

SOUTH CAROLINA

ELECTION COMMISSION

Budget Request Presentation FY 2025-26

House Ways and Means Constitutional Subcommittee

January 22, 2025

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Agency Attendees

- Howie Knapp, Executive Director
hknapp@elections.sc.gov
- Paige Salonich, Deputy Executive Director
psalonich@elections.sc.gov
- Jenny McGill, Chief of Staff
jmcgill@elections.sc.gov
- LaToria Williams, Director of Administration & Finance
lwilliams@elections.sc.gov

Agency Overview

The South Carolina Election Commission (SEC) is dedicated to safeguarding the security, integrity, accessibility, and credibility of our state's electoral system. Our mission is to ensure that every eligible citizen has the opportunity to register to vote and participate in fair, impartial elections, with the assurance that their vote will count.

While state and local officials share the responsibility for conducting elections, the SEC serves as the state's primary authority, overseeing voter registration and the overall election process.

Specifically, the agency is tasked with:

- Maintaining the statewide voter registration system
- Supporting the statewide voting system
- Supervising 46 county boards of voter registration and elections
- Performing audits and post-election analyses of county boards of registration and elections
- Assisting with county operations if a county election office fails to comply with state and federal law or SEC policies and procedures; or if a county is unable to certify election results in a timely manner.
- Conducting a training and certification program for local election officials
- Conducting candidate filing and providing a candidate tracking system

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Major Programs and Achievements

Election Security

Protection of South Carolina’s critical election infrastructure remained a top priority during FY2024. Elections face numerous threats from a wide variety of actors with various motives. The agency is committed to taking all reasonable measures to further enhance the state’s election security posture. Major achievements in this fiscal year include:

- **CIS Vulnerability Disclosure Program.** The SEC continued to work with the Center for Internet Security (CIS) as a participant in the CIS Vulnerability Disclosure Program (VDP). A VDP is a formalized process to receive, validate, remediate, and communicate vulnerability information that is identified by security researchers on specific technology systems. VDPs have proven successful in many industries, from large companies to government agencies. VDPs can be an effective and efficient way for an agency to improve its security posture. SCVotes.gov as well as VREMS.sc.gov are currently enrolled in the VDP.
- **Endpoint Protection.** The SEC has installed an endpoint detection and response (EDR) tool to increase the agency’s ability to identify, detect, respond to, and remediate security incidents and alerts. The EDR is deployed directly to SEC laptops, workstations, and servers to provide device-level protection against known (signature-based) and unknown (behavioral-based) attacks and malicious activity. The SEC and the Center for Internet Security continuously monitor the EDR.
- **Risk and Vulnerability Assessment by the Department of Homeland Security.** In the spring of 2023, the SEC requested a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment be performed by the Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). The agency seeks to engage in these assessments approximately every two years. The assessments look for external vulnerabilities an internet-based user could exploit. Additionally, an internal evaluation is undertaken to determine the impact that an internal attacker could have on the SEC network and services. The assessment took place in the summer of 2023 and overlapped both the current and previous fiscal years. Results from the assessments continued into FY24, with findings and remediation occurring at the state level.
- **Physical Security Assessments of County Offices and Storage Facilities.** The SEC and DHS conducted physical security assessments of all forty-six-county voter registration and election offices and facilities as well as the SEC office. The assessments took place over the summer of 2023. The SEC provided copies of these assessments to each county, included suggested remediation activities, and continues to monitor county progress towards the remediation goals in FY24.

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- **Integra.** The SEC has partnered with Integra to provide a tool for S.C. counties to create a security posture baseline. County directors and IT staff answer a list of questions from different categories (physical security, risk assessment, policy, procedure, etc.) based on the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards. After completion of all questions, a score is given to the county. The SEC reviews the reports and provides recommendations and feedback on weaknesses and strengths. The SEC is pushing for full county participation.
- **Asset Management.** The SEC has implemented a mandatory asset management program for all counties to follow. This requires the scanning of all seals on e-pollbooks, ballot marking devices, and ballot scanners when they leave the county's storage area, arrive to the voting location, when they are picked up from the voting location and returned to the storage area. This allows for a record of complete chain of custody for all voting equipment throughout the election process.
- **RABET-V.** The SEC has partnered with the Center for Internet Security (CIS) to participate in their Rapid Architecture-Based Election Technology Verification (RABET-V) program. This program uses a risk-based approach that allows for rapid verification of a manufacturer's security claims. It allowed knowledgeable CIS researchers to analyze the underlying technology architecture of all of South Carolina's digital and web presence.

