

HCS HB 717 -- PAPER BALLOTS

SPONSOR: Curtman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 7 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 4.

This bill requires that electronic touch screen voting machines be phased out and replaced by hand marked paper ballots. Paper ballot marking devices will be used for the disabled. Machines that wear out or break are subject to replacement for any reason after January 01, 2018. The bill does not require the breach of any existing contracts regarding voting machines.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will create an audit trail of ballots so that election results may be verified without reliance on software not disclosed to the public or election authorities. Paper ballots increase confidence in elections.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Curtman; Cynthia Richards; Frieda Keough; and Phillip Michaels.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that audits of electronic touch screen voting in St. Louis city have shown no error rate. Current electronic touch screen voting machines are very reliable.

Testifying on the bill were the Office of Missouri Secretary of State; Rick Stream; and Eric Fey, St Louis County Election Board.