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**GAE Public Hearing**  
**February 14, 2005**

**Testimony of Richard Sivel**  
**regarding Senate Bill 55**

Good morning Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Richard Sivel. I live, and vote, in West Hartford. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today on Senate Bill 55. I am strongly in favor of a Voter-Verified Paper Ballot as required by this bill.

Last year SB388, which required a voter verified paper record, was unanimously approved by your Committee and the Appropriations Committee and then passed unanimously by the Senate. It was headed for likely unanimous approval by the House near the end of the session but unfortunately was not acted upon. I applaud Senator DeFronzo for introducing similar legislation this session. The state will shortly invest significantly in new voting technology. I hope that SB55 obtains speedy passage by the Legislature.

This past November a national election was again marred by numerous disparities and charges and counter-charges by Democrats and Republicans alike. Voters across the country are increasingly concerned whether their votes are properly recorded and counted. The integrity of our voting system is a nonpartisan issue and the very bedrock of our democracy.

The nation as a whole is moving toward a modern, hopefully more trustworthy, electoral system. In Connecticut we are at an historic crossroads. Choices we make *this year* will affect our voting system for decades to come.

Objections raised last year included lack of federal standards and concerns about accessibility for the disabled.

The federal situation is currently in flux. Senators and Representatives on both sides of the aisle have introduced, or will presently introduce, bills to clarify and strengthen the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). I believe many of these bills require some form of Voter-Verified Paper Ballot. (Specific bills are cited in my written testimony.) I also understand that evolving federal standards are voluntary, allowing states to define more stringent requirements.

Seven states, representing about 25% of the US population, already require Voter Verified Paper Ballots; most passed these laws in the last year. Eleven other states besides Connecticut have similar legislation pending this year. (Again, specific citations are in my written testimony.) Connecticut can remain in the forefront of states with the most trustworthy and secure voting systems by doing the same.

I appreciate the legitimate concerns of disabled voters for privacy and accessibility at the polls. Technology has evolved to the point where modern election machinery can provide privacy, accessibility, *and verifiability for all* voters. Election systems currently on the market meet these requirements for blind, visually- and physically-impaired, and sighted voters alike. I believe inclusion of language explicitly ensuring accessibility for all voters would strengthen SB55.

I appreciate the work of the Committee and the challenges you face as you deliberate on many election-related bills this year. You have the opportunity to set minimum requirements for Connecticut's voting system, which will then be rigorously defined and enforced by the State's very capable election officials. Regardless of the direction that Connecticut goes in terms of specific voting technology, we need to guarantee verifiability and accessibility for all voters. This can be done by means of a Voter-Verified Paper Ballot. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Sivel

***State-level VVPB legislation that has already been passed / signed into law:***

Alaska HB-459, enacted 7/4/2004.

California SB 1438, enacted 9/27/2004.

Illinois Public Act 093-574, enacted 8/21/2003.  
(very long, relevant section begins on page 130)

Maine LD-1759, enacted 4/22/2004.

Ohio HB-262, enacted 5/7/2004.

Vermont S. 0202, enacted 4/15/2004.

In addition, Nevada requires VVPB by order of its Secretary of State, Dean Heller.

***State-level legislation that has been introduced in the current session and which is pending:***

Arizona HB 2491, introduced 1/12/2005 and SB 1342, introduced 1/27/2005

Arkansas HB 1360, introduced 2/1/2005

Colorado SB05-79, introduced 1/17/2005.

Connecticut S.B. 55, introduced 1/5/2005.

Florida S. 504, introduced 12/5/2004.

Hawaii HB 1740, introduced 1/27/2005 and SB 1325, introduced 1/27/2005

Maryland SB 9, introduced 1/12/2005.

New Jersey S 2627, introduced 5/3/2004 and S 1583, introduced 5/10/2004.

New York S 1669, introduced 2/1/2005.

Texas SB 94, introduced 11/16/2004.

Virginia HB 1549, introduced 1/12/2005.

Washington HB 1025, introduced 1/10/2005 and SB 5395, introduced 1/24/2005

**Federal Verified Voting Legislation**

|                                           |                                         |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>HR704 (VIVA 2005)</b>                  | <b>S330 (VIVA 2005)</b>                 |
| <a href="#">HR550</a>                     | no companion bill at this time          |
| <a href="#">HR533</a> (VOTER Act of 2005) | <a href="#">S17</a> (VOTER Act of 2005) |
| <a href="#">HR278</a>                     | no companion bill at this time          |

Source:

<http://verifiedvoting.org/legis>