



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
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The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
and Members of the Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: **SB0313** – Election Law – Postelection Tabulation Audits – Risk-Limiting Audits – **UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Committee Members,

The 1,154 members of the Maryland Federation of Republican Women oppose SB0313 – Election Law – Postelection Tabulation Audits – Risk-Limiting Audits. Senate amendments are an improvement in that, should the risk-limiting audit results change the outcome of the election, an investigation by the Board of Canvassers would be required. In the absence of a definitive result, we should not abandon a full recount.

Changing the outcome of an election based on a statistical sample is not acceptable. It is always dangerous to extrapolate from a sample. Doing so will further decrease confidence in the election result. For any contest whose results are in question, a FULL RECOUNT must be required.

The SB0313 Fiscal and Policy Note references the National Conference of State Legislatures' description of risk-limiting audits as "statistically based audit techniques." Statistically based audit techniques (or methods) are subject to manipulation. In statewide races, the precincts chosen as the sample could be "cherry picked" for the desired result. The Democracy Fund report referenced on page 6 cautions that:

"Voting equipment plays a major role in determining the type of audit that can be conducted. This includes the ability to produce a paper ballot that can be retrieved and examined, as well as a cast vote record that will allow you to compare how the voting system interpreted each and every ballot."

Photo ID for in-person voting and signature verification of mail-in ballots are critical to restoring confidence in election results. There have been multiple changes in Maryland's election processes in recent years including mail-in ballots and election day voter registration. None of the changes have increased voter confidence or voter turn-out. Implementing statistically based risk-limiting audits will have the same neutral or even negative outcome.

We urge an **UNFAVORABLE** report for **SB0313**.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman