

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6398

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As Passed Senate, February 12, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to testing of voting systems.

**Brief Description:** Regulating voting system tests.

**Sponsors:** Senators McCaslin and Winsley; by request of Secretary of State.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations: 1/29/98 [DP].  
Passed Senate 2/12/98, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Hale, Vice Chair; Haugen, Horn, Patterson and T. Sheldon.

**Staff:** Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

**Background:** New election equipment must pass an acceptance test prescribed by the Secretary of State and be identical to that certified by the secretary. Before each state primary or general election, the Office of the Secretary of State must perform a specified test of local election equipment. The Secretary of State, the county auditor, and any political party observers must certify the testing. The Secretary of State must publish manuals of recommended procedures for specified voting operations.

**Summary of Bill:** The requirement that an acceptance test be one that is prescribed by the Secretary of State is removed; and equipment can be the same as, rather than identical to, that which is certified. The Office of the Secretary of State is authorized to adopt rules for testing the programming of local voting systems before each state primary or general election. The county auditor and any political party observers certify the testing. The Secretary of State is given discretion to publish procedures that allow restricting or defining the use of approved voting systems.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The existing statute was written in the 1970s for punch card voting systems. A new system called Optical Scan/Mark Sense has become widely used and requires different programming tests, which the Office of the Secretary of State will define by rule.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** David Elliott, Office of the Secretary of State (pro)