



*Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws  
In support of H.687, S.388 & H.721  
Acts relating to post-election audits  
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If adopted, these bills will improve post-election audits of the vote by adding the office of Governor and expanding the number of elections audited from the single one after Presidential elections. Audits would be conducted after all statewide primaries, general and special elections. The current audit of 3% of all precincts would be replaced by risk-limiting audits.

A special LWVUS task force studied and issued a detailed report on post-election audits that recommended “risk-limiting audits with escalation protocols.” The report noted that “Fixed percentage audits include insufficient audit units...in small or close races and unnecessarily many units for landslide or large races.”

The report recommended audits for “selected races and ballot questions in all elections—primary, general and special.” <https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/report-electionaudits.pdf>

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports these bills and advocates changes to make audits more effective in improving elections. The final report of the audit by the office of the Secretary of State should be timely. These bills do not change the six-month deadline for issuing the report; we recommend an earlier deadline.

The audit report after the November 2016 election was published in May 2017, nearly six months later. There were significant differences between the machine tallies and the manual counts in some of the audited precincts in 2016. Three precincts in New Bedford and a few precincts in other towns had substantial changes in votes for President and other offices. The audit count became the official vote tally. The purpose of the manual post-election audit is to determine if our voting systems and processes are accurate and to recommend changes when needed in a timely way. The late report was largely unnoticed in 2017, however, because the election was in the rear-view mirror.

The League also advocates that expert(s) in election statistics participate in drafting the final report.

Thank you for your consideration.