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

**Harrisburg, PA** – To continue **Governor Shapiro's** commitment to transparency about election administration in the Commonwealth, the Department of State today live streamed the process to randomly select batches of ballots from the Nov. 7, 2023, municipal election that will be audited as part of Pennsylvania's third statewide risk-limiting audit (RLA).

"National experts consider RLAs the highest standard of comprehensive election audits," **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 accurate."

During the livestream, 10 Department employees 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 Nov. 9, that the Pennsylvania Superior Court judge race will be audited for this RLA. During the audit, county officials will hand-tally the randomly selected ballot batches, then compare those vote counts against the original machine counts for the audited race.

Known as a "batch comparison" type of RLA, this pre-certification audit can confirm whether counties accurately tabulated paper ballots so 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 Nov. 24, and they must certify all election results to Secretary Schmidt by Nov. 27.

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

The Department livestreamed and recorded the random seed selection process for the previous two statewide RLAs, which were conducted in [November 2022](#) and [May 2023](#).

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

## No recount

**Schmidt** also said today unofficial returns show that no statewide race in the Nov. 7 election produced results within the 0.5% margin that would trigger a statutorily required automatic recount.

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