



OKLAHOMA STATE ELECTION BOARD

February 11, 2022

LETTER FROM STATE ELECTION BOARD SECRETARY PAUL ZIRIAX

To the Honorable Members of the Oklahoma Senate and Oklahoma House of Representatives,

Although I have spoken to several of you individually about this matter, I want to provide an update to all legislators about the State Election Board's significant progress in developing procedures for the conduct of post-election tabulation audits pursuant to existing law. (See [26 O.S. § 3-130](#).)

As you are likely aware, in 2019 the Oklahoma State Legislature first authorized post-election tabulation audits as a part of [Senate Bill 261](#), a major election security bill authored by Senator Daniels and then-Representative Wright. As Secretary of the State Election Board, I requested that the legislation include language authorizing post-election tabulation audits in Oklahoma.

The bill received overwhelming bipartisan support, passing [42-0](#) in the Senate and [93-2](#) in the House of Representatives before being signed into law by the Governor. Prior to the enactment of SB 261, performing a post-election tabulation audit would have violated state law.

The State Election Board first began developing post-election audit procedures in late 2019 and early 2020, with the intention of implementing these in time for the 2020 General Election. Unfortunately, when the pandemic struck in the Spring of 2020, our limited time and resources had to be redirected to planning for candidate filing (at a time the State Capitol building was closed to the public), and then to implementing new pandemic-related election procedures enacted by the Legislature.

Last year we returned to developing post-election tabulation audit procedures consistent with the requirements enacted by the Legislature in Senate Bill 261. **We are currently testing these procedures and are on track to begin conducting post-election tabulation audits for the 2022 elections.**

Oklahoma already has one of the most accurate and secure election systems in the entire world. When implemented, Oklahoma's post-election tabulation audits will help ensure the public's continued confidence in the security and accuracy of Oklahoma's elections.

SUMMARY OF POST-ELECTION AUDIT PROCEDURES

In developing procedures for the post-election audits authorized by SB 261, we have focused on **efficiency, security, accuracy, and transparency**. Here are some of the key features that will be part of the new post-election audit system that is currently being developed and tested:

- Post-election audits will include **a mix of both manual and electronic examinations of ballots**, in compliance with state law.
- Once implemented, post-election audits will be conducted following **every election** – not just General Elections.
- For statewide elections, Oklahoma's post-election audits will include ballots from randomly-selected precincts across dozens of counties, including ballots cast on Election Day, during Early Voting, and by Absentee Ballot. **Typically, 5% or more of the total ballots cast across the state will be included in a post-election tabulation audit**, and strict chain-of-custody policies will be followed.
- The public will be able to observe post-election audits, and the date, time and location of a post-election audit will be announced in advance. The results of post-election audits will be made available to the public, creating **a transparent environment that promotes trust in elections**.
- Oklahoma's post-election tabulation audit plan **will also avoid growing government** by utilizing existing, trained, bipartisan election officials to conduct the audits under the supervision of the nonpartisan county election board secretary (in the presence of the public).

CONCLUSION

The U.S. Constitution and the Oklahoma Constitution grant the Oklahoma Legislature the authority to determine the election policies of our state. I speak for myself, as well as other state and county election officials in Oklahoma, when I say that we are honored by the responsibility that we have been given (and have wholeheartedly accepted) to **implement, uphold, and promote free and fair elections in our state**. I am grateful to the Oklahoma Legislature for authorizing post-election tabulation audits, which will provide Oklahoma election officials with **yet another tool to ensure the security and integrity** of our elections.

As always, please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Paul Ziriak, Secretary
Oklahoma State Election Board

Learn more about the security and integrity of Oklahoma's elections:
<https://oklahoma.gov/elections/security-integrity.html>