

Joint Committee on Election Laws

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 517
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act strengthening the post-election audit process
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senators Kennedy, Jehlen, and Tarr

SUMMARY

Current law only requires audits of ballots cast on election day. This bill would require the audit to include all ballots validly cast, including “cured” provisional ballots, so that the audit will include all ballots counted for certification.

Expands post-election audits so they happen every two years, after both the September and November elections in even-numbered years. During non-presidential years, audits will include the governor’s race and another statewide election: either a constitutional officer or a ballot question, based on a random drawing.

Requires the statewide audit report to be published within 30 days of the election; and if any investigation into discrepancies is still ongoing, a supplemental report may be issued up to 90 days after the election. Requires that the statewide audit report be maintained online for at least six years. Current statute requires the statewide audit report to be published online – but doesn’t specify how long it must be kept available for voters to access.

Authorizes – but does not require – cities and towns to perform post-election audits.

Creates a Risk-Limiting Audit Workgroup to consider other ways to improve post-election audits. The Workgroup would begin its study within 90 days of the bill’s effective date and issue a report by July 31, 2027.