

TO: Porter County Board of Elections & Registration and Porter County Clerk's Office

DATE: 7/28/2026

SUBJECT: Summary of Porter County 2026 Primary Election Post-Election Audit

On June 12, 2026, the VSTOP team successfully completed a post-election audit in Porter County, Indiana, of the 2026 Primary Election. The following report will summarize the pre-audit process, explain the execution of the audit, and present the audit results.

Pre-Audit Process

VSTOP has been authorized by the Indiana Secretary of State to conduct post-election audits. At this time, Indiana does not have mandated post-election audits, and county participation is voluntary, with official designation granted by the Secretary of State. Porter County formally requested designation on March 26, 2026 via a Board of Elections Resolution. Porter County was granted designation by the Indiana Secretary of State on April 29, 2026 and VSTOP began coordinating audit preparation.

An initial audit meeting was held to review the post-election audit process and answer any questions Porter County Election Officials had about the process. From there, the audit date, time, location and selection of audited contests were finalized, coordinated by VSTOP and County Clerk – Jessica Bailey and Board of Elections & Registration Director – Sundae Schoon. The audit was scheduled and conducted on June 12, 2026 at the Porter County Board of Elections & Registration Office in Valparaiso, Indiana.

Using the Stark Audit Tool, VSTOP proceeded to run ballot sample size estimates on the selected contests based on the initial election night reports found on the county website. While these may not have been the final vote totals (pre-certification), they work appropriately for estimating expected sample sizes and approximating how long it would take to complete the audit.

VSTOP advised Porter County to select two Republican and two Democratic Primary contests for audit. VSTOP conducts audits of the Democratic and Republican contests separately since Porter County uses paper ballot cards and they can be separated by political party. In consultation with VSTOP, Election Officials determined the post-election audit would utilize nearly all ballots cast in the Primary Election including absentee by mail, absentee in-person, and Election Day ballots. Provisional ballots require additional action post-election, so they were not able to be sorted into their respective precincts from which they may have originated. While they were cast and counted, they were not included in the inventory for the audit, which accounts for the 4-ballot difference between the certified results and the “total ballots cast” used in the audit tool. This had no impact on the integrity or efficacy of the audit and its purpose. The final audit estimations and ballot manifests/inventories were generated using those ballot types and the county's certified reported results.

The audit was conducted with an intended 1% risk limit, meaning it carried a 99% confidence level. In simple terms, this means the audit had a 99% chance of catching a significant tabulation error, if one existed, and only a 1% chance of missing one. The only way to reach 100% certainty would be to inspect every single ballot, but that's a full recount, not an audit. VSTOP established that election outcomes can be confirmed with confidence using risk-limits ranging from 1-5% and respective confidence levels ranging 95-99%. For an audit to significantly confirm election outcomes, the sample of audited ballots **MUST** reach a maximum risk limit of 5% and a minimum 95% confidence level. Should the confidence level not be reached in the initial sample of ballots it **DOES NOT** mean there is an error in election outcomes. It just means that more ballots will need to be hand counted until there is at minimum 95% confidence level reported for the sample of that audited contest.

The ballot manifest/inventory was generated by Porter County and included all votes cast in the Primary Election, excluding provisional ballots. VSTOP tested the manifest for functionality in the Stark Audit Tool and confirmed it functioned correctly, completing all pre-audit preparation.

The information above is detailed below:

