Delegate Anne R. Kaiser
Chair, Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401
Via e-mail: anne.kaiser@house.state.md.us

February 27, 2020

Verified Voting statement of support for HB 1172
Postelection Tabulation Audits – Risk-Limiting Audits

Dear Chair Kaiser:

Verified Voting welcomes and supports your bill HB 1172, which would replace Maryland's current ineffective manual audits with risk-limiting audits in statewide elections by 2022 – with first pilots this year. The legislation would place Maryland on a path to efficient and compelling verification of its vote counts.

As you know, the United States confronts unprecedented security threats to election systems – and to public confidence in election outcomes. To counter these threats, risk-limiting audits (RLAs) directly examine a sample of voters' paper ballots before the election results are certified. RLAs are designed to efficiently confirm that election outcomes match what a full hand count would reveal. RLAs also assure a large chance of leading to a full hand count *if* that count would change the election outcome. Thus, these audits provide strong evidence that the final certified results can be trusted. RLAs often require far less work than fixed-percentage audits, depending in part on how close the audited contest(s) are.

Risk-limiting audits have been widely endorsed by security specialists and election officials. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, in their 2018 consensus report *Securing the Vote*, recommended that states move toward implementing RLAs for "all federal and state election contests – and local contests where feasible." The Department of Homeland Security has partnered in developing open-source, verifiable software for use in RLAs. Election officials across the country have taken the lead in piloting and implementing RLAs.

Full implementation of RLAs in Maryland will take time, and HB 1172 sets the stage for success. Appropriately, the bill defers most details to be specified in comprehensive regulations. To inform the regulations, the bill establishes a broad advisory workgroup and requires RLA pilots in at least two counties after the November 2020 election. Verified Voting could provide expertise to this workgroup. This process empowers election officials to lead in developing audit procedures responsive to their circumstances. The requirement to audit at least one statewide contest, beginning in 2022 elections, is readily feasible and allows Maryland to progress toward more inclusive tabulation audits without having to rush the planning.

We thank you for introducing this impressive bill. We look forward to future opportunities to work with Maryland officials to implement risk-limiting audits.

Respectfully,

Marian Schneider
President, Verified Voting