

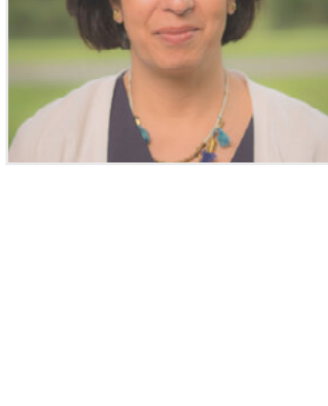
# Verified Voting

## Field Report

September 2021

Last week, the report from Arizona's sham election review was released, revealing what we already knew: partisan [sham reviews](#) undermine Americans' rights to free and fair elections. We've spent the summer collaborating with election officials and advocates around the country to give them the tools they need to shore up confidence in our election outcomes, fighting back against the spread of disinformation, and working to provide every voter with evidence-based assurance their vote counts. Keep reading to learn about our work throughout the second and third quarters of 2021, and please consider sharing this report, or making a [contribution](#) to support these vital efforts.

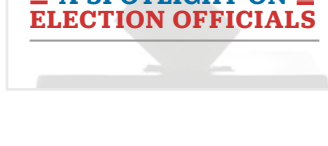
## New President & Chief Executive Officer



**Sangita Sigdya** joined Verified Voting full-time in early September as President and CEO and is leading our ongoing efforts to guide our elections toward greater security, verifiability, accuracy, and transparency. A seasoned executive and collaborative leader with twenty plus years in the U.S. democracy and international development spaces, Sangita brings experience with transformative scaling of social movements and organizations.

She previously served as Executive Vice President at FairVote where she was a key architect of its current strategic plan, board development, long-term fiscal management, and fundraising strategy. Prior to FairVote, she served in a leadership role to scale the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a 75-country multilateral initiative that promotes government transparency through citizen engagement. She also held a variety of executive positions at the Results Educational Fund's Microcredit Summit Campaign and the World Bank, among others. Sangita has a Masters in Public Administration (MPA) from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. She is originally from Nepal and currently lives in Virginia with her family.

## Education & Outreach



Our "[Spotlight on Election Officials](#)" series continues to shine a light on the work that election officials do to safely and securely administer the most basic function of our democracy - voting! The officials we have interviewed have varied backgrounds, electorates, and regions, but one common theme has emerged - they are all committed to helping voters understand how elections work. Read the latest features: [Patty Hansen](#) (Coconino County, AZ's Recorder), [Caroline Fawkes](#) (US Virgin Islands' Supervisor of Elections), and [Eric Fey](#) (St. Louis County, MO's Democratic Director of Elections).



The Verified Voting data team has been busy with improvements and updates to our Verifier tool so we can keep bringing you accurate and inclusive data about our elections infrastructure. We've upgraded the [accessible equipment map](#) with improved colors and a more comprehensive legend. We've added data for the all-too-often overlooked U.S. territories: American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



We're bringing the public opportunities to connect directly with our experts through a variety of virtual events, from briefings like our "State of the States" look at what's been happening around the country in election security, to informal "Ask an Expert" Q&As on audits, data, our work with election officials, and more. We're also co-hosting events with partners such as our June [event](#) with the League of Women Voters of Virginia, which gave the public the opportunity to hear from federal, state, and local election officials, as well as experts in risk-limiting audits and disinformation. The event highlighted the inroads the state has made in making their elections more secure and gave the attendees practical ways to elevate trusted information about the state's elections.



The team continues to meet election officials where they are, through conferences such as the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) and the Election Center annual conference. Additionally, Mathematical Advisor Audrey Malagon and Senior Policy Associate C.Jay Coles hosted an informational booth at the International Association of Government Officials (iGO) annual conference. These gatherings allow us to hear about the support election officials need to provide justified confidence in our elections, and how our team can assist with post-election audits and other election security measures.