- **Audit Date:** June 12, 2026
- **Audit Time:** VSTOP Setup and Pre-Audit Meeting 10:00 AM – Audit Begins 11:00 AM
- **Location:** Porter County Board of Elections & Registration Office – Valparaiso, Indiana
- **Total Ballots Cast Included in Audit:** 19,245 (4 provisionals not included)
 - Republican Ballots Cast: 8,563 (1 provisional not included)
 - Democratic Ballots Cast: 10,682 (3 provisionals not included)
- **Estimated Ballot Sample Sizes for Contests Selected for Audit:**
 - (Republican Primary) U.S. Representative District 1
 - Intended Risk Limit – 1%
 - Diluted Margin – 38.62%
 - Estimated Sample Size – 48 Ballots
 - (Republican Primary) Porter County Prosecuting Attorney
 - Intended Risk Limit – 1%
 - Diluted Margin – 23.18%
 - Estimated Sample Size – 163 Ballots
 - (Democratic Primary) U.S. Representative District 1
 - Intended Risk Limit – 1%
 - Diluted Margin – 62.68%
 - Estimated Sample Size – 23 Ballots
 - (Democratic Primary) Porter County Commissioner District 2
 - Intended Risk Limit – 1%
 - Diluted Margin – 14.38%
 - Estimated Sample Size – 408 Ballots

Initial sample size

Contest information

Ballots cast in all contests: 8563 Smallest margin (votes): 3,307. Diluted margin: 38.62%.

Contest 1. Contest name:
 REP U.S. Representative District 1

Winners: 1 ▾

Reported votes:

Candidate 1 Name:	Barb Regnitz	Votes:	4956
Candidate 2 Name:	Ben Ruiz	Votes:	1483
Candidate 3 Name:	James Kent (Jim) Schenke	Votes:	1649

Add candidate to contest 1 Remove last candidate from contest 1

Add contest Remove last contest

Audit parameters

Risk limit: 1% Expected sample size: 48.

Above: Stark Audit Tool screenshot of U.S. Representative Dist. 1 margin, intended risk limit, & sample size

Initial sample size

Contest information

Ballots cast in all contests: 8563 Smallest margin (votes): 1,985. Diluted margin: 23.18%.

Contest 1. Contest name:
 REP Prosecuting Attorney

Winners: 1 ▾

Reported votes:

Candidate 1 Name:	Andrew L. Bennett	Votes:	4996
Candidate 2 Name:	Harry Peterson	Votes:	3011

Add candidate to contest 1 Remove last candidate from contest 1

Add contest Remove last contest

Audit parameters

Risk limit: 1% Expected sample size: 163.

Above: Stark Audit Tool screenshot of Prosecuting Attorney margin, intended risk limit, & sample size

Initial sample size

Contest information

Ballots cast in all contests: 10682 Smallest margin (votes): 6,696. Diluted margin: 62.68%.

Contest 1. Contest name:
DEM U.S. Representative District 1

Winners: 1 ▼

Reported votes:

Candidate 1 Name:	Frank J. Mrvan	Votes:	8566
Candidate 2 Name:	Lavetta Sparks-Wade	Votes:	1870

Add candidate to contest 1 Remove last candidate from contest 1

Add contest Remove last contest

Audit parameters

Risk limit: 1% Expected sample size: 23.

Above: Stark Audit Tool screenshot of U.S. Representative Dist. 1 margin, intended risk limit, & sample size

Initial sample size

Contest information

Ballots cast in all contests: 10682 Smallest margin (votes): 1,536. Diluted margin: 14.38%.

Contest 1. Contest name:
DEM County Commissioner Dist 2

Winners: 1 ▼

Reported votes:

Candidate 1 Name:	James Kocal	Votes:	4057
Candidate 2 Name:	Kyle S. Nelson	Votes:	5593

Add candidate to contest 1 Remove last candidate from contest 1

Add contest Remove last contest

Audit parameters

Risk limit: 1% Expected sample size: 408.

Above: Stark Audit Tool screenshot of County Commissioner margin, intended risk limit, & sample size

Execution of Post-Election Audit

The VSTOP Audit Team, led by Election Systems Audit Specialist Matt Housley, arrived at the Porter County Board of Elections & Registration Office at approximately 10:00 AM and began audit setup. While the team prepared, Matt held a pre-audit meeting with all County Election Officials and volunteers participating in the audit, covering the post-election audit process and responsibilities, reviewing and confirming contest selection and election result totals, and conducting a final review of the public presentation to be given just prior to the audit. By approximately 11:00 AM, both the pre-audit meeting and audit setup were complete, and Porter County's post-election audit officially began.

