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STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

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Looking Into Our Elections

Recent polls by USA Today, Gallup, CNN, Fox News and others tell us that a very large number of Americans do not trust the outcome of the November 2020 election. The US News & World Report [recently reported](#) that a Gallup poll released on February 11, 2021 “found that 59% of Americans don’t have confidence in the honesty of elections, while 40% say they do.”

Whether you believe the outcome of the election, or not, it is very concerning that so many voters distrust the validity of our elections. Every American should have confidence that their vote matters and is counted. Right now, there are many Americans, and many Wisconsinites, who do not believe this.

In response, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLA) recently approved the scope for a very thorough audit of the November 2020 election. As a CPA and forensic accountant, I have performed many audits throughout my career. I recognize the value of examining data and asking tough questions to seek the truth and discuss opportunities for improvement and reform.

We may find serious issues. We may find thorough compliance. Either way, we are asking questions and examining data. We owe our voters a thorough audit of the election.

As a member of the JLA, I voted for this scope and will be monitoring the progress of our auditors. We have asked our auditors to examine the following issues:

- Usage of indefinitely confined status and compliance with statutes.
- Absentee ballot request/collection processes and security issues.
 - Ballot drop boxes and Democracy in the Park events.
 - Allegations of clerks filling in missing information and “curing” a ballot.
- Voter registration process and maintenance of voter registration records.
 - Ineligible voters - deceased, moved out-of-state, felons.
 - ERIC movers list.
 - Incorrect data on myvote.wi.gov.
- Electronic voting equipment and the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) post-election audit.
- WEC practices.

- Has WEC issued guidance to local clerks advising them to do something in violation of the statutes.
- Complaints received by WEC and how they were handled.
- Recount procedures and verification of reimbursement requests.
- Use of third-party election grant funding by municipalities.

All of the Republican members on the JLA voted to approve the scope for the election audit. All of the Democrat members voted no. I really don't think this should have been a party-line vote. I would think that all legislators should want to audit the most contentious election in recent history. In my professional experience, people who resist or deny audits often have something to hide.

When the audit is completed, we will use the data to determine if we need to reform our laws and in which ways to protect your vote. Several of my colleagues are already working on additional pieces of legislation that are currently circulating for co-sponsors. I have signed-on to most of these bills and look forward to a thoughtful debate in public hearings. We will continue to dig into our concerns and take strong steps to restore the integrity of our elections.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.