

Jordan M. Jancosek  
H5384

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jordan Jancosek, and I live in Barrington. I am writing to you today in support of bill H5384/S541 which are companion bills that increases from 7 days to 9 days the period of time in which a request for a recount of the votes cast can be made to the board of elections.

This bill is deeply personal to me, as I felt firsthand the effects of this lapse in our elections process this past November. In my town council race, it was a very close election between myself and another candidate. After election day, the total had me somewhere within 30 odd-votes or so, by the Friday after the election (the 8th), this had dropped below 20. I was advised to apply for a recount.

The process of applying for a recount through the Board of Elections was horrendous, confusing, and draining - adding to an already stressful situation. There is no form, but candidates are rather directed to "[write an application](#)," which should contain certain information. You are also required to drop the notarized letter at the Board of Elections - in person - it cannot be faxed or emailed. The BOE is only open during business hours and not weekends, requiring candidates to take off work if they hold a job. I found this process to be tedious and inequitable.

There is no way for candidates to know at any time during the process how many ballots are left to count. The gap between myself and another candidate continued to shrink as the seven day window narrowed in; when I called the BOE (many times) to try and discern what votes were left and when they would be tabulated, no one could give me a clear answer. In fact, no one could tell me anything about how the process would play out at all. I asked what the process would be if I did pull ahead - as I had already applied for the recount, as I was heading out of town a week after the election. No one could give me any insight, just that I would be contacted as the this all played out.

For the sake of brevity, it played out like this: ballots were added to the system at 8:48 pm on Wednesday night (8 days after the election), putting me ahead by a handful of votes. I was notified by the BOE Thursday at 8:50AM if I could, "come to the BOE for their meeting," which would take place at 9:15AM. Not only was I out of town, but this would have been impossible for me even if I was in Rhode Island, as I work full time. I was then told that I could, "write to request to rescind my recount, as only the trailing candidate is allowed to request a recount." I submitted an email to the record that I would not be rescinding my request for a recount, which was seemingly discussed, voted on, and held up at the BOE meeting. The subsequent recount took place that Friday.

Increasing the amount of days a candidate has to file a recount is a good step in the right direction; I would like to see the bill move further. By my count, 25 states have some form of an automatic recount threshold; I encourage Rhode Island to consider instituting one as well. Yes, my situation fell within an improbable gap in the system. But if it happens once, who to say it won't happen again?

Sincerely,

Jordan. M. Jancosek  
Barrington, RI