The VSTOP team members who participated in this audit included:

- Matt Housley, Election Systems Audit Specialist
- Marc Chatot, VSTOP Manager
- Alisa Gray, Training and Assessment Specialist
- Payton Glesing, Graduate Assistant for Training & Assessment

Election Stakeholders who participated in this audit included:

- Jessica Bailey, Porter County Clerk
- Sundae Schoon, Board of Elections & Registration Director
- Tara Graf, Board of Elections & Registration Assistant Director
- Paul Rausch, Board of Elections Member
- JC Colter, Board of Elections Member
- Kathy Hartwig, Porter County Clerk's Office
- Cindy Fish, Board of Elections & Registration
- Barbara Gamble, Board of Elections & Registration
- 15 Porter County Election Workers sworn in to serve as Audit Volunteers
- Dustin Renner, Indiana Secretary of State's Office

The audit began with a public post-election audit presentation given by VSTOP's Election Systems Audit Specialist. The presentation overviewed VSTOP and explained the post-election audit process, including the Ballot-Polling Audit method used for this audit. This presentation has been attached as *Appendix A* to this report. VSTOP conducted the audit using the Stark Audit Tool, built specifically for Ballot-Polling Audits.

Indiana counties using Optical Scan voting systems with paper ballot cards undergo a ballot-polling post-election audit to verify election outcomes. Porter County utilizes ES&S, one of Indiana's three Optical Scan voting system vendors certified in the state. The audit applies statistical methods to hand-count a random sample of ballots, providing strong statistical evidence that the reported election outcome is correct. Rather than verifying the accuracy of each individual ballot and exact vote totals, this approach holistically affirms the overall integrity of the voting system's reported outcome by hand-counting ballots until sufficient evidence confirms the audit outcome would align with the officially certified results.

While the intended achieved risk limit for this audit is 1%, for the audit to be deemed successful, the audited results must meet a maximum risk limit of 5%, yielding a minimum confidence level of 95%. This process gives voters confidence that the voting system accurately tabulated ballots and reported correct election outcomes.

The sample was drawn in real time using a random seed number generated by 20 rolls of a 10-sided die, ensuring the sample was truly random and that no one could know in advance which ballots would be selected. The seed number also serves as a control, allowing the audit to be replicated in its entirety if ever needed.

The audit of both the Democratic and Republican contests used the same seed number.

The seed number for the Porter County Post-Election Audit is as follows:

70562833237594186407

The seed number was entered into the Stark Audit Tool, generating a random sample of ballots. For the Republican contests, VSTOP drew an initial sample of 771 ballots, and both Republican contests were reviewed using ballots from this sample. For the Democratic contests, VSTOP drew an initial sample of 775 ballots, and both Democratic contests were reviewed using ballots from this sample. VSTOP's practice is to inspect all audited contests on each audited ballot when applicable. While it was highly unlikely all ballots from these samples would be needed, these larger samples accounted for the expected need to draw additional ballots due to two key factors. First, ballot-polling audits require voted selections only. If a ballot was undervoted for the contest being audited, it must be skipped and an additional ballot must be counted in its place. Second, if the initial estimated sample does not reach the intended confidence level, additional ballots must be counted until at least the maximum 5% risk limit and minimum 95% confidence level are met.

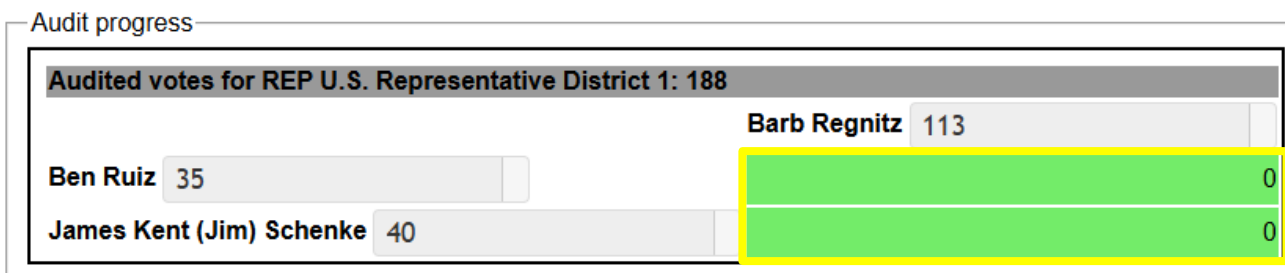
For the Republican U.S. Representative District 1 and Republican Porter County Prosecuting Attorney contests, an initial batch of at least 163 ballots would be hand counted prior to results being checked against the maximum 5% risk limit and minimum 95% confidence level.

