



**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**HB 759 - Election Law - Postelection Tabulation Audits - Risk-Limiting Audits**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson – Co-Presidents**

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The League of Women Voters supports measures to ensure accurate counting of all votes and to protect election systems against attack. We commend Maryland's election administrators for implementing strong systems to protect voting systems from attack and to detect and remedy any errors.

HB 759 would replace certain of the existing requirements for auditing of election systems with a more modern "risk-limiting audit." A growing number of states are requiring risk-limiting audits and the positive experience demonstrates the value of such audits for ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.

The current requirement for auditing a fixed percentage of ballots is inefficient as errors could often be detected by an audit of a smaller sample. Risk-limiting audits calibrate the size of the sample to be audited according to the margin of victory in each contest and are therefore more efficient. HB 759 also requires that such a risk-limiting audit be completed before the election is certified, in place of the current requirement for an audit after the election has been certified. This faster timeline may require that more staff resources be allocated to the audit process, and we would urge the General Assembly to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated for such audits.

We note that this bill replaces the current requirement for an automated software audit of all audits with a requirement for an automated audit of 25% of ballots. Although this is a large sample, the automated process would be less expensive and should be completed more quickly than a hand count.

Finally, HB 759 proposes a publicly accessible process for drafting the necessary regulations and conducting the audits. These measures will help to maintain public confidence in the integrity of Maryland's elections.

We urge a favorable report on HB 759.