

The topic of election security is in the news almost daily as the 2020 primary and general elections grow closer. As fears of hacking and attempts by foreign nations to interfere in our elections persist, many states are moving toward Washington's model of voting: requiring votes be cast on reliable, secure paper ballots.

Cybersecurity experts resoundingly agree that the only secure way to ensure elections are free from interference is to utilize paper ballots with good chain-of-custody practices and statistical postelection audits. Using paper ballots that voters have marked by hand or with an assistive device provides an official record of each vote that can be used in recounts and audits. These practices give the public supportable confidence that election outcomes are correct, even if "fake news" claims otherwise.

There is more Washington State can do, and we need to act during the current legislative session. The Secretary of State's election security package, Senate Bill 6412/House Bill 2647, provides for increased election security funding for local election officials, requires improved chain of custody for voted ballots, eliminates email ballot return for military and overseas voters (which is a form of internet voting), and requires all recounts be conducted manually.

The League of Women Voters of Thurston County urges you to contact your legislators and advocate for passage of SB 6412 / HB 2647, currently in the Senate and House State Government and Tribal Relations Committees. Supporting election security is critical to defending our democracy.

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