For the Democratic U.S. Representative District 1 and Democratic Porter County Commissioner District 2 contests, an initial batch of at least 408 ballots would be hand counted prior to results being checked against the maximum 5% risk limit and minimum 95% confidence level.

The Republican contests were audited first, with 251 Republican ballots sampled in total. Following the completion of the Republican contests, the Democratic contests were audited, with 442 Democratic ballots sampled in total. The outcome of the hand count for each audited contest and the achieved audit results are presented in the following section.

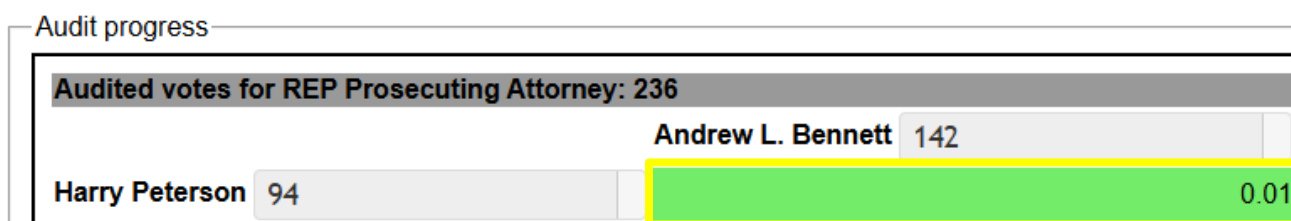
Audit Results

For the Republican U.S. Representative District 1 contest, VSTOP and County Election Officials hand counted 198 ballots. Of those, 188 had voted selections and 10 were skipped due to undervotes. Winning candidate Barb Regnitz received 133 votes, and losing candidates Ben Ruiz and James Kent (Jim) Schenke received 35 and 40 votes, respectively. The hand counted totals of 188 ballots resulted in a **1%** risk limit, satisfying the required <5% threshold and confirming with **99%** confidence that the machine-tabulated election outcome was correct as reported.



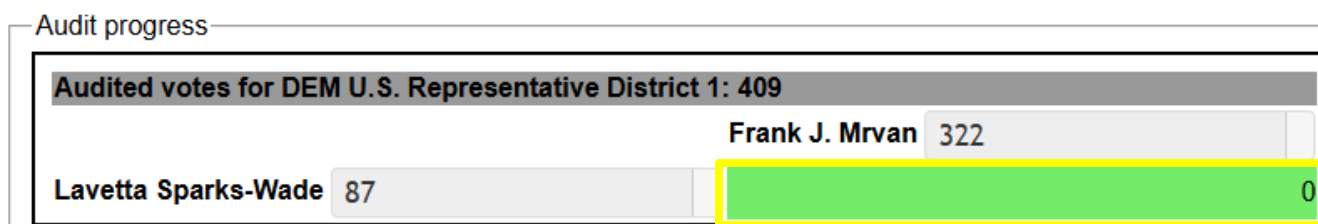
Above: Stark Audit Tool showing a <1% risk limit and >99% confidence level was achieved based on a hand count of 188 randomly selected ballots

For the Republican Porter County Prosecuting Attorney contest, VSTOP and County Election Officials hand counted 251 ballots. Of those, 236 had voted selections and 15 were skipped due to undervotes. Winning candidate Andrew Bennett received 142 votes, and losing candidate Harry Peterson received 94 votes. The hand counted totals of 236 ballots resulted in a **1%** risk limit, satisfying the required <5% threshold and confirming with **99%** confidence that the machine-tabulated election outcome was correct as reported.



