

February 6, 2025

Connecticut Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2200  
Hartford, CT 06106  
*Via online portal*

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of Verified Voting, I write in support of S.B. No. 1232 regarding risk-limiting audits. Verified Voting is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen democracy for all voters by promoting the responsible use of technology in elections. Since its founding by computer scientists in 2004, Verified Voting has promoted voter-verified paper ballots and routine, rigorous post-election audits—especially risk-limiting audits—to check the accuracy of computerized voting systems.

Risk-limiting audits (RLAs) and other routine manual audits address two distinct challenges to U.S. elections: the chance that voting technology will misreport results, and the spread of baseless accusations that vote counts are rigged. Well-designed audits provide routine, efficient, and timely quality assurance. They take a “show, don’t tell” approach to confirming vote counts.

RLAs are robust tabulation audits designed to efficiently confirm that election outcomes match what a full hand count of those ballots would reveal by manually examining a representative random sample of the ballots. RLAs have been recommended by the American Statistical Association, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and many other experts as one element of a strong and resilient election infrastructure.

Election officials across the country have taken the lead in piloting and implementing RLAs. Colorado, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia regularly conduct RLAs prior to the finalization of election results, and their experience offers valuable lessons learned for Connecticut.

S.B. No. 1232 would allow for the successful implementation of RLAs in Connecticut, providing a strong basis for public confidence in election results. The bill gives the Secretary of State the time and authority to develop procedures and regulations related to RLAs, without overspecifying the details in legislation. The bill includes a pilot program that would provide registrars additional experience with the RLA process and allow them to test their new voting equipment—expected throughout the state this

year—as part of an RLA. The University of Connecticut has also been refining audit methods and strategies for effective audit implementation that would bring the goals of this legislation within reach.

We also offer a few suggestions on how this legislation might be improved. One of the strengths of the bill is that it requires a range of contests to be audited, but the state may benefit from reducing the set of contests subject to an RLA, at least initially. The bill could instead only require state offices and the office of presidential elector, when applicable, to be audited to a risk limit. Other contests—one randomly selected office for U.S. representative in Congress and five percent of the offices of state senator and state representative—could also be audited but not necessarily to a risk limit. For instance, these contests could be audited as they appear on the ballots selected as part of the statewide RLA sample. The legislature may wish to revisit whether to require an RLA of all these contests at a later time, once the state has more experience with RLAs. We also suggest exempting from the RLA contests that are “uncontested,” where a candidate runs unopposed for an office.

We also suggest reconsidering the requirement to audit U.S. House and General Assembly contests already subject to a recanvass, because of a close vote or a tie. If two candidates are separated by only a handful of votes, an RLA would likely result in a full hand count, which could prove challenging for registrars to complete prior to certification.

We also noticed that RLAs are required beginning in 2026 while RLA instructions are not required until the beginning of 2027.

Thank you for considering our comments and suggestions. RLAs are an important tool for verifying election outcomes, and we applaud your efforts to implement them in Connecticut. We would be happy to discuss further any provisions of the bill or any of the suggestions we have outlined.

Respectfully submitted,

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Deputy Policy & Strategy Director