The SEC continues working with a broad-based team of federal, state, and private cybersecurity, law enforcement, and intelligence professionals to ensure the agency takes every prudent measure to enhance the security and resilience of the state election infrastructure.

These partnerships provide a multitude of resources and services including:

- Network scanning and monitoring
- Cyber and physical risk and vulnerability assessments
- Remediation
- Information sharing
- Response support
- Security training
- Advice on strengthening our security posture

The SEC continues to improve its security posture by adding layers of security to address changes in the environment and the emergence of new technologies and threats. Taking all reasonable measures to bolster the security and resilience of the state's election infrastructure will remain a top priority for the agency.

Training Division, Addition of Training Services

As part of a continuous effort to ensure the process of elections occurs correctly at the county level, the SEC expanded its capabilities within training, creating a Training and County Support Services ("T&CSS) Division and began expanding its training courses for county election officials

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and board members. The addition of T&CSS staff allows the SEC to go into the county offices and provide in-person training to an entire staff, rather than only training a selected group of individuals at the SEC’s office, as well as provide poll manager training when county offices lack sufficient resources to conduct their own training.

Additionally, the T&CSS Division performed statewide workshops for county staff and board members in preparation for the multitude of elections in 2024, including Presidential Preference Primaries and statewide primaries.

Audit Division

The SEC strengthened its post-election hand-count audit program. A hand-count audit is designed to ensure the number of ballots cast was accurately recorded by the tabulation device, and the number of votes cast for a particular contest was accurately recorded by the tabulation device. These audits are required by the SEC to be conducted by the counties for state-level elections or higher. Starting in 2024, at least one early voting center per county is now randomly selected for audit; this is in addition to the election day precincts that are also randomly selected. Furthermore, hand-count audit examiners must be preapproved by the audit division. Considerations include the character of proposed examiners, political neutrality of examiner teams, and one’s compliance with the SEC’s training program for those who must complete it. Other changes include requiring a public notice for the audit and audit to be performed blindly, which means examiners count ballots and votes before checking the results from the voting equipment. For the statewide primaries in June 2024, approximately 5% of all precincts and nearly 4% of all ballots cast were audited. All hand-count audits performed in 2024 have been posted on scVOTES.gov.

The Audit Division oversaw 800+ hand-count audits for eight state-level elections. Counties audited approximately 5% of ballots and precincts, verifying that paper ballots matched voting equipment results.

| | Democratic PPP | Republican PPP | June Primary | June Primary Runoff | General Election |
|--|-----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Total Ballots Cast | 132,057 | 757,930 | 439,766 | 87,326 | 2,566,404 |
| Total Ballots Audited by Hand Count | 8,507 (6.4%) | 32,057 (4.2%) | 16,256 (3.7%) | 10,374 (12%) | 87,552 (3.4%) |

The SEC Audit Division exceeds the national standard of auditing 3% of total ballots by conducting more extensive hand count audits. Detailed audit results are available at scVOTES.gov.

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Process Improvements through Partnerships with Other State Agencies

The SEC continues to work with the Department of Motor Vehicles to update and improve processes and policies between the State Election Commission and the South Carolina

Department of Motor Vehicles. These processes include working through voter registration at the DMV, utilizing SEC and DMV data to check voter registration information, and disseminating SEC voter education materials at all DMV locations. Additionally, the SEC continues to work with county voter registration and elections offices and board members to further standardize election processes and procedures across the state.