A comprehensive [dataset](#) with 2020 U.S. General Election official county-level results is now publicly available thanks to software and data collection done at Portland State University, jointly funded by the National Science Foundation and Verified Voting. Believed to be the first publicly available comprehensive dataset of the 2020 results, the authors are Verified Voting Data Scientist Stephanie Singer, Janaki Srungavarapu, and Todd Graham.

## State Highlights



Our team is monitoring election legislation in [more than a dozen states](#), testifying in support of election security best practices, and opposing efforts to limit voter access and discredit the election results. We are also providing guidance to election officials and advocates in our priority states on conducting robust, scientifically sound risk-limiting audits and other election security measures. Here's a snapshot of our work:

### Pennsylvania



Mark Lindeman [testified](#) before the Pennsylvania Senate State Government Committee about the state's RLA pilots of the 2020 general election and the 2021 primary election, which we have been [heavily engaged with](#) from planning to implementation. The hearing [showcased](#) the continued politicization of audits, but we are actively pushing back against political distractions, and are working with election officials in the state to prepare for another pilot of November's municipal elections.

### Arizona

We stand with Arizona election officials in our [criticism](#) of the sham review recently completed in Maricopa County ([read our statement here](#)) and are ready to help Maricopa County election officials replace their [compromised](#) voting systems in time for the 2022 elections. We are also forging ahead with our work with election officials and advocates across the state who want to conduct robust, scientifically sound post-election audits.

### Texas

Thanks to our efforts and expert assistance in the state, Texas passed SB 598, a bill that introduces risk-limiting audits and phases out the paperless voting machines that 10% of in-person voters in Texas still use. We're also providing support and advice to legislators and advocates on the ground amidst calls for a sham review of the 2020 election and helping to ensure that Texas is on track to implement RLAs in the next five years, if not sooner.

### Ohio

Senior Policy Associate Chrissa LaPorte provided planning and assistance [onsite](#) for a risk-limiting audit pilot of a countywide contest from the 2020 general election in Williams County, OH. The pilot provided an opportunity for election officials from Williams County and three other counties to get hands-on experience conducting a full RLA.

### New Hampshire

In response to concerns over discrepancies in the 2020 general election totals for the state representative contest, Windham, NH appointed Mark Lindeman to investigate the results as one of three designated representatives to a "forensic election audit team." Mark and the audit team spent two weeks on site in May directing the audit, which was extensively [documented on video](#) to promote transparency. The team [released its report](#) in July, attributing the discrepancy in the results to ballot folding issues rather than attempted fraud. This process demonstrated that robust audits can provide evidence to counter conspiracy claims.

### Louisiana

Louisiana recently passed [SB221](#), which will require voting systems that provide voter-verified paper ballots: a critical step toward moving the [last remaining state](#) using paperless voting systems to a more secure voting system, which is a major milestone in Verified Voting's ongoing quest to phase out paperless voting systems. We recently submitted [comments](#) to the state's Voting System Commission recommending a hand-marked paper ballot system with voter-verifiable ballot marking devices for accessible use to help reinforce Louisiana voters' confidence in the state's elections.

### Virginia

Virginia conducted its first statewide risk-limiting audit pilot in early 2021, representing another important step toward RLAs as a routine post-election process. Verified Voting Mathematical Advisor and in-state representative Audrey Malagon, who has been deeply involved with trainings and prior pilots throughout the state, observed the audit and held conversations with election officials and members of the Department of Elections to review its success and identify areas for improvement. We are also working to propose legislative changes that will strengthen RLA requirements in the state, including ensuring the process happens before election certification.

### North Carolina

We are continuing to focus on building our relationships in the state and have met with the State Board to offer assistance as the state explores piloting RLAs. We have also shared resources with local election officials as they work to improve their communications on post-election audits and have had discussions at the county level about individual pilots. We have been encouraged by their interest in RLAs and are keeping lines of communications open so our experts can be of assistance when needed.

