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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Establishes
New Working Group to Evaluate Post-Election Audit Standards

SACRAMENTO – In her continuing effort to ensure the security, accuracy, reliability and accessibility of California voting systems and the elections in which they are used, Secretary of State Debra Bowen today announced the creation of a Post-Election Audit Standards Working Group charged with examining whether the post-election audit standards in California should be strengthened.

While many states have no obligation to manually audit election results, California law requires counties to conduct a manual tally of 1% of the precincts following each election. Congress is currently considering legislation to set a national standard that could require higher percentages of election results to be audited in a post-election hand count.

"California's 1% audit law is 40 years old, and I want to know how effective it is and whether there are better models for auditing election results and maximizing voters' confidence in the electoral process," said Secretary Bowen, the state's chief elections officer.

Bowen tapped the following experts in the fields of computer science, financial auditing, statistical analysis, election reform advocacy, and city and county government to form the Post-Election Audit Standards Working Group:

- David Jefferson (Chairperson)
  Center for Applied Scientific Computing, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

- Kim Alexander
  President and Founder, California Voter Foundation

- Elaine Ginnold
  Registrar of Voters, Marin County

- Amy Lehmkuhl
  Certified Public Accountant, Ueltzen & Company, LLP

- Kathleen Midstokke
  City Clerk, City of Downey

- Philip Stark
  Professor of Statistics, University of California, Berkeley

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Over the next four weeks, the Post-Election Audit Standards Working Group will review a variety of post-election audit models and consider the advantages and disadvantages of various models and procedures. The group will report to Secretary Bowen the options for developing and implementing additional auditing requirements that could enhance the reliability of election results, as well as suggested guidelines and procedures for reconciling manual audit and machine count results.

"No matter what voting systems California counties use, we have to make sure we're doing meaningful audits of election results to provide voters with the confidence that every vote is counted as it was cast," Bowen continued. "The goal of this working group is to take a fresh look at the post-election auditing being done now, and draw on experts in the field to better understand the benefits and challenges of the new auditing models out there."

The Post-Election Audit Standards Working Group will hold its first public forum on Monday, July 2, at 11:00 a.m. in the auditorium of the Secretary of State building in Sacramento. Public comments are encouraged.

Secretary Bowen is simultaneously conducting a top-to-bottom review of voting systems currently certified for use in California elections. Unprecedented in its thoroughness, the top-to-bottom review is a comprehensive expert review of all software, hardware, source code and documents, testing everything from usability for people with limited physical abilities to security vulnerabilities that could enable tampering. The results of that review are expected by the end of July.

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