Minutes
Legislative Audit Commission
July 8, 2026

Members Present:
Senator Calvin K. Bahr
Senator D. Scott Dibble
Senator Steve J. Drazkowski
Senator Mark W. Koran
Senator Ann H. Rest
Representative Patti Anderson
Representative Emma Greenman
Representative Rick Hansen
Representative Steven Jacob
Representative Fue Lee
Representative Duane Quam

Members Absent:
Senator Tou Xiong

Senator Ann H. Rest, Chair, called the Legislative Audit Commission (LAC) meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. in room 1100 Minnesota Senate Building. Senator Rest noted that Senator Dibble was not yet present and began the meeting with the second agenda item, to receive the key findings and recommendations in the Office of the Legislative Auditor's (OLA's) evaluation report, *Voter Registration.*

Judy Randall, Legislative Auditor; Jodi Munson Rodríguez, Deputy Legislative Auditor; and Sarah Delacueva, Program Evaluation Manager, were invited to speak to the report.

Ms. Randall thanked the commission for the hearing and outlined the evaluation's scope, noting that nearly 3.8 million individuals were registered to vote in Minnesota at the start of the year and that responsibility for maintaining those records is split between the Office of the Secretary of State (OSS), which manages the statewide voter registration system (SVRS) and issues guidance, and the state's 87 counties, which handle the bulk of registration processing. She emphasized that OSS has no legal authority to enforce county compliance with voter registration law. Ms. Delacueva then presented the substance of the findings, which centered on four points: (1) OSS has established appropriate procedures for processing voter registration applications; (2) counties correctly process at least 99 percent of identity and residency verification transactions; (3) counties do not always update voter registration records appropriately; and (4) federal law, state law, and OSS practice each establish different criteria for when a voter registration record should be inactivated.

Ms. Delacueva walked the commission through the processes of registration and verification, covering automatic voter registration (AVR) through driver's license transactions, online registration, paper applications, and election-day registration. This prompted questions from members about what "identity verified" means (it confirms identity, not citizenship), what a "challenged" voter status entails, and whether someone can still vote through self-attestation if they lack certain documentation, which Ms. Delacueva confirmed is possible in most circumstances for previously registered voters, though not for first-time same-day registrants.

Ms. Delacueva also detailed how OSS cross-checks new and existing registrations against data from the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Corrections, the State Court Administrator's Office, and the Department of Health. Ms. Delacueva closed the presentation with a legislative recommendation: that lawmakers reconsider the current rule inactivating voter records after four years of inactivity, since it predates AVR and does not account for voters who update their registration information without necessarily casting a ballot.

Senator Rest invited Steve Simon, Secretary of State, to provide comments. Secretary Simon characterized OLA's findings as a positive report that reflects well on the state's election administration. He noted that only 9 of Minnesota's 87 counties maintain full-time, year-round elections staff and that the state was ranked first in the nation in the 2026 MIT Election Performance Index. He then turned to Paul Linnell, Elections Director, who presented the office's responses to OLA's seven recommendations.

Director Linnell indicated agreement with all of them, including commitments to: continue modernizing SVRS, which is now more than 21 years old; clarify documentation requirements around returned postal verification cards; and work with the legislature on revising the criteria for inactivating voter records.

Senator Rest invited Michael Stalberger, representing the Minnesota Association of County Officers, to present the counties' response to the report on behalf of the state's election administrators. He broadly endorsed OLA's findings, noting that counties were essentially fully compliant with statutory processing timelines except in the days immediately preceding an election, when competing demands such as early voting and absentee ballot processing can delay other tasks. On the finding that roughly 1 percent of residency-verification records lacked documentation in SVRS, Mr. Stalberger said that much of that verification work occurs outside the system itself and therefore would not have been captured in OLA's review, suggesting the underlying error rate is likely lower than the reported figure implies. He also requested that the legislature revisit processing-timeline requirements within the 20-day window before an election to better balance registration service with administrative workload.

Senator Rest then thanked OLA, the Secretary of State's office, and Mr. Stalberger for their participation and formally closed discussion of the *Voter Registration* evaluation.

Senator Rest returned to the first agenda item, which was to finalize selection of topics for OLA to begin evaluating in fall 2026 and spring 2027. Senator Rest invited Senator Dibble, Chair of the Evaluation Subcommittee, and Ms. Munson Rodríguez to summarize the Evaluation Subcommittee's July 1, 2026, meeting. Senator Dibble said the topics selected for final consideration were: (1) Minnesota Department of Health Mortuary Science Program, (2) Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Feedlot Permitting, and (3) Postsecondary Enrollment Options. Topics selected for recommendation as selection for the LAC to consider in the fall were: (1) Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy, and (2) Minnesota Paid Leave.

Representative Hansen said that with the paid leave program only about six months into implementation, it might be too early to evaluate meaningfully and should instead be left for the subcommittee to reconsider in the fall. Senator Drazkowski said he recalled all five topics being selected for consideration and made a motion that the LAC approve all. Ms. Munson Rodríguez said that at the previous meeting, it was suggested Minnesota Paid Leave could be pre-selected for deferment starting in 2027, but that it and the Board of Behavioral Health had been meant to be recommendations rather than selections.

Senator Drazkowski and Representative Quam favored formally selecting Minnesota Paid Leave now given its high interest and top ranking in the legislative survey. Representative Anderson added that the Behavioral Health topic had only been a recommendation from the last meeting and asked that OLA bring a broader list of board-related topics for the fall selection. Senator Dibble noted that nothing would prevent the commission from revisiting Paid Leave at the fall selection when more data was available. Representative Lee said he also recalled that the Behavioral Health and Paid Leave topics were only recommendations from the prior meeting. Senator Drazkowski then made a new to motion to approve the three top-ranked topics (Minnesota Department of Health Mortuary Science Program, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Feedlot Permitting, and Postsecondary Enrollment Options) along with Minnesota Paid Leave, since members could still reconsider it in the fall. Senator Rest asked for a roll call vote; the motion to approve the four topics for OLA evaluation passed unanimously.

Seeing no further discussion, Senator Rest adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Senator Ann H. Rest, Chair Maureen Garrahy, Recording Secretary