



January 14, 2025

The Honorable Sharlett Mena
Washington State Capitol
416 Sid Snyder Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98504
Via online portal

RE: Verified Voting Supports Passage of HB 1030 Modifying Post-election Tabulation Audits

Dear Chair Mena and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Verified Voting, I write in support of HB 1030, which codifies and bolsters ongoing improvements in Washington's post-election tabulation audits. Verified Voting's mission is to strengthen democracy for all voters by promoting the responsible use of technology in elections. Since our founding in 2004, we have acted on the belief that the integrity and strength of our democracy rely on citizens' trust that each vote is counted as cast. As such, we welcome and support HB 1030, which clarifies that post-election audits entail manually examining ballots to check machine counts and facilitates statewide risk-limiting audits (RLAs) in Washington's elections.

Risk-limiting audits and other routine manual audits address two critical challenges to U.S. elections: the possibility that voting technology will misreport results, and the spread of unfounded claims that vote counts are rigged. Well-designed audits provide dependable, efficient, and timely quality assurance, helping Washington election officials show that reported winners received more votes.

More specifically, RLAs can confirm that one or more election outcomes match what a full hand count of those ballots would reveal before results are finalized. RLAs provide strong evidence that a full hand count would confirm the reported election outcomes by checking a small fraction of voted ballots. If necessary, RLAs can check more ballots—up to a full hand count if needed—to establish the correct outcome.

Election officials across the country—including in Washington—have taken the lead in piloting and implementing RLAs. Colorado, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia regularly conduct RLAs before certifying election results. Washington has piloted RLAs since 2019, and the state completed its first statewide RLA last November, following a statewide post-certification RLA pilot in August. The current statute does not address the need for coordination among counties to conduct RLAs of statewide and shared-district contests. Also, current law allows "electronic audits" in lieu of either RLAs or what HB 1030 calls "limited hand-count audits," which are still the most common audit method nationwide.

HB 1030 updates and clarifies Washington's audit statutes in important yet measured ways, establishing broad requirements to be fleshed out further by election administrators during the rulemaking process. Notably, the bill requires that RLAs and limited hand counts be conducted manually by eliminating the electronic audit alternative—a clarification that provides a solid grounding for audits in the state. The bill explicitly authorizes the secretary of state to initiate an RLA of a statewide contest, and allows RLAs of multi-county contests if all counties agree to participate. We expect that RLAs in Washington will grow in scope as their conduct becomes routine; HB 1030 will support that progress.

We applaud you for considering this bill and encourage you to support it. We would be delighted to discuss these topics with committee members, election officials, and other stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Mark Lindeman
Policy & Strategy Director