



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 1, 2024

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

HB40 – Information

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and Committee Members:

My name is John Michael Gudger, chair of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) Legislative Committee. I am writing on behalf of MAEO to provide you with information and an amendment regarding HB40 – Election Law – Post-election Tabulation – Risk Limiting Audits.

As an election official, I would like to inform you that we currently have robust audits in place, including the comprehensive audit, 100% automated audit, and post-election manual audit. However, if we are required to perform all of these audits, we would need an additional 7-10 days to complete them before the election is certified.

In the days after the election, our staff is busy preparing for the mail-in ballot canvass, reviewing and preparing provisional ballot applications for the canvass, and conducting the comprehensive audits required before certification, among other things. If there are any close races, we are also concerned about recounts that may be requested and the delicate timeline that they must follow since elected officials are sworn into their positions beginning in early December. All of these things are to be conducted in specific timeframes laid out in law and require an immense amount of staff attention and space, which local boards of elections do not have enough of.

We support implementing Risk Limiting Audits (RLAs) in lieu of some of the comprehensive audit requirements and post-election manual audits. This would allow us to save time and resources while still ensuring the transparency to the public, accuracy and integrity of the election process.

MAEO proposes establishing a pilot program in a small, medium, and large county to test and develop best practices for RLAs. This approach will provide us with valuable insights that will allow us to submit our findings for a bill during a subsequent session.

MAEO has a strong desire to complete our jobs efficiently and effectively with absolute accuracy in the election results. We hope you will consider our recommendation for a pilot program to help establish best practices for Risk Limiting audits.

Sincerely,

John Michael Gudger
johnmichael.gudger@maryland.gov
Chair, MAEO Legislative Committee