**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 7‑1‑110 SO AS TO CREATE A JOINT COMMITTEE TO BE KNOWN AS THE “RESTORE ELECTION INTEGRITY NOW” (REIN) COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE SUCH ISSUES RELATED TO ELECTION INTEGRITY AS THE SECURITY OF THE VOTE BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER ELECTION DAY; THE ACCURACY AND SECURITY OF THE ELECTION PROCESS; THE UNIFORMITY OF THE ELECTION PROCESSES ACROSS THE STATE; THE IMPACT AND ROLE OF THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION IN ISSUING INTERPRETATIONS, GUIDANCE, AND INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE ELECTION PROCESS; THE IMPACT AND ROLE OF THE JUDICIARY ON THE ELECTION PROCESS; AND OTHER ELECTION‑RELATED ISSUES THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE FOR REVIEW AND EXAMINATION, INCLUDING THE AUDIT OF CERTAIN 2020 PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPOSITION AND STAFFING OF THE COMMITTEE; AND TO REQUIRE THE COMMITTEE TO MAKE ANNUAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BEFORE JANUARY FIRST OF EACH YEAR.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 7 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 7‑1‑110. (A) There is created a joint committee to be known as the Restore Election Integrity Now (REIN) Committee. The REIN Committee’s purpose is to examine a range of issues relating to election integrity that includes, but is not limited to:

(1) the security of the vote before, during, and after election day. Ballot security shall include identifying:

(a) methods or means for a voter to verify his vote was cast and tabulated in the manner in which he intended; and

(b) how Election Systems & Software (ES&S) voting machines store and transmit data, including how ES&S scanners read bar codes and how this information is stored and transmitted. If necessary to complete this requirement, the REIN Committee may request funding from the General Assembly to retain the services of an independent third‑party expert;

(2) the accuracy and security of the election process, particularly during the precanvassing and canvassing stages;

(3) the uniformity of the election processes across the State;

(4) the impact and role of the State Election Commission in issuing interpretations, guidance, and instructions regarding the election process and the conduct of the election as a whole;

(5) the impact and role of the judiciary on the election process, including the US Supreme Court’s rationale for upholding South Carolina’s absentee ballot witness requirement prior to the 2020 general election; and

(6) other election‑related issues the committee considers appropriate for review and examination.

(B) In addition to the topics identified for review in subsection (A), the REIN Committee shall select and recommend three South Carolina counties to the General Assembly to undergo forensic audits of their 2020 primary and general election results. If approved by the General Assembly, each of these county forensic audits shall verify both the voters’ and witnesses’ signatures on absentee ballots cast in the 2020 primary and general elections. If the results of these initial forensic audits reveal a pattern of election law discrepancies, as part of its report to the General Assembly, the committee may recommend that all South Carolina counties undergo forensic audits of their 2020 primary and general election results. Also as part of its report to the General Assembly, the committee may identify other issues or matters to be audited, and the committee shall include the estimated cost to conduct the audits described in this subsection.

(C)(1) The REIN Committee is composed of seven members, consisting of:

(a) three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, at least one of whom must be a member of the largest minority political party in the Senate;

(b) three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, at least one of whom must be a member of the largest minority political party in the House; and

(c) one member appointed by the Governor.

(2) In making appointments to the committee, consideration should be given to ensure the inclusion of diverse racial, ethnic, and gender perspectives representing districts throughout the State.

(3) Vacancies in the committee’s membership must be filled in the manner of original appointment.

(4) Members of the committee shall serve without per diem, mileage, or other compensation generally provided to members of boards and commissions.

(D) The Senate and the House Judiciary Committees shall provide appropriate staffing for the committee.

(E) The REIN Committee shall provide an annual report with its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly before January first of each year.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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