What Legislators Need to Know about Election Recounts

- When elections are close, 20 states offer (and pay for) automatic recounts. The “trigger” for a recount is determined by a margin of 0.1 percent to 1.0 percent between the top two vote getters.
- In 43 states, losing candidates or other interested parties can request and pay for a recount under certain circumstances. In the remaining states, recounts are not authorized; if a losing candidate doubts the outcome, the only recourse is through the courts.
- Statewide recounts are rare—and expensive. In the 2008 Minnesota senate race, the recount cost $460,000, and the 2004 Washington governor’s race recount cost $900,000.
- Manual recounts require a paper ballot or other paper trail; retabulation on electronic voting machines is possible.

Resources for Election Recounts

- NCSL’s Automatic Recounts webpage, [http://goo.gl/4JRb71](http://goo.gl/4JRb71)
- Recount Principles and Best Practices (Center for Election Integrity-Minnesota), [http://goo.gl/YGqPAV](http://goo.gl/YGqPAV)
- CEIMN State Recount Laws Searchable Database (Center for Election Integrity-Minnesota), [http://goo.gl/Uq1FWO](http://goo.gl/Uq1FWO)