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**AuditEngine**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## "AuditEngine" to be Piloted for Election Audits in Maryland

"Our goal is to audit all elections, contests, and ballots by independent teams instead of insiders"

Rockville City, MD, October 31, 2023 - Citizens Oversight, a Delaware-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, has entered into an agreement with the Maryland State Board of Elections and officials in Rockville City, Montgomery County, MD, to conduct a demonstration "pilot" audit of live election data in the upcoming November 2023 Rockville City election. This pilot aims to showcase the effectiveness of the cloud-based AuditEngine platform for auditing elections using ballot images and other election data.

The agreement involves collaboration with the State Board of Elections and the Mayor and City Council of Rockville City, Maryland.

### **Pilot Audit Scope:**

In addition to the live November 2023 Rockville City election, the pilot audit will include two historical elections, such as the 2022 elections in Montgomery County and Somerset County.

Citizens Oversight has developed a cloud-based ballot-image auditing platform known as AuditEngine. It leverages the power of thousands of parallel computers to rapidly process all ballot images and compare independent tabulations with official results, allowing for a detailed

ballot-by-ballot comparison of all contests on the ballot. Unlike other auditing solutions, AuditEngine compares the voter-verifiable text on ballot summary cards created by Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs) used by many voters who vote in person, to effectively check the voter-verifiable text and "skip over" the unverifiable barcodes.

**Key Facts:**

Citizens Oversight, Inc. is a Delaware 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with primary offices in San Diego. They have developed the AuditEngine ballot-image auditing application starting in 2019 based on design ideas from around 2006.

The pilot audit will be conducted by Citizens Oversight at no cost. Its goal is to provide a report for the Maryland State Board of Elections to assess whether AuditEngine qualifies for a state-wide contract to audit all elections in the state or for municipal elections as needed. More importantly, the results of this pilot can be used by other states and counties to evaluate the usefulness of this tabulation audit process.

Ray Lutz, Executive Director of Citizens Oversight and architect of the AuditEngine system, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration with Maryland, stating, "We are happy to be able to work with officials in the state of Maryland and particularly in Rockville City, to test both our software platform as well as the logistics of cooperation. The audit is based on a review of digital ballot images to create an independent tabulation and then comparison with cast-vote records on a ballot-by-ballot basis. Our case studies in Florida, Georgia, Wisconsin, and New Jersey support our confidence that AuditEngine will provide an extremely robust audit of the counties in Maryland."

AuditEngine operates securely in a Virginia datacenter, authorized to utilize up to 10,000 virtual machines in parallel to efficiently review all ballots by inspecting the images created by ballot scanners during the initial scan.

AuditEngine does not directly communicate with the isolated "air-gapped" computers in election offices and cannot modify official election data. AuditEngine provides detailed reports pointing out any discrepancies, and it can also provide transparency to voters who wish to review the details of the audit.

Lutz added, "We've discovered fascinating issues in almost all audits we have performed, usually regarding quirks in the election system, and we continue to be impressed by the overall quality of work done by election offices even though sometimes there is a need to work around limitations in the voting systems. We find it an honor to work with the State of Maryland in this pilot project."

The pilot audit will be mainly of interest to districts outside Maryland for the 2024 election season because Maryland has already granted the contract for 2024-2025 audits in Maryland to their prior vendor, as announced at the recent Sept. 28 Maryland State Board of Elections meeting.

"We are hoping Maryland will conduct a fair bidding process for future audits, particularly any municipal elections in Maryland and in other states, as our solution is competitively priced and we offer auditing of all BMD ballots, while our competition does not.

"We regard Maryland as the absolute leader in providing clean data suitable for nearly fully automated audits ballot images to build confidence in the outcome."

#### MEDIA ADVISORY

Initial results will be provided within 24 hours after receiving the ballot images, and then Cast Vote Records will be provided for our detailed comparison. After the audit is completed and the narrative report drafted, a meeting will be held in Rockville City to review the results of the audit and solicit feedback from election officials and the public. The exact time and place to be announced.

For media inquiries and further information, please contact:

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#### About Citizens' Oversight:

Citizens' Oversight is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the integrity and transparency of the electoral process through innovative auditing solutions.

#### References:

1. "Case Study Report: 2020 Election Ballot Image Audits in Collier County, Volusia County, and St. Lucie County Florida" -- <https://copswiki.org/Common/M1970>
2. "Dual Tabulation Issue in ES&S Voting Equipment" -- <https://copswiki.org/Common/M1989/>
3. "2020 General Election Audit Reports for Bartow GA, Fulton GA and Dane WI" -- <https://copswiki.org/Common/M1986>
4. NJ -- Three County 2022 Audit Narrative Report -- In this report, we provide details of many issues found by AuditEngine as the counties of Monmouth and Mercer were phasing in new voting systems.  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HhAfIGhEQUIHpyChl0uJORUmymGAZq9thdPMbKuGXs/edit?usp=sharing>