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Department of State Livestreams Kickoff of Pennsylvania's Statewide Risk-Limiting Audit of the 2023 Municipal Primary

Harrisburg, PA – Ensuring that our elections are conducted freely and fairly, and that every eligible voter can make their voice heard, are top priorities of the Shapiro Administration. To continue **Governor Shapiro's** commitment to transparency about election administration in the Commonwealth, the Department of State livestreamed the process to randomly select batches of ballots that will be audited as part of Pennsylvania's second statewide risk-limiting audit (RLA).

"National experts consider RLAs the highest standard of comprehensive election audits," **Acting Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt** said. "The RLA process provides a statistically sound method for confirming, with a high degree of confidence, that the reported outcome of the audited election is correct."

During the livestream, seven department volunteers took turns rolling 10-sided dice. The numbers they rolled generated a random 20-digit "seed number." That seed number will be used to determine which batches of ballots counties will audit over the next few days.

The department and counties determined, through a random selection process conducted Monday, that the audited race will be the Democratic primary for Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

During the audit, county officials will hand-tally the randomly selected ballot batches, then compare those vote counts against the original machine counts in the Democratic race for Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Known as a "batch comparison" type of RLA, this pre-certification audit can confirm whether counties' voting systems tabulated paper ballots accurately enough that a full hand count would produce the same reported outcome.

The RLA will be carried out in addition to the 2% statutorily required review that counties must perform after each primary and general election. For that review, county officials

are required to conduct a statistical recount of a random sample of at least 2% of all ballots cast – or 2,000 ballots, whichever is fewer.

Counties must complete the RLA by June 2, and they must certify all primary election results to Secretary Schmidt by June 5.

History of RLAs in PA

In 2019, the department convened a post-election audit workgroup. The workgroup researched, discussed, and experimented with different types of RLAs, and it assisted many counties through pilot RLAs over the last few years. In its [2020 report](#), the workgroup – which included multiple county and state election administrators – recommended that Pennsylvania use this batch-comparison type of RLA.

In November 2022, the Department of State issued a [directive](#) instructing counties to conduct a pre-certification RLA after every election, beginning with that year's general election.

For more information about RLAs, visit the [department's website](#).

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