



South Carolina Association of Registration and Election Officials, Inc.

DAVID K. ALFORD
PRESIDENT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

June 22, 2017

The Honorable Gary E. Clary, Chairperson
Executive Subcommittee
Legislative Oversight Committee
South Carolina House of Representatives
PO Box 11867
Columbia SC 29211

Dear Representative Clary:

In review of some of the submissions and testimony relating to the Legislative Oversight Committee's assessment of the State Election Commission, I would like to submit information on behalf of the South Carolina Association of Registration and Election Officials, Inc. (SCARE). Our professional organization is comprised of local election officials from across the state and part of our purpose is to represent the interests of counties with regard to legislative matters.

Several topics have been mentioned or touched on during the committee's review process of the State Election Commission either through document submission or by way of testimony. I would like to take this time to provide some additional information from an organizational and county perspective, and I thank you for accepting my submission and the kind consideration of its content.

In previous testimony, Marci Andino touched on the matter of funding with regard to the voting system refresh. As she stated, the State Election Commission requested \$7.5 million in funding to refresh the state's aging voting system. Unfortunately, that funding request did not survive the budget process.

Collectively as counties, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of maintaining a dependable and reliable voting system in order to uphold the confidence of the elections process in South Carolina.

In recent months, the Department of Homeland Security designated election systems as part of our nation's critical infrastructure, and the interest in the integrity of our voting system is prominent.

Therefore, we are respectfully requesting continued dialogue with the State Election Commission with regard to proper funding to extend the life of the existing voting system and/or eventual replacement.

In addition to the above topic, we noted that the State Election Commission provided a copy of their Election Date Standardization Plan. SCARE is strongly in support of election standardization for a variety of reasons. By creating limited and standardized dates, the logistics of conducting elections would be better streamlined, and it would create a measure of cost savings to both the state and counties. It would also assist in reducing voter confusion and fatigue and decreasing the strain on facilities and poll workers.

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KATY SMITH
FIRST
VICE PRESIDENT

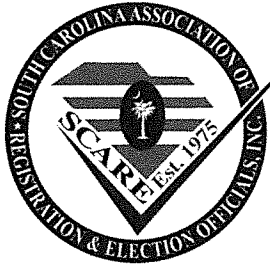
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SECOND
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ADAM HAMMONS
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JOSEPH DEBNEY
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Within the vein of election standardization, we noted the significant measure of questions and discussion regarding Presidential Preference Primaries, filing fees collected, and the offset of costs. We would strongly recommend requiring the political parties to collaborate and choose a uniform date. With all said, we would request your careful consideration of the standardization plan submitted by the State Election Commission and encourage conversation and potential legislative action in this area.

In conclusion, should you desire a representative(s) to appear and provide testimony on these topics, please do not hesitate to ask. Furthermore, should you wish for us to testify on other election related matters or our role as county election officials, please let us know. Counties are the linchpin of elections in South Carolina; however, we could not subsist without the partnership and support of the State Election Commission. We are all committed to working collectively together to better serve the voters of South Carolina.

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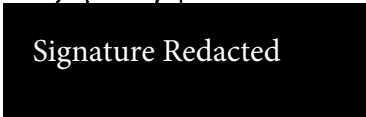
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With Kindest Regards,



Signature Redacted

David K. Alford
President



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Proposed 2017-2018 Legislative Priorities

Improve Voter Experience

Reduce Lines

- Allow early voting and/or no excuse absentee voting.
- Reduce length of ballot by allowing the listing of only ballot question short titles with "Yes" "No" selections for ballot questions. Text, content, summary and/or explanation would be published prior to Election Day and at polls through educational materials.

Recruit Adequate Number of Poll Workers

- Allow SC registered voter to serve as a poll worker anywhere in South Carolina.
- Increase poll worker pay.

Improve Absentee Voting Process

- Delete witness signature on mail-in absentee ballots.
- Allow permanent absentee status for some reasons. (e.g. over 65, physically disabled).
- Allow for the processing of mail-in absentee ballot envelopes the day prior to the election not to include the tabulation and reporting prior to 7 p.m. Election Day.

Funding

- Fully fund refurbishment of current voting system and establish fund for the replacement of the voting system
- Conduct Presidential Preference Primaries on same day.

Election Law Review

- Require municipal general elections to be held in November of odd years and establish uniform and standardized election dates for other election types.

State of Emergency

- Authorize and/or clarify authority to postpone elections in the event of an emergency.