Voter Education and Outreach

The SEC continued to reach out and educate voters on all aspects of voter registration and elections through the Agency's *SC Votes* voter education initiative. The statewide initiative helps ensure voters are informed about the requirements, processes, procedures, and deadlines associated with voter registration and voting in South Carolina. FY2024 efforts were focused on educating voters on efforts to secure South Carolina's election infrastructure, how to register and update your registration, the changes to absentee voting, how to vote early and how to vote on election day, and Photo ID requirements. The initiative includes educational brochures, posters, videos, outreach at public events, a voter education website (scVOTES.gov), social media messaging, and a statewide media campaign. In FY24, the Voter Education and Outreach division grew from two employees to six, adding four Voter Education and Outreach coordinators to aid in in-person events, social media messaging, and graphic design.

Voter Turnout

The 2024 Statewide General Election saw a record-breaking turnout, with over 2.5 million registered voters (75% of Overall Turnout) casting their ballots, the highest in history.

In 2024, voter turnout reached the second highest percentage on record, trailing only the 2008 General Election, with 75% of eligible voters casting their ballot in the 2024 General Election compared to 76% of eligible voters casting their ballot in 2008. However, the total number of voters in 2024 was significantly higher than in 2008.

South Carolina has 3,486,008 registered voters.

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| Democratic PPP - February 3, 2024 | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Turnout Category | Number of Voters | Percentage of Turnout |
| Overall Turnout | 132,000 | 4% of Total Registered Voters |
| In-Person Turnout | 128,000 | 97% of Overall Turnout |
| Early Voting | 48,000 | 38% of In-Person Turnout |
| Election Day Voting | 80,000 | 62% of In-Person Turnout |
| Absentee Turnout | 4,000 | 3% of Overall Turnout |
| Domestic Absentee | 3,600 | 90% of Absentee Voting |
| Military & Overseas | 400 | 10% of Absentee Voting |

| Republican PPP - February 24, 2024 | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Turnout Category | Number of Voters | Percentage of Turnout |
| Overall Turnout | 758,000 | 23% of Total Registered Voters |
| In-Person Turnout | 745,000 | 98% of Overall Turnout |
| Early Voting | 205,000 | 28% of In-Person Turnout |
| Election Day Voting | 540,000 | 72% of In-Person Turnout |
| Absentee Turnout | 13,000 | 2% of Overall Turnout |
| Domestic Absentee | 12,300 | 95% of Absentee Voting |
| Military & Overseas | 700 | 5% of Absentee Voting |

| Statewide Primaries and Runoffs - June 11 and June 25, 2024 | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Turnout Category | Number of Voters | Percentage of Turnout |
| Overall Turnout | 527,000 | 16% of Total Registered Voters |
| In-Person Turnout | 504,000 | 96% of Overall Turnout |
| Early Voting | 145,000 | 29% of In-Person Turnout |
| Election Day Voting | 359,000 | 71% of In-Person Turnout |
| Absentee Turnout | 23,000 | 4% of Overall Turnout |
| Domestic Absentee | 22,300 | 97% of Absentee Voting |
| Military & Overseas | 700 | 3% of Absentee Voting |

| Statewide General Election - November 5, 2024 | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Turnout Category | Number of Voters | Percentage of Turnout |
| Overall Turnout | 2,558,000 | 75% of Total Registered Voters |
| In-Person Turnout | 2,449,000 | 96% of Overall Turnout |
| Early Voting | 1,472,000 | 60% of In-Person Turnout |
| Election Day Voting | 977,000 | 40% of In-Person Turnout |
| Absentee Turnout | 109,000 | 4% of Overall Turnout |
| Domestic Absentee | 100,000 | 92% of Absentee Voting |
| Military & Overseas | 9,000 | 8% of Absentee Voting |

