Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount, a Certified Moderator, and a Computer Scientist.

Although well-intended, these somewhat ambiguous bills raise issues of expense, state database timeliness, state database availability, and equality.

S.B. 775 would allow pollworkers to access an electronic database by computer, laptop, or tablet to help voters find their correct polling place.

- The law does not seem to prohibit a town from accomplishing this today. The bill title says it is to “encourage” use of technology tools by poll workers, but only suggests amending the law to “better enable” such use, with no indication how that would be accomplished.

- If optional, by town, or optional by polling place it might setup a equality/civil rights issue for towns that cannot afford it or decide to prohibit it.

- If mandatory, this might be a considerable unfunded mandate requiring equipment and Internet access for each polling place, plus workers trained to use the SOTS/Google application. Cost, perhaps $500 in equipment plus $200 per polling place not currently equipped with Internet access.

- This system would require an emergency backup plan, not only for loss of connectivity, but also so that the central database be quickly updated with new locations in cases of emergency — all when power or connectivity failures might preclude access for update or reference, rendering the system useless -- the very times when polling place location information would be most needed.

- A much more economical, effective system would be to require or “encourage” that towns provide a printout of street listings for all polling places in town at each polling place. This would serve all voters who went to the wrong polling place in their own town and would not require an emergency backup plan.

SB 777 would “allow” pollworkers to check-in voters electronically.

- If mandatory, this might be a considerable unfunded mandate requiring electronic pollbooks plus bar code readers for each polling place that could cost approximately $1000 per polling place, per check-in line

- Also see my testimony, submitted today on H.B. 6428, regarding the need for and value of state certification/approval of electronic check-in hardware, software, and procedures.

Thank You