

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Risk Limiting Audit (RLA) Work Group**  
**July 19, 2021**  
**Washington Building**  
**1100 Bank Street**  
**Richmond, VA 23219**

**Members Present:** Brenda Cabrera, Barbara Tabb, John Nunnally, Keith Balmer, Anne Marie Middlesworth, Ravi Udeshi, Roger Omwake, and Mike Ziegenfuss.

**ELECT Staff Present:** Rachel Lawless, Confidential Policy Advisor; Daniel Davenport, Policy Analyst; Karen-Hoyt Stewart Locality Security (Voting Tech) Program Manager, Max Berckmueller and Colleen McBride, ELECT Interns.

**Public:** Two members of the public also attended.

**Welcome**

At 1:05 P.M. Rachel Lawless opened the meeting, welcomed everyone in attendance, and thanked them for making it. Introductions were then held for a five minutes.

**Presentation**

Rachel Lawless began her presentation with a review of the agenda for the meeting and a basic discussion of the primary objectives of the work group. She then began discussing the new legislation introduced around Risk Limiting Audits. As she discussed the new laws and their ramifications as well as potential plans and timelines for how the Department of Elections thought an audit might look, the members of the meeting began to introduce questions that led to discussions around a number of topics.

**Ballot manifests**

First the importance of ballot manifests was discussed. The general consensus around the manifest was that their significance should be made clear to local officials. In particular, these election officials should begin thinking of how they might store their ballots before the beginning of the election. The potential for revisions to the training standards for RLA's and the RLA manual were also discussed. One suggestion was that videos and step by step checklists would be useful for ensuring uniformity during RLAs for procedures and methodologies such as for ballot weighing. As well, updating the RLA manual to include a methodology section would be helpful.

**Discussion of Timeline for Statewide RLA**

There was a broad discussion concerning the potential issues that could come up by creating

different timelines for the Risk Limiting Audit process. Questions such as what constitutes involvement in an RLA, whether the audit is intended to test the machines or the contest, and how best to observe the requirement that every locality being involved in an audit when statewide elections already require all localities to hold an audit at least every four years were discussed and debated among the work group.

Another large question examined was how to balance the random selection of a contest with the need to have realistic expectations for how close an election's results can be for an audit to occur in a timely manner. The problem being that if an extremely close election is audited then the process would almost become a full recount. Simultaneously, it should not be the case that no close elections are audited. There was also a discussion around how it might be possible to make the processes that go into holding an RLA easier to understand for the public.

The work group also concluded that requests for audits by individual election boards should come after the election occurs to help maintain the randomness of the process and help prevent the potential for any pre-election preparation for the audit to occur. The different potential voting procedures for the local election boards to choose whether to hold an audit were then debated. The main discussion came down to by what margin should a local election board decide whether to audit one of their elections. Not all of these questions were entirely answered, but each of the potential solutions was considered and will be discussed further.

### **State process for random annual selection of elections**

The work group agreed that the Chairman of the State Election Board should be the one to select the audited elections and that no locality should be removed from the potential pool of auditees to simplify the process. Finally, there was a discussion of the best dates to hold this post-election meeting where the specific elections being audited would be chosen.

### **Discussion of Next Steps**

Rachel Lawless offered that the Policy Team would consider the input that had been provided so far in making recommendations and changes. There was then some discussion for when the next meeting would occur. Ultimately it was decided that late August, likely the 23rd, would be the most suitable date. The next meeting will likely be both virtual and in-person.

### **Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.