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Certified Election Results

in the November 5, 2024 General Election

OVERALL TURNOUT:
 **2,558,000**
75% OF
REGISTERED VOTERS

→ **2,449,000**
IN-PERSON VOTING
109,000
ABSENTEE

IN-PERSON TURNOUT
 **2,449,000**

→ **60%** EARLY VOTING
1,472,000
40% ON ELECTION DAY
977,000

ABSENTEE TURNOUT
 **109,000**

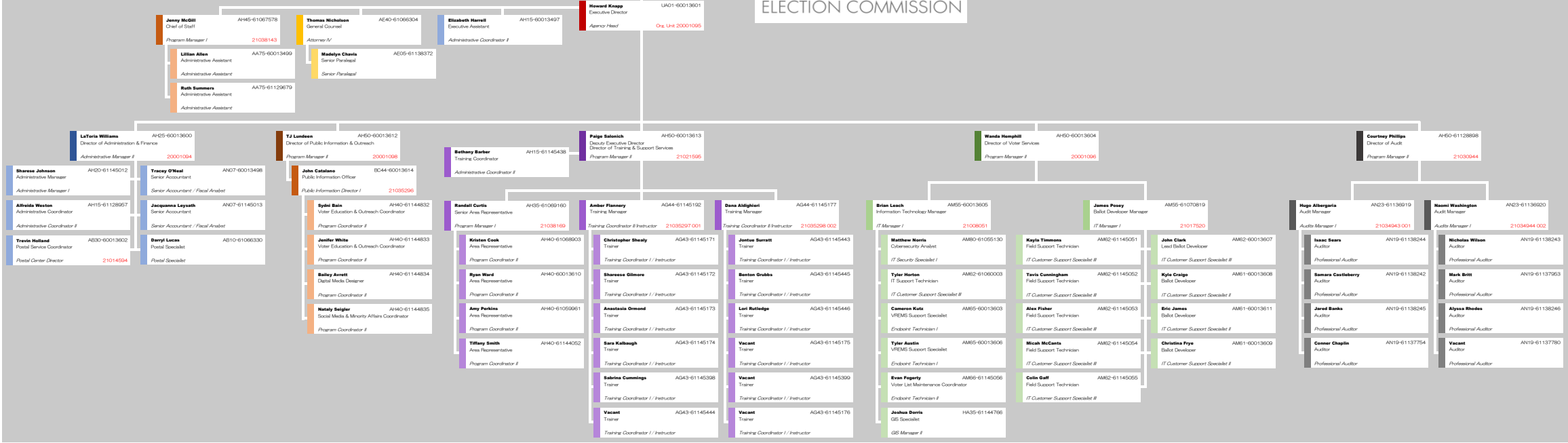
→ **92%** DOMESTIC ABSENTEE
100,000
8% MILITARY & OVERSEAS
9,000

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SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTION COMMISSION

