S.B.779 H.B. 6429 – Oppose – Either Bill Would Create Unintended Problems

Government Administration and Elections Committee

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Testimony – March 11, 2013

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

These well-intended bills are proposed, as I understand them, to ease the work for officials in counting and accounting for multiple votes for cross-endorsed candidates. Each bill would do little to reduce work for officials and both have unintended, negative consequences.

S.B. 779 would require that all tabulators used in Connecticut not accept a dual vote for the same cross-endorsed candidate, rejecting such as an overvote:

- Our currently approved AccuVoteOS tabulators cannot be programmed to accomplish this for multi-vote races. Thus in municipal elections, any polling place with cross-endorsed candidates running in multi-vote races would have to conduct their election entirely on paper, with manual counting late at night – This is a more error prone, less secure, process than we have today. It would make election officials jobs more, not less, challenging.

- Similarly, all absentee ballots and Election Day Registration ballots with dual votes would be rejected in all elections, adding to the number of hand-counted ballots.

- The formulas for allocating cross-endorsed “Unknown” votes would still need to be understood and applied to all hand-counted ballots.

H.B. 6429 would require that any tabulator certified by the Secretary of the State would need to eject all cross-endorsed votes as overvotes:

- In my interpretation, our currently certified AccuVoteOS scanners would remain certified, and thus this law would have no effect until scanners meeting these requirements are located, certified, and purchased.

- If my interpretation is not correct, once this law were in effect, it would preclude the use of AccuVoteOS scanners in any election in Connecticut – requiring that all ballots in all elections be hand-counted.

- This law would preclude the certification of a subsequent release of software for our AccuVoteOS scanners, unless such version met this requirement – an unlikely development.

- The formulas for allocating cross-endorsed “Unknown” votes would still need to be understood and applied to all hand-counted ballots.

Thank You