



**OFFICE OF THE  
STATE AUDITOR**

**News Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**January 3, 2025**

**State Auditor Completes Review of Utah Election Processes**

**Salt Lake City, UTAH –**

During the summer, the Office of the State Auditor (Office) received numerous complaints about concerns with the election process. As a result, the Office reviewed certain election processes including controls over and disclosure of voter registration information, as well as the validation process associated with signature-gathering by candidates. Today, the State Auditor released another report detailing areas for improvement in the election processes, focusing particularly on the candidate petition signature verification process.

Among the issues identified in the report, the biggest challenge is between maintaining voters' privacy and keeping the process transparent, to maintain public trust. Problems result from conflicting statutes, including the Government Records Access and Management Act and Utah's election code. Until the problems in the statute are addressed, the conflict between voting transparency and privacy will continue.

The Office identified three areas for improvement:

1. Currently, statutory restrictions prevent effective public oversight of the candidate's petition signature verification process.
2. Existing statute treats similar voter data differently depending whether it is in the election database (VISTA) or on a candidate petition.
3. Optional privacy protections likely give voters a false sense of security.

State Auditor John Dougall noted:

"Existing statute places election officials in an untenable position with one portion of code calling for greater transparency over the candidate petition signature verification process while another position of statute demands voter privacy. It is unclear how election officials can avoid compromising privacy for transparency.

"Furthermore, voters who request privacy protections for their voter registration records may be lulled into a false sense of security, given how freely that data may be shared and the lack of any follow-up to ensure sensitive data is protected."

The news release and related information may be found on the Office's website at [auditor.utah.gov](http://auditor.utah.gov).

The letter may be found directly at:  
[reporting.auditor.utah.gov/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=015Do0000017ezJIAQ](http://reporting.auditor.utah.gov/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=015Do0000017ezJIAQ)

### **About the Office of the State Auditor**

The Office of the State Auditor provides Utah taxpayers and government officials with an independent assessment of financial operation, statutory compliance, and performance management for state and local government.

Specific activities of the Office include performing financial audits, conducting Federal funds compliance audits, providing local government oversight, conducting agency and program performance audits, performing fraud and compliance audits, and operating the State Auditor Hotline for citizens to report suspected financial issues or improprieties. These capabilities strengthen Utah State Government and help taxpayers have confidence in the integrity of Utah's government agencies.

The State Auditor is a Constitutional Officer of the State of Utah, elected directly by the state's citizens every four years. The role of the State Auditor is authorized in Article VII, Section 15 of the Utah Constitution. For more information, see [auditor.utah.gov](http://auditor.utah.gov).

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