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**NEAL KELLEY**  
Registrar of Voters

Mailing Address:  
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April 27, 2021

Mr. Pat Garcia - President  
Huntington Beach Republican Assembly

Dear Mr. Garcia,

Thank you for your recent email regarding election audits.

I appreciate your input and while we agree on the need for audits, in fact I have embraced them, I think it's important to address a few key points as it relates to your email.

1. I think it would be helpful if I make you aware of auditing that takes place in our agency on an on-going basis. First, I am pleased to note that Orange County is one of only two California counties to implement Risk Limiting Audits (RLA). RLAs are one way of checking whether computers tallied an election accurately. It involves (1) storing paper ballots securely until they can be checked, (2) manually comparing a statistical sample of paper ballots to the computers' record for those same ballots, and (3) checking whether all the computer records of ballots in the election were totaled correctly.

As with other election audits, the goal is to identify not only *intentional* alterations of ballots and tallies, but also potential bugs in election hardware, such as software errors, scanners with blocked sensors, or scanners skipping any ballots.

This method of auditing requires complex logistics in order to isolate and locate ballots for auditing among nearly three million pieces of paper. All of this process is open to the public, candidates and observers. More importantly, the audit mechanics (including audit methodology, use of software, actual auditing, etc.) are closely monitored, confirmed and re-created by non-partisan independent audit experts, including computer scientists, audit specialists, and members of the general public.

You can view all of the backup documentation from our most recent audit in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Board of Supervisors' contest, by visiting (this same information is also available for our 2020 audits) here:

<https://www.ocvote.com/results/risk-limiting-audit>

In addition to the non-mandated RLAs that we conduct, we also conduct a 1% manual tally of ballots in all precincts within Orange County as required by state law.

2. The use of third-party vendors to conduct “audits” in California is prohibited by numerous California statutes, including (but not limited to) California Government Code sections 6254(k) and 6255, the California Constitution, article II, Section 7 and California Elections Code sections 15370 and 17302. I am very involved with national election administration issues and I am aware that there have been recent email chains, information on the Internet, etc. encouraging individuals to contact their local election offices to “push” for the use of third-party auditing firms. While this is allowed in some states, many states, such as California, protect the ballots themselves from any third-party use, or auditing.
3. At my direction, we are the only California County to undergo a forensic audit of our general operations, including a focus on the validity of our voter registration records, tabulation, etc. Caltech University spent a year conducting the audit, scrubbing voter registration data on a weekly basis. While Caltech did not have access to the ballots themselves, they were able to access the voter registration records and monitor the auditing process. Their detailed analysis and final reports can be accessed here:

<https://www.ocvote.com/election-library/docs/2019%20Caltech%20Evaluating%20the%20Quality%20of%20Changes%20in%20Voter%20Registration%20Databases.pdf>

and here:

<https://www.ocvote.com/election-library/docs/2019%20Caltech%20Independent%20Review.pdf>

We comply with strict statutes and regulations, both state and federal, that govern the maintenance of voter records. Some organizations and individuals believe that these controls should be tightened, but those are policy level discussions that should be conducted with elected representatives.

4. Also at my direction, we are the only election jurisdiction in the United States currently undergoing ISO 9001 certification by the International Organization for Standardization. ISO 9001 sets out the criteria for a quality management system. The standard is based on a number of quality management principles, process approaches and continual improvement. This rigorous certification focuses on areas that complement the strict auditing that we have in place, allowing us (and the standards setting body) to identify areas for continual improvement. Following a detailed audit, I suspect that we will obtain certification by September 2021.

As you can see from the contents of this letter, and the various links to third-party, independent audits and reports, that we are on the forefront of election administration

and auditing in the United States. In fact, we regularly have delegations visit our operations from state and local jurisdictions from throughout the country.

I hope this helps to shed additional light on this topic for you – I am happy to discuss this letter, and our operations, in detail with you at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Neal Kelley', with a stylized, cursive script.

NEAL KELLEY  
Registrar of Voters  
Orange County, CA