H-1251.1

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**HOUSE BILL 1554**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Chase and McCaslin

AN ACT Relating to postelection audits that enhance ballot integrity; adding a new section to chapter 29A.60 RCW; creating new sections; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  It is the intent of the legislature to assure all voters in the state that only legitimate votes are counted accurately in Washington state elections.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 29A.60 RCW to read as follows:

(1) As used in this section, "company" means an impartial, independent company selected to perform the audit of a county's election results described in this section. The company shall be selected by the Democratic and Republican party chairpersons of the county. If the chairpersons cannot agree on a company to audit the county's election results, the company shall be chosen by coin toss.

(2) Beginning immediately after certification of the election, the company shall conduct a statistically significant manual hand count audit of all ballots tabulated for that election, including duplicated and adjudicated ballots, in at least 12 precincts in the county. The 12 precincts selected for the audit shall be chosen by the county Democratic and Republican party chairpersons, with each party choosing six precincts. In counties where the number of ballots cast in the 12 chosen precincts is fewer than five percent of the total number of ballots cast, additional precincts must be selected until at least five percent of ballots cast are included in the audit.

(3) The races or ballot measures counted for the audit shall be selected by the Democratic and Republican party chairpersons of the county and may be different races or ballot measures for each precinct.

(4) The auditing method shall be a manual hand count of the physical ballots, performed by examining the votes marked on each ballot for the race or issue selected for the individual precinct as compared to the results generated from running those same ballots through the county's tabulation equipment.

(5) Public election observers must be allowed to observe all processes of the audit beginning with locating the ballots for each precinct, sorting and counting ballots, and the results of the audit. Observers must also be permitted to examine duplicated and adjudicated ballots from the precincts subject to the audit, alongside the original ballots, to determine the accuracy of the duplications and adjudications.

(6) By December 31st in the same year as the election, the company must submit a report to the legislature detailing the findings of the audit and any recommendations to improve ballot integrity in future elections.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Within 30 days of the effective date of this section, the company, as defined in section 2 of this act, must perform an audit of the 2020 general election in the county.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

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