Wisconsin Election Integrity
to make sure elections reflect the will of the people

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WEC makes major improvement in state's election security
Orders hand-counted audits of random voting machines before final certification of results.

Wednesday, September 26 –In a vote at their Tuesday meeting, the Wisconsin Election Commission corrected the largest flaw in the state's election-security program. In a unanimous vote, Commissioners revised their policy for biennial voting-machine audits in a way that for the first time makes those audits a security measure, by introducing the possibility that hacked results could be detected and corrected before election results are certified.

Beginning later this year, the Commission will randomly select 5% of all voting machines statewide on the day after the November general election and order the municipal clerks to conduct public hand counts of those machines' paper ballots in four key races. The audits must be completed before election results are certified.

In previous years, Wisconsin's election officials audited only after declaring results final. This one major flaw consistently put Wisconsin in the lower half of rankings of the 50 states' election security.*

"The next time we see a 50-state ranking, I expect to see Wisconsin listed in the top 10 or 12," said Karen McKim, coordinator of Wisconsin Election Integrity, a nonpartisan citizens' group that has been advocating for audits since 2012.

"We're still behind the states where audits verify the correct winners, but we're no longer among the states that don't audit in any meaningful way at all."

"WEC's action today was of national significance," she added. "When a swing state like Wisconsin shuts and locks the door on election hacking in this way, every US voter can celebrate."

McKim also expressed gratitude to the hundreds of voters who contacted the Commission in the weeks leading up to their September meeting. "It's more exciting to talk about Russian hackers than about prudent election administration. But more than a thousand Wisconsin voters responded constructively and joined us in demanding effective election audits. And WEC responded."

Post-election audits using paper ballots are considered critical for election security because officials have no other way to detect Election-Day computer errors. Local officials can keep software secure while it is in their possession, but they have no way to assess whether it was adequately secured before then. Lack of IT expertise and the voting-machine manufacturers' claims of proprietary secrecy prevent election officials from examining the software directly. Pre-election tests cannot prevent Election-Day computer errors or glitches, nor can they detect malicious code designed to operate only on Election Day.

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* See *Election Security in all 50 States*, Center for American Progress, Feb. 2018 and *Election Security Update: Top 18 Most Vulnerable States*, US Congress Committee on House Administration, July 2018