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- NEWS RELEASE -

SECRETARY OF THE STATE'S OFFICE SELECTS TWO NAUGATUCK PRECINCTS TO HAVE MAY MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS AUDITED

10% OF VOTING PRECINCTS IN 15 CONNECTICUT COMMUNITIES WITH MAY
ELECTIONS TO HAVE BALLOTS HAND COUNTED AND MATCHED AGAINST MACHINE
TOTALS TO ENSURE INTEGRITY OF VOTING

Hartford: Representing Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz, Deputy Secretary of the State Lesley Mara today joined Connecticut voting rights advocates for a public drawing to randomly select two precincts that will have election results audited following the May 4, 2009 municipal elections that took place in 15 Connecticut communities. The two Precincts selected are Oak Terrace and Central Avenue School in Naugatuck. A third Naugatuck precinct, Andrew Avenue School, was chosen as an alternate.

“On May 4th voters went to the polls across Connecticut to choose public servants to fill very important roles in local government,” said Secretary Bysiewicz. “No matter how big or small an election is, our audit law exists to hold our election process accountable and reassure the public to have continued confidence that all votes were recorded accurately.”

As required by Public Act 07-194, An Act Concerning the Integrity and Security of the Voting Process, 10% percent of the polling precincts used in the election are subject to an audit. Deputy Secretary Mara directed that a pool of 13 precincts from the six towns that held municipal elections May 4th, not counting precincts that required a recount, be used for the selection. To comply with the law, two precincts were chosen to have their election results audited. The alternate precinct will only face an audit if one of the audit at one of the selected precincts cannot be performed. The audit can begin no sooner than May 19, 2009 and must be completed by May 29, 2009.

“Auditing election results isn’t just a good idea, it’s absolutely essential in order to guarantee the integrity of our elections – we don’t just take the machines’ word for it,” said Secretary

Bysiewicz. "This audit will consist of every ballot cast in a full 10% of the precincts hand counted and matched against the machine totals. Connecticut has the toughest elections audit law in the country and I am confident at the end of this audit the numbers will match."

The law requires a hand audit 10% of all polling places in all elections and primaries. (Polling precincts which are already part of a recount are exempt from audits by statute). The provisions in the law, developed in close cooperation with the computer science department at the University of Connecticut, give Connecticut one of the strictest audit statutes in the country. Connecticut is the first state in New England to require a comprehensive audit of election results.

Public Act 07-194 states that local Registrars of Voters, "... shall conduct a manual audit of the votes recorded in not less than ten per cent of the voting districts in the state, district or municipality, whichever is applicable. Such manual audit shall be noticed in advance and be open to public observation." The results of audits will be analyzed by the University of Connecticut and then presented to the Secretary of the State's Office and the State Elections Enforcement Commission, and ultimately made available to the public.

The law contains a detailed description of the audit process:

"The manual audit... shall consist of the manual tabulation of the paper ballots cast and counted by each voting machine subject to such audit. Once complete, the vote totals established pursuant to the manual tabulation shall be compared to the results reported by the voting machine on the day of the election or primary. The results of the manual tabulation shall be reported on a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State which shall include the total number of ballots counted, the total votes received by each candidate in question, the total votes received by each candidate in question on ballots that were properly completed by each voter and the total votes received by each candidate in question on ballots that were not properly completed by each voter. Such report shall be filed with the Secretary of the State who shall immediately forward such report to The University of Connecticut for analysis. The University of Connecticut shall file a written report with the Secretary of the State regarding such analysis that describes any discrepancies identified. After receipt of such report, the Secretary of the State shall file such report with the State Elections Enforcement Commission."

Municipal elections on May 4, 2009 took place in the following communities: The towns of Andover, Bethany, Bolton, Naugatuck, Union and Woodbridge, the Boroughs of Litchfield, Naugatuck, Newtown, Stonington, Bantam(Litchfield), Danielson(Killingly), Fenwick(Old Saybrook), Jewett City(Griswold), Woodmont(Milford) and the City of Groton. The majority of Connecticut's municipalities will hold primaries if necessary on September 15, 2009 and a General Election for municipal candidates on November 3, 2009.