

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-394 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RISK-LIMITING
Title: AUDITS WORKING GROUP.

Vote Date: 3/23/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/13/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

There has been a growing concern about transparency and discrepancies within elections. A Risk-Limiting Audits Working Group was established in 2021 to study and report on the possibility of implementing a system of post-election risk-limiting audits. This bill would seek to implement the recommendations of the working group to limit the errors and increase confidence in election results.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Specifies state elections are not subject to regular audits, only RLAs; moves pilot program to 2026; and adds RLA exceptions for close or tie vote or unopposed candidates

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Stephanie Thomas, Secretary of the State, Office of the Secretary of State

Secretary Thomas explains that the bill builds on a 2021 task force and pilot program to establish risk-limiting audits (RLAs) in Connecticut. Unlike the current system, which audits a fixed percentage of precincts, RLAs use statistical methods to review a number of ballots based on the margin of victory, ensuring results are accurate within a defined risk limit (no more than 5%). The bill adopts ballot comparison audits and aligns Connecticut with other states using RLAs, widely considered the “gold standard.” RLAs have been adopted in a number of states, with pilots and legislation currently happening in more states. Estimated costs are about \$1 million to implement and \$400,000 annually thereafter. Recommended improvements include auditing all ballot types, granting regulatory authority to the Secretary

of the State, clarifying UConn’s role, and adjusting the effective date. Adoption of RLAs will strengthen the accuracy verification process already in place and further reinforce voter confidence in the integrity of our elections.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Anonymous 84 & 95

Supports

Benjamin Fuller, Associate Professor, UConn Center on Voting

Professor Fuller strongly supports the bill and recommends a few changes to the current bill. The UConn Voting Center was created to advise the State on election security, technology, and auditing procedures and has a particular expertise on risk-limiting audits. They led the design of the 2022 RLA pilot program. He strongly supports adopting risk-limiting audits (RLAs) as a reliable, transparent, and cost-effective method to verify election results. All steps in the RLAs are open to the public to assure voters and candidates of the transparency and reliability of the RLA process. RLAs can detect tabulation errors, reporting mistakes, and aggregation issues while increasing public trust through observable procedures and rigorous statistical validation—without the expense of full hand counts. Widely endorsed by experts and recommended in the study “*Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy*”, RLAs are already used in many states. Prof. Fuller recommends changes to the current bill language that would limit RLAs to statewide federal election years (not municipal ones) and keeping existing municipal audit practices. He also proposes accelerating the timeline, starting a pilot in 2026 and full implementation by 2027, with the first audited federal election in 2028. Connecticut’s newer voting equipment would support efficient implementation without any impact on security or transparency.

Chrissa LaPorte, Deputy Policy & Strategy Director, Verified Voting

Verified Voting is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen democracy for all voters by promoting the responsible use of technology in elections and supports this bill. Ms. LaPorte explains RLAs provide a strong basis for public confidence in election results and is being used by many states and others are piloting programs to integrate into their voting procedures. She feels the bill appropriately give the SOTS the flexibility to develop procedures and a pilot program to help registrars gain experience and test new voting equipment. Verified Voting also suggests narrowing the initial scope by focusing RLAs on statewide and presidential contests, while delaying or modifying audits for legislative races. They recommend exempting uncontested races, reconsidering audits for contests already subject to recounts, and clarifying whether additional audits would still occur. They also note a timing issue in S.B. 394 that may mistakenly require RLAs to be done for the November 2026 elections before the pilot phase begins.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Cindy Panioto

Date: 3/27/26