

June 28, 2017

Hon. Gary Clary  
Chair  
Executive Subcommittee  
House Legislative Oversight Committee  
PO Box 11867  
Columbia, SC 29211

VIA EMAIL

Dear Rep. Clary:

As we discussed during the Executive Subcommittee meeting held on June 27, 2017, the Municipal Association of South Carolina supports the concept of establishing several annual dates on which municipalities may hold their general elections.

Currently, cities and towns across the state hold their general elections throughout the year. While those dates were chosen for a variety of reasons, the Municipal Association recognizes the confusion those varying dates may cause for residents. The Association agrees that standardization of general election dates would be helpful, but cities and towns should be allowed to choose from several dates rather than be forced to use a single date.

The Association has previously proposed that general elections could be held once per calendar quarter in an even or odd year. This would provide cities and towns the option to choose a date closest to their current election dates. The Association is certainly willing to discuss other potential options and reach agreement on dates that would satisfy as many stakeholders as possible.

Keep in mind that changes to election dates will have several effects that should be considered by any potential legislation. First, the terms of many elected council members across the state will have to be shortened or lengthened. Currently, councils choose whether or not to shorten or lengthen their terms when they change their election dates. That council prerogative should be retained. Additionally, changes in election dates will require councils to modify their existing election ordinances to accommodate a new date. Therefore, any new legislation's effective date must be set to allow councils time to modify their election ordinances.

On behalf of the state's 270 cities and towns, the Municipal Association stands ready to assist you and the subcommittee with your work on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us going forward.

Sincerely,

Signature Redacted

Scott Slatton  
Legislative and Public Policy Advocate