Maryland
State Board of Elections

HB 1172
Election Law – Postelection Tabulation Audits- Risk-Limiting Audits
Delegate Kaiser

Purpose:
To require the State Board of Elections in collaboration with the local board of elections to conduct a risk limiting audit after each statewide election.

Comments:

The State Board of Elections offers informational testimony on the proposed legislation.

Attached is a summary of the post-election audits currently being performed by the State Board of the Elections to ensure confidence in the electoral process and election results.

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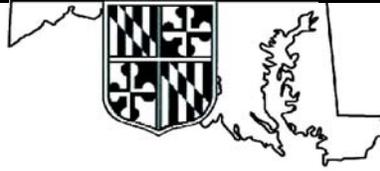410-269-2853 or jared.demarinis@maryland.gov

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STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Post- Election Audits in Maryland

Did you know? The State Board of Elections uses a multilayer defense to protect our election systems and voter data. The same is true after an election, when we verify the accuracy of the voting system and the integrity of the voting process. Maryland uses a three-pronged approach to post-election audits. First, two separate audits verify the accuracy of the voting system – in other words, we check to make sure that the voting system counted the votes accurately. Second, a comprehensive audit checks three separate components of the voting process to verify the integrity of the election.

How do we verify that the voting system is counting votes accurately?

Maryland uses two different post-election tabulation audits to verify the results of the voting system. The first of these two audits is called an automated tabulation audit. In this audit, ballot images from the voting system are securely copied and transferred to a third-party vendor who uses independent software to retabulate the results.

What's so great about the automatic tabulation audit? By completing an independent, third-party automated tabulation audit, **we retabulate 100% of ballots cast** in a fraction of the time that it would take to manually audit 100% of ballots. All ballots cast during early voting and on election day are audited before local election officials certify the election. Those ballots, along with the absentee and provisional ballots cast, are tabulated again before the State certifies the election. Any variances between the audit results and the voting system results greater than 0.05% trigger further auditing.

The second of these audits is the manual audit. In this audit, a specified percentage of ballots and precincts from each local jurisdiction are manually counted and compared with the results of the voting system.

The results of these audits for prior elections are available on our website. Visit www.elections.maryland.gov and select "Ballot Audit Plan" under "Hot Topics" for audit results from the 2018 elections.

How do we verify the integrity of the entire election?

Besides verifying the accuracy of the voting system, it is also necessary to verify the integrity of the election. Maryland does this by conducting a comprehensive audit, which audits 16 different actions related to the voting system (in a separate way than the tabulation audits), polling place operations, and canvassing and post-election reconciliation. The results of each audit are returned to the local boards of elections with findings and corrective actions identified.

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