**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO CREATE A VOTING SYSTEM STUDY COMMITTEE, TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP AND STAFFING OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE STUDY COMMITTEE’S REPORT AND DISSOLUTION.

Whereas, in 2013 the Legislative Audit Council (LAC) published the results of its comprehensive review of South Carolina voting machines, which were believed to be partially responsible for the numerous difficulties South Carolina voters encountered during the 2012 General Election; and

Whereas, chief among its findings, the LAC concluded that the election audit process in South Carolina is severely hampered by the absence of a voter‑verified paper audit trail; and

Whereas, fully electronic touchscreen voting systems are subject to the limitations and risks of computer technology, including voting machine vendors with weak security practices, the failure to conduct background checks on programmers and system developers, and the failure to establish clear chain‑of‑custody procedures for handling software; and

Whereas, without an independent, voter‑verified paper audit trail, it is essentially impossible to discover almost any but the most egregious anomalies, whether accidental or intentional; and

Whereas, a voter‑verified paper audit trail would enable a complete audit of close elections and questionable elections, and more fundamentally, would give voters confidence that their votes are actually being recorded and counted as they intended; and

Whereas, in order to assure voter confidence, every voting system must incorporate or produce a paper ballot, which the voter can view before finally casting his or her vote. Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. (A) There is created a “Voting System Study Committee”. The study committee shall review information regarding the most current voting technology and make appropriate findings and recommendations, including, but not limited to:

(1) voter‑verified paper audit trail voting systems;

(2) the security of all voting systems evaluated;

(3) the comparative acquisition, implementation, and maintenance costs of all systems evaluated;

(4) the current canvassing schedule as it relates to the ability to conduct random audits of election results; and

(4) amendments to Article 15 “Voting Machines”, Chapter 13, Title 7 of the 1976 Code.

(B) The study committee must be composed of three members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House, three members of the Senate appointed by the Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate, and one member appointed by the Governor. At least one member from both the House of Representatives and the Senate must be selected upon recommendation of the Minority Leader of the respective body.

(C) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall provide staffing for the study committee.

(D) The study committee shall make a report of the committee’s recommendations to the General Assembly by January 31, 2016, at which time the study committee must be dissolved.

SECTION 2. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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