



May 7, 2020

The Honorable Bill Quirk  
State Capitol, Room 2163  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2400 - SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Quirk:

The California Voter Foundation (CVF) supports your bill, AB 2400, which would modify California's existing risk-limiting audit pilot project.

Post-election audits are a critical step in election verification. Since 1965, California has required election results tabulated by computer to be audited in a public manner in order to verify the accuracy of the results. For over 50 years this has been accomplished by requiring county election officials to select 1 percent of their precincts at random and count those ballots by hand and compare the hand-counted results to the computer-counted results. This process is open to public observation.

In 2008, a new method of auditing, called a risk-limiting audit (RLA) was developed by UC Berkeley Statistics Professor Philip Stark, as an alternative approach to verifying results. Evaluating the effectiveness of RLAs compared to the traditional one percent manual tally (1PMT) is crucial in order for the elections community to assess the benefits and challenges of these two election verification methods.

In 2018, California lawmakers enacted AB 2125, which you authored, allowing counties to pilot RLAs during the 2020 election cycle in place of conducting 1PMT audits. That law includes a requirement that counties piloting RLAs must conduct an RLA on every contest on the ballot, just as the 1PMT law requires. However, following the enactment of AB 2125, during the regulations work group process (in which CVF participated) it was discovered that this requirement could result in a participating county that wanted to carry out an RLA trial having to conduct a hand recount of every ballot cast in order to comply with the law.

AB 2400 seeks to remedy this situation by allowing counties to take a "mix and match" approach to conducting pilot RLAs. If enacted, AB 2400 would allow a participating county to select one or more contests wholly contained within the county upon which to conduct an RLA instead of a 1PMT audit and require contests not audited in this manner to be audited instead by the 1PMT audit process. This would give counties greater flexibility to pilot RLAs in an administratively effective way. AB 2400 would also extend the pilot period and give counties an additional election cycle in which to pilot RLAs.

It is our hope that through the enactment of this bill, some California counties will be encouraged to conduct RLA pilots which will help the elections community better assess and understand the effectiveness of this election verification method.

Sincerely,

Kim Alexander  
President