

RELEASE

WHO: **The National Election Data Archive**

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Tiered Election Audits: New Report Issued by National Election Data Archive

<http://electionarchive.org/ucvInfo/release/Release-TieredElectionAudits.pdf>

Table 1: A Three-Tier Election Audit

Margins Between Two Leading Candidates	Vote Count Audit Rate	Minimum Number of Vote Counts To Audit (audit no less than this amount or 100% of vote counts)
0.05% to 1%	50%	170
1%+ to 5%	10%	24
5% +	2%	6

Tiered Election Audits: New Report Issued by National Election Data Archive

A recent recommendation released by the National Election Data Archive (NEDA) entitled "Tiered Election Audits" suggests that a tiered tabulation system for election audits may be the solution to ensuring the integrity of election outcomes.

In light of the increase in contested elections since 2000; the 18,000 missing votes in Sarasota FL in 2006¹; the introduction of new voting technology that many reputable scientists insist is flawed²; the decertification of the testing lab that certified a majority of US voting machines by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission³, the conviction of two Ohio election officials for rigging the 2004 presidential recount;⁴ concerned citizens are questioning the integrity of our voting systems.

According to Kathy Dopp, President of National Election Data Archive (NEDA), citizen oversight of tiered election audits are needed to ensure that election outcomes are accurate. "If the goal of elections is to ensure the will of the voters, then election audits need to be designed to ensure that election outcomes are correct", stated Dopp.

¹ "Questions remain in D-13 under-vote controversy" by Duane Marsteller Herald Staff Writer
<http://www.bradenton.com/mld/bradenton/news/local/16538437.htm>

² "The Machinery of Democracy: Protecting Elections in an Electronic World" by Brennan Voting System Security Task Force
http://brennancenter.org/dynamic/subpages/download_file_39288.pdf

³ Ciber owners sold off their stock while the US EAC kept it secret that this company that had federally tested a majority of US voting systems, was not following quality control procedures and was not recertified.

<http://www.bradblog.com/?cat=159> or
http://www.opednews.com/articles/opedne_michael_070124_eac_s_22new_york_brot.htm

⁴ "2 election workers convicted of rigging '04 presidential recount", M.R. KROPKO, Associated Press
<http://www.ohio.com/mld/beaconjournal/news/state/16536269.htm>

An election reform bill sponsored by Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ) is being released on the U.S. House floor, perhaps as soon as this week. If Holt's new bill requires election audits whose goal is merely to ensure that a certain percentage of votes, say 95% of votes, are accurately counted, this would allow 5% of votes to be switched to the wrong candidate and leave any race with less than 10% margins between candidates open to vote fraud.

In close elections, a smaller amount of vote miscount can wrongly alter the outcome. A flat 2% or 3% audit of vote counts would often be insufficient to ensure accurate election outcomes. Also, in addition to a percentage, a minimum number of vote counts must be manually audited because some election races involve fewer total number of vote counts. For example, if one-in-20 vote counts were corrupt (altering a race within a 10% margin) then at least 20 vote counts must be sampled to have a reasonable chance to detect at least one of the corrupt counts. A 10% audit of 500 vote counts would sample 50 counts and be sufficient, but a 10% audit of 20 vote counts would sample only 2 counts and have little chance of detecting the corrupt vote count.

NEDA's new paper, "Tiered Election Audits" provides a small table to look up the margin between the leading candidates and find a percentage and a minimum election audit amount that would ensure that election outcomes are accurate.

<http://electionarchive.org/ucvAnalysis/US/paper-audits/FourTierAudit/TieredElectionAudits.pdf>

Election integrity experts agree that for audits to be effective, they must be timely, verifiable, transparent, independent, scientific, mathematically sufficient, and used to correct the election results. Effective citizen oversight over election audits requires committing the data prior to the audit; public availability of election records; that the public may view both the random selection of vote counts and the manual counts; and durable paper ballots that are verified by voters during elections.

Dopp said that other important requirements to ensure the integrity of election outcomes are included in a set of 14 "Recommendations for Ensuring the Integrity of Elections" by experts in election integrity. <http://electionarchive.org/ucvInfo/US/EI-FederalLegislationProposal.pdf>

A list of prominent election integrity experts is available to be consulted by Congress on the details of legislation. <http://electionarchive.org/ucvInfo/US/ExpertsList.pdf>

The National Election Data Archive says that U.S. elections could be protected against fraud and error by federal legislation that requires states to conduct tiered election audits and to allow public oversight of elections.