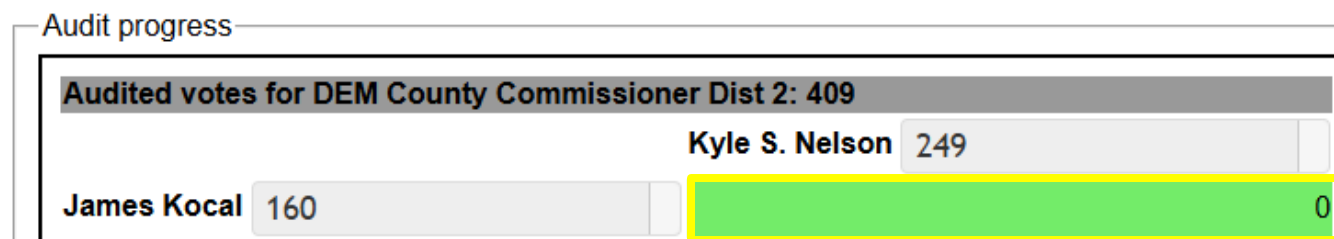
Above: Stark Audit Tool showing a 1% risk limit and 99% confidence level was achieved based on a hand count of 236 randomly selected ballots

For the Democratic U.S. Representative District 1 contest, VSTOP and County Election Officials hand counted 420 ballots. Of those, 409 had voted selections and 11 were skipped due to undervotes. Winning candidate Frank Mrvan received 322 votes, and losing candidate Lavetta Sparks-Wade received 87 votes. The hand counted totals of 409 ballots resulted in a **1%** risk limit, satisfying the required <5% threshold and confirming with **99%** confidence that the machine-tabulated election outcome was correct as reported.



Above: Stark Audit Tool showing a <1% risk limit and >99% confidence level was achieved based on a hand count of 409 randomly selected ballots

For the Democratic Porter County Commissioner District 2 contest, VSTOP and County Election Officials hand counted 442 ballots. Of those, 409 had voted selections and 33 were skipped due to undervotes. Winning candidate Kyle S. Nelson received 249 votes, and losing candidate James Kocal received 160 votes. The hand counted totals of 409 ballots resulted in a **1%** risk limit, satisfying the required <5% threshold and confirming with **99%** confidence that the machine-tabulated election outcome was correct as reported.



Above: Stark Audit Tool showing a <1% risk limit and >99% confidence level was achieved based on a hand count of 409 randomly selected ballots

In Closing

VSTOP would like to thank Porter County Clerk – Jessica Bailey and Board of Elections & Registration Director – Sundae Schoon, for their coordination and the Porter County Board of Elections & Registration for their voluntary request for audit designation. VSTOP would also like to thank the Indiana Secretary of State’s Office for approving Porter County’s audit designation and their support of VSTOP to conduct these initiatives.

Upon completion of all 2026 Primary Election Post-Election Audits, a State Summary Report of all Primary Election post-election audit activities and their respective results will be prepared and submitted to the Indiana Secretary of State and published publicly by the Secretary of State’s Office.

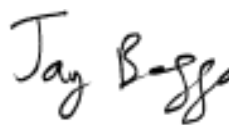
For any questions or concerns regarding Indiana’s Post-Election Audit Procedures, or information contained in this report, contact VSTOP’s Election Systems Audit Specialist, at vstop@bsu.edu.

Matt Housley, MPA



Election Systems Audit Specialist
Voting System Technical Oversight Program

Jay Bagga, PhD



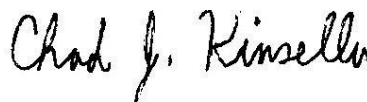
Senior Director (Research)
Voting System Technical Oversight Program

Dustin Renner



Election Director
Indiana Secretary of State

Chad Kinsella, PhD



Executive Director
Voting System Technical Oversight Program