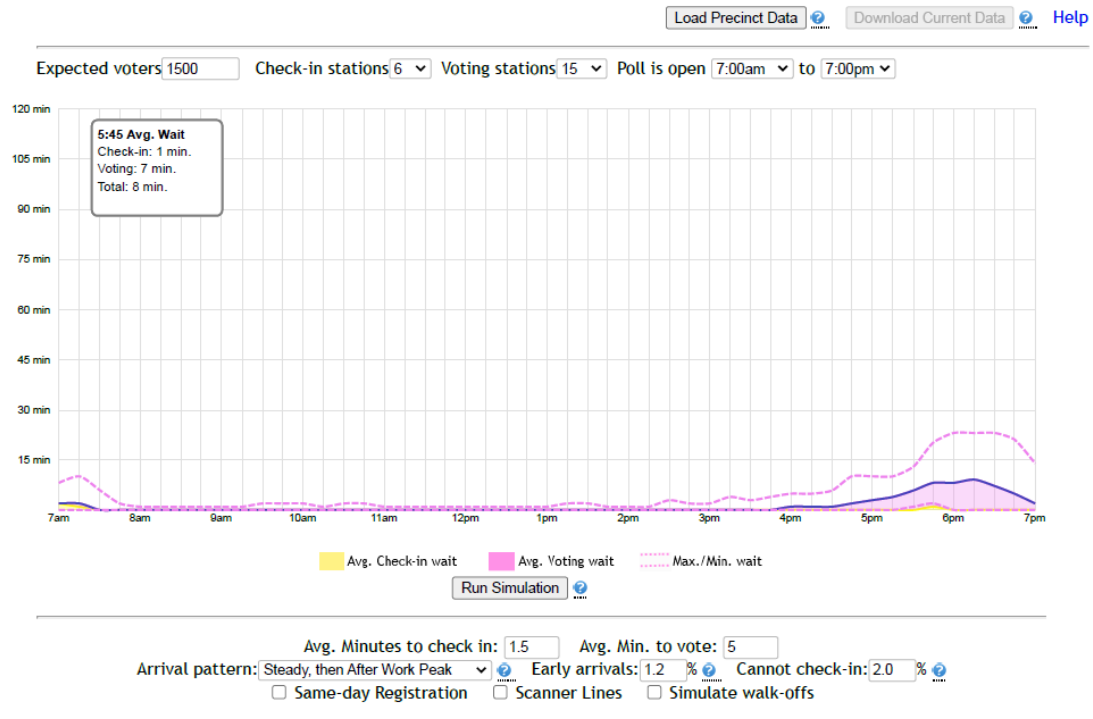
Average check-in time using electronic pollbooks is 1.5 minutes and each election worker is assigned an electronic pollbook. Conversely, using paper pollbooks increases check-in time to 3 minutes and election workers work in pairs to help streamline the check-in process. The models in Exhibit A reflect the same number of voters, voting booths, and polling hours but show significant increased voter wait times using the paper pollbook. It would be a disservice to the voters of our state to rollback the clock and use the paper pollbook.

Auditors and election workers strive to ensure that we're upholding the practice of one voter, one vote while continuing to best serve the voter. This bill would open the door to allowing voter fraud in our elections and severely diminish the security and integrity that we proudly uphold.

