



House Republican Caucus

SCHRC 2022

Week 4 - Election Integrity & Judicial Elections

New Judges on the Bench

Members of the Senate joined us in the House chamber to vote on Judicial nominees. The South Carolina Constitution requires judges to be elected by members of the General Assembly in a Joint Assembly. Prior to being judicial candidates, individuals seeking judicial office are screened by a committee to ensure they are upstanding citizens and possess the competency and qualifications necessary to serve on the bench. Congratulations to all of those elected, and thank you for your willingness to serve!

Preserving the Integrity of our Elections

Voting in free and fair elections is what sets our American democracy apart and makes our country the greatest in the world. Ensuring that this right is upheld is of utmost importance to my colleagues and me. On Thursday, I signed on to [H. 4919](#), which is a bill that will make it easier to vote while making it harder for fraudulent votes to be cast. in South Carolina. Although this bill still has to work its way through the legislative process (where it could be altered), here are some of the protections that the bill proposes:

- Currently, 'in-person' absentee voting extends up to 45 days before an election. This bill repeals the "in-person" absentee voting system, so all absentee ballots would have to be submitted by mail.
- H. 4919 creates 12 days of "early voting" with an acceptable form of ID, just as voting on Election Day. These early voting locations must be "brick and mortar", and offer every ballot for that particular election - giving every individual a chance to go vote if voting on election day is not possible.
- This bill enforces voter ID requirements when voting absentee, just as they are enforced on Election Day. IDs would mirror what is already in South Carolina law: SCDL, state ID card, passport, military ID, voter registration card with a picture.
- Every absentee ballot that is submitted must have the signature of a witness. With this, witnesses would be required to print their name beside their signature and provide an address so their identity can be verified.
- Absentee envelopes would be opened prior to Election Day so results are available by the close of polls. To safeguard this, any disclosure of any election-related information before the polls close is a felony.
- Finally, "Fusion voting" laws would be repealed, meaning a name could appear on the ballot only *once*. "Fusion voting" allows a candidate to appear on multiple parties' ballot lines, essentially pooling the votes for them.

I anticipate that a sound and solid bill which safeguards our elections will make its way to the Floor, and I will vote in favor of it when given the opportunity.

Other Statehouse News

- **Duck, Duck, Goose!** South Carolina is known all over the United States for her natural beauty and is home to some of the most esteemed hunters. It is important that we preserve and protect our natural resources and the sport that so many love. This week, I voted to pass [H. 4177](#). This requires DNR to hire a waterfowl program manager. Among other responsibilities, the manager would be responsible for the development, protection, and propagation of our natural resources and waterfowl.
- **Bringing Industry to South Carolina:** On Wednesday, we passed [H. 4831](#), which creates a process to study South Carolina's business advantages, economic climate, and workforce readiness. With this study, we can create a roadmap for South Carolina to compete in attracting offshore wind energy supply chain industries. This industry is on the rise and could provide excellent economic opportunities for South Carolina in the future.
- **Workforce Enhancement and Military Recognition Act:** We will always be indebted to those who are willing to lay down their lives for our country. Ways and Means met this week to discuss legislation to eliminate state income taxes on military personnel who have served our country. I look forward to supporting [this bill](#) when it makes its way to the Floor.

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