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CONTACT: Matt Heckel, ra-st-press@pa.gov

Department of State Begins Risk-Limiting Audit of 2024 Presidential Primary Election

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Department of State began Pennsylvania’s fourth statewide risk-limiting election audit (RLA), this time for the April 23, 2024, presidential primary.

“Risk-limiting audits have proven to be the highest standard of comprehensive election audits, not just here in Pennsylvania, but across the country,” **Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt** said. “With a high degree of confidence, this RLA process provides a statistically sound, scientific method for confirming that the reported outcome of the audited election is accurate.”

Ten Department employees took turns rolling 10-sided dice to deliver the random 20-digit “seed number,” which is used to determine which batches of ballots counties will audit over the next several days.

The livestream of the event continues the **Shapiro Administration**’s commitment to transparency in election administration in the Commonwealth.

A random-selection drawing on April 26, [also livestreamed](#), resulted in the selection of the contest for the Democratic nomination for state treasurer for this RLA. During the audit, county officials will hand-tally the randomly selected ballot batches, then compare those vote counts to the original machine counts for the selected 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 in Pennsylvania. 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 May 10, and they must certify all election results to **Schmidt** by May 13.

HISTORY OF RISK-LIMITING AUDITS 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 April 23, 2024, primary was the fourth election since the directive.

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

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