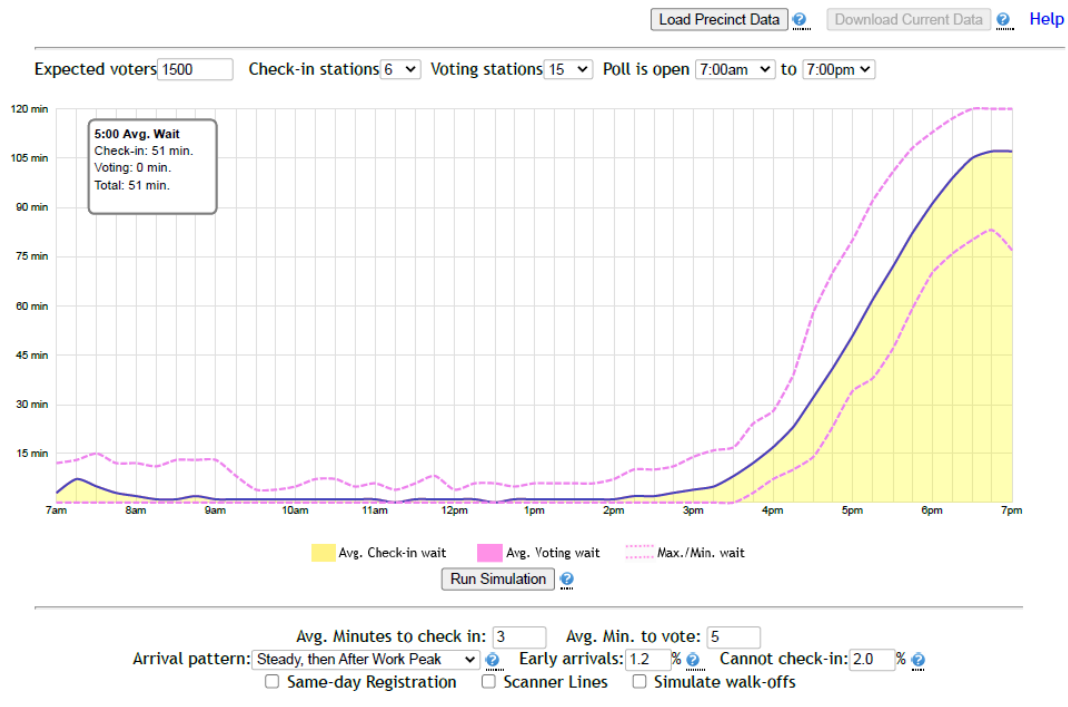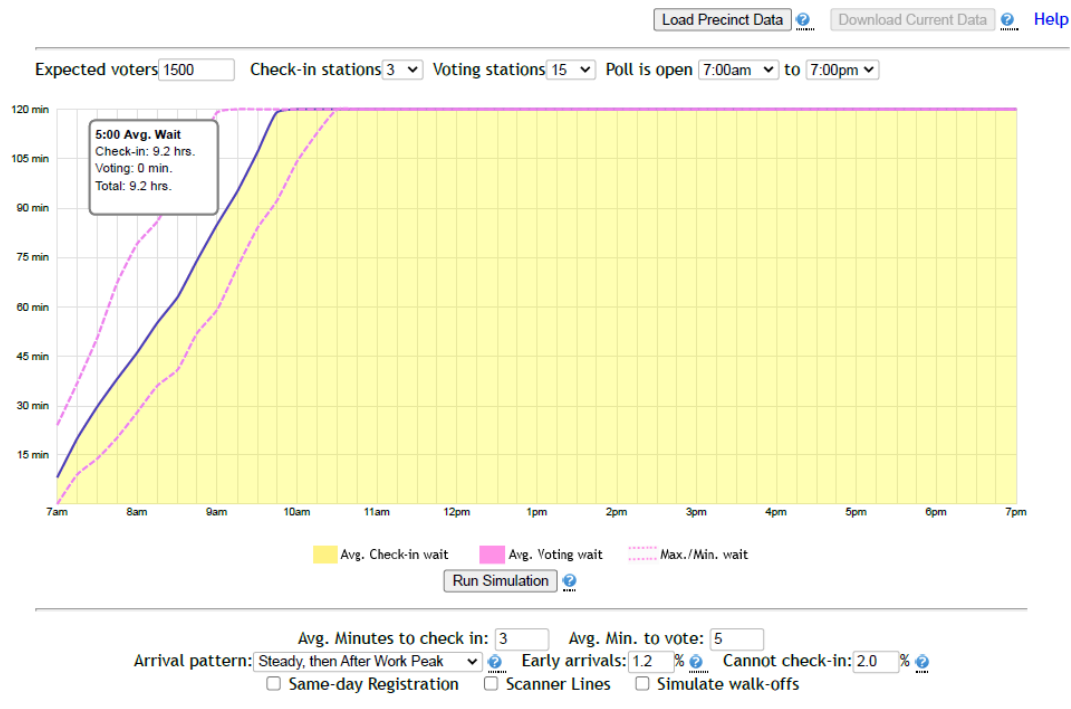Thank you for your time and I urge a DO NOT PASS on SB 2386.

Line Optimization

The model above reflects voter wait time using 6 electronic pollbooks (6 election workers) with a maximum wait time of 20 minutes.

Line Optimization

Expected voters 1500   Check-in stations 6 ▾ Voting stations 15 ▾ Poll is open 7:00am ▾ to 7:00pm ▾


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5:00 Avg. Wait
Check-in: 51 min.
Voting: 0 min.
Total: 51 min.
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⬛ Avg. Check-in wait   ⬛ Avg. Voting wait   ⋯⋯ Max./Min. wait

Run Simulation ⓘ ⋯⋯

Avg. Minutes to check in: 3   Avg. Min. to vote: 5
Arrival pattern: Steady, then After Work Peak ▾ ⓘ Early arrivals: 1.2 % ⓘ Cannot check-in: 2.0 % ⓘ ⋯⋯
☐ Same-day Registration   ☐ Scanner Lines   ☐ Simulate walk-offs

The model above reflects voter wait time using 6 check-in stations with paper pollbooks (12 election workers) with a maximum wait time of 120 minutes beginning at 6:15pm.

Line Optimization

Expected voters 1500   Check-in stations 3 ⌄   Voting stations 15 ⌄   Poll is open 7:00am ⌄ to 7:00pm ⌄

5:00 Avg. Wait	
Check-in: 9.2 hrs.	
Voting: 0 min.	
Total: 9.2 hrs.	

■ Avg. Check-in wait   ■ Avg. Voting wait   ┈ Max./Min. wait

Run Simulation ⊘

Avg. Minutes to check in: 3   Avg. Min. to vote: 5

Arrival pattern: Steady, then After Work Peak ⌄ ⊘   Early arrivals: 1.2 % ⊘   Cannot check-in: 2.0 % ⊘

☐ Same-day Registration   ☐ Scanner Lines   ☐ Simulate walk-offs

The model above reflects voter wait time using 3 check-in stations with paper pollbooks (6 election workers) with a maximum wait time of 120 minutes beginning at 9:45am.