



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 426 - Election Law - Post Election Tabulation Audits - Risk-Limiting Audits

POSITION: Favorable

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters supports measures that ensure the accurate counting of all votes and that protect the integrity of our elections. Risk-limiting audits can be a useful tool in this effort and are well worth funding.

HB 426 would replace certain existing requirements for the auditing of election systems with a more modern, statistically proven risk-limiting audit (RLA). [Thirteen states](#) now use Risk Limiting Audits.

Risk-limiting audits are more efficient than the current mandate to audit a fixed percentage of ballots. Instead, they only sample as many voter-verified paper ballots as are necessary according to the margin of victory in each contest. At least one statewide contest must be audited this way, plus at least one local contest in each county. Pre-determined guidelines for expanding the audit, up to a full recount, if necessary, preclude the need for making arbitrary, case-by-case decisions.

Another advantage of HB 426 is that it would require risk-limiting audits to be completed before the election is certified, rather than up to 120 days after the election. This rapid turnaround will help reassure candidates and voters that ballots were counted correctly.

Finally, HB 426 proposes a transparent process for conducting the audits and posting a report on the State Board of Elections website describing the process and the results. These measures will help maintain public confidence in the integrity of Maryland's elections.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 426.