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Verified Voting Calls on Florida to Rely on Paper Ballots for Election Recounts – Not Ballot Images

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – (February 19, 2020) Verified Voting urges the Florida legislature to amend **HB 1005 and SB 1312** to **require a public manual comparison audit** to check that electronic election result tabulations agree with the voter-verified paper ballots to a **reasonable scientific standard**.

Election security researchers agree that all electronic vote tabulations should routinely be manually checked against paper ballots. A retabulation system can facilitate this verification: election officials can examine a relatively small random sample of the voted paper ballots to ensure that the system counted each ballot accurately. Given heightened public concern about security threats, it is important now more than ever to demonstrate – not just assert – that computerized systems performed correctly.

“For Florida recounts to give Floridians the faith in election results that they deserve, recount procedures must demonstrate, **to a reasonable scientific standard, that the computers counted the paper ballots accurately**,” said Dan McCrea, Florida Director of Verified Voting. “As members of the Florida legislature recognized in a public hearing – that paper is the best evidence – we urge the legislature to amend the bill to routinely check this evidence.”

A representative of the Florida Supervisors of Elections (FSE), David Ramba, assured members of the House Public Integrity & Ethics Committee on February 6th that ballot images would not be used for recounts in 2020 even if the bill passes. While Verified Voting supports delaying implementation, it would be prudent for Florida to table these bills, conduct careful post-election audit pilots using paper ballots after the 2020 elections, and revisit the legislation next year, better informed, and to avoid making major changes to the election code in a presidential election year.

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