

MINUTES
JOINT PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 27, 2024
9:30 AM
Room 151, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Kim Hammer, Co-Chair; and Jonathan Dismang; Representatives Mark H. Berry, Co-Chair; Kendra Moore, Tara Shephard, Joy Springer, and Jim Wooten

Other members present: Senators Tyler Dees, Jim Dotson, Ben Gilmore, Missy Irvin, Blake Johnson, Brian King, Fredrick Love, and Matt Stone; Representatives Howard Beaty, Jr., Stan Berry, Keith Brown, J.P. Carr, Cameron Cooper, Denise Jones Ennett, Jon Eubanks, Kenneth Ferguson, Lanny Fite, Steve Hollowell, Jack Ladyman, Wayne Long, Aaron Pilkington, Jay Richardson, and Johnny Rye

Senator Hammer called the meeting to order.

Discussion of Audits of Previous Elections in Searcy and Saline Counties

Jeff Cotton, County Clerk, Searcy County; Laura Gross, Chair, Searcy County Board of Election Commissioners (SCBEC); and LC Ratchford, Member, SCBEC; provided testimony on the decision to opt for paper ballots instead of using electronic voting machines for their county elections. Ms. Gross emphasized the transparency and security of the ballot-casting and tallying process, ensuring that each ballot was handled meticulously. Mr. Ratchford cited the unreliability and frequent breakdowns of the electronic voting machines, which gave the community a primary reason to use paper ballots instead. Leslie Bellamy, Director of Elections, Elections Division, Arkansas Secretary of State, noted that the county would not be responsible for the repair costs of the electronic machines, as the state would cover these expenses.

Hon. Matt Brumley, County Judge, Saline County, and Doug Curtis, County Clerk, Saline County, explained what the process of reverting to paper ballot elections could lead to from the perspective of a county with a higher population and voter turnout percentage.

Chris Madison, Director, Arkansas State Board of Election Commissioners (ASBEC); Charlie Morris, Election Administration Supervisor, ASBEC; Jon Davidson, Educational Services Manager, ASBEC; and Waylan Cooper, Legal Counsel, ASBEC; reported that a post-election audit had been authorized and conducted in Searcy County to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the voting process.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.