### California

We recently submitted comments to strengthen California's draft RLA legislation, along with monitoring other legislative and regulatory developments such as voter signature verification requirements and extending 2020 pandemic provisions. Additionally, we have partnered with the California Voter Foundation on the launch of the new Election Community Network, which is intended to protect election workers against threats and attacks.

### Oregon

Verified Voting Data Scientist and in-state representative Stephanie Singer is serving on the Oregon Secretary of State's RLA Advisory Committee to help guide improvements to the state's proposed RLA rule, and we are meeting with election officials to build support for RLAs.

### Florida

We are connecting with local advocates and coalition partners to discuss election-related issues and are analyzing how to improve audit practices as well as monitoring legislation for opportunities to provide expert assistance.

### Internet Voting

We provided written comments and testimony in states considering expanding electronic ballot return, including [Rhode Island](#), [Colorado](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Maine](#), [Michigan](#), and the [District of Columbia](#).

## Federal Advocacy



We [support](#) the election security provisions in the [Freedom To Vote Act](#), a revised version of the For The People Act (H.R.1/S.1), which unfortunately stalled in the Senate. The Freedom To Vote Act would require the use of voter-verified paper ballots, contains post-election audit requirements, increases protection for election workers from intimidation and coercion, and provides funding for states to replace and secure voting systems and election infrastructure. We continue to support other federal and state funding provisions that strengthen election security and released a [statement](#) in support of the House FSGG Appropriations bill, urging Congress to "make investments to safeguard our elections infrastructure."

We are closely monitoring any federal legislation that would allow for the electronic return of voted ballots (a.k.a. Internet voting), including a bill that was introduced that would allow for internet voting for military voters. Giving an unverifiable voting option to any voter would make their votes less secure - when safe and accessible options already exist to ensure that votes count as cast.

We also submitted [comments](#) to the National Institute of Standards and Technology's request for information to seek information about barriers to private and independent voting for people with disabilities, noting the many barriers for voters with disabilities and our support for solutions that are both innovative and secure.

## Press Highlights



Mark Lindeman was featured in the [Philadelphia Inquirer's](#) in-depth piece about the Pennsylvania legislature's sham "forensic audit" and why it is not a real audit.

CNN [spoke with](#) Mark Lindeman about his concerns regarding the sham review taking place in Maricopa County, Arizona.

In this [AP article](#), Mark Lindeman discusses the Windham, New Hampshire audit outcome and emphasizes that there was no evidence of fraud.

POLITICO published an [in-depth story](#) based on the "Price of Voting" report that Verified Voting helped publish.

Mark Lindeman [spoke](#) with the Carolina Public Press about what risk-limiting audits might mean for North Carolina.

Stateline, run by Pew Charitable Trusts, published a [story](#) interviewing Mark Lindeman about how "cyber navigator" programs might help strengthen our electoral systems.

Audrey Malagon was interviewed on the popular election administration [podcast](#) "High Turnout, Wide Margins" about her work with risk-limiting audits, the Verifier and more!

Don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) for the latest updates from #TeamVerifiedVoting.

## A Look Ahead



For all the focus on sham election reviews in the national headlines, [progress is being made on multiple fronts as states and jurisdictions across the country implement our recommendations for making elections more transparent, secure, and verifiable](#). We won't allow the attempted politicization of audits - or election security as a whole - to distract or deter us. As we move into the final months of 2021, we'll keep working to support election officials in providing voters with evidence-based assurance in election results, to combat disinformation campaigns that rely on confusion by helping voters understand the nuts and bolts of how elections work, and to formulate strategies under the guidance of our new President and CEO to meet the challenges ahead.

Again, we hope you'll share this report with your friends and colleagues, and [consider a donation](#) to support our ongoing efforts. Please reach out to us at [info@verifiedvoting.org](mailto:info@verifiedvoting.org) with any questions you have; we're always delighted to hear from you, and look forward to sharing future updates as we work together to ensure that every vote will be counted as cast.