Five Member Commission



FY 25-26 Budget Priorities Summary

Agency Name: State Election Commission

| Budget Priorities | | | | Funding | | | | | FTEs | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---|--|------------|---------|-----------|------------|------------|-------|---------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Priority No. | Request Type | Request Title | Priority Description | State | Federal | Earmarked | Restricted | Total | State | Federal | Earmarked | Restricted | Total |
| 1 | B2-Non-Recurring | Statewide Voting System Upgrade | To meet the growing needs of county voter registration and elections offices ahead of the November 2024 election, the SEC leveraged the State Master Lease Program to purchase DS300 polling place scanners, ExpressVote Ballot Marking Devices, DS950 high-speed scanners, and pollbook hardware. This equipment was deployed across all 46 counties for election operations. The new scanners, which include auditing capabilities, replaced older models and enable the SEC to conduct Risk Limiting Audits, enhancing transparency in ballot counting while safeguarding voter privacy. | 32,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32,000,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2 | B1-Recurring | Annual Election Costs | State and local election officials share responsibility for conducting elections, with the SEC overseeing voter registration and the overall election process as the state's chief election agency. South Carolina holds approximately 300 elections annually, including at least one statewide election each fiscal year. The demand for resources and the number of voting days has increased significantly with the introduction of early voting. To support election operations, the SEC is requesting \$4,500,000 to cover election-related expenses, including early voting and election day workers, legal notices, and printed materials. This financial assistance is crucial to ensuring accessible, efficient, and accurate elections across all 46 counties. | 4,500,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4,500,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 3 | B1-Recurring | Polling Location Technician Certification Program | This request aims to maintain a statewide pool of trained and reliable Polling Location Technicians for elections. The Certified Polling Location Certification Program will help recruit and retain technicians in all counties, addressing a statewide shortage. | 500,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 500,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 4 | B1-Recurring | Election Integrity | Election integrity, audits, and voter list maintenance are top priorities for the SEC, which manages the statewide voter registration system. To maintain list accuracy amid growing data, ongoing software upgrades and audits are essential. The requested funds will support results verification audits, risk-limiting audits, and necessary updates to the voter registration system. | 500,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 500,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------------|--|---|------------|---|---|---|------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 5 | B1-Recurring | New FTEs | The SEC saw an increase in workload regarding regulatory requirements and is adjusting to ensure continuity of services and performance throughout the agency. As such, certain staff are taking on additional job duties. Overall, being able to adequately compensate staff for performance of job duties is essential to the SEC being able to recruit and retain qualified individuals, enabling the accomplishment of the agency's goals and mission. Anticipated new positions are GIS manager and additional auditors. | 423,346 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 423,346 | 5.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 5.00 |
| 6 | B1-Recurring | Agency Legal Defense Costs | The State Election Commission has gone from being a part of 1-2 lawsuits a year to 10-12 major, complex lawsuits. In order for the agency to properly manage the increasing lawsuits, the State Election Commission is requesting \$500,000 to allocate to its legal defense costs. | 500,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 500,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 7 | B1-Recurring | Poll Worker Pay Increase | The funds would be used to increase the total amount paid to poll workers for being trained to work and working in an election. Poll workers are currently paid \$135 per election. This request would allow poll workers to be paid \$175 per election. This includes payment for poll worker training and working on election day. | 4,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4,000,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 8 | B1-Recurring | Board Member Stipend Increase | There are 46 boards of voter registration and elections consisting of three to nine board members per board. The State Election Commission is requesting \$621,000 for county board member stipends to include an overall increase of \$1,000 per year per board member bringing the total stipend paid per board member per year to \$2,500 with a maximum of \$22,500 per county. | 621,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 621,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9 | B1-Recurring | State Board of Canvassers Compensation | The State Election Commission consists of a five-member board that constitutes as the State Board of Canvassers. As the State Board of Canvassers, the Board meets as needed throughout the year to certify election results. There has not been an increase to the State Board of Canvassers compensation in recent history. If the funds are not provided, South Carolina elections will be severely impacted and it will grow increasingly more difficult for the State Board of Canvassers to carry out their duties as defined by state law. | 11,250 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11,250 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 10 | B2-Non-Recurring | State Matching Funds for 2024 HAVA Grant | Funds would be used for the state match required by the federal funds received by the Help America Vote Act grant received in 2024. | 200,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200,000 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| TOTALS | | | | 43,255,596 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43,255,596 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

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Budget Request Summary

Priority 1: The SEC is requesting \$32,000,000 in non-recurring funds for Statewide Voting System Upgrade.

- In order to meet the increasing needs and demands of county voter registration and elections offices ahead of the November 2024 election, the State Election Commission utilized the State Master Lease Program to purchase DS300 polling place scanners and tabulators, ExpressVote Ballot Marking Devices, DS950 high-speed scanners and tabulators, and pollbook hardware.
 - 3,015 new DS300 scanners, 250 Ballot Marking Devices, 100 EPollbooks, 100 ExpressVote Printer, additional cases, additional memory sticks.
- The equipment will be used to conduct elections by county voter registration and election offices across the state. All 46 counties received equipment.
- This purchase replaces existing scanning equipment with scanners that have an auditing function, allowing the SEC to conduct Risk Limiting Audits of South Carolina elections.
- This request would provide additional transparency in ballot counting, while protecting voter's privacy.

Priority 2: The SEC is requesting \$4,500,000 in recurring funds to support the mission and programs of the agency and cover the cost of statewide election expenses and the necessary supplies and reimbursements to counties.

- State and local election officials share in the responsibility of conducting elections. The SEC, as the chief election agency in the state, is responsible for overseeing the overall voter registration and election process. **Each year, South Carolina holds approximately 300 elections.**
- Since the passage of Act 150 and the implementation of early voting in 2022, the amount of resources needed to carry out an election and the number of days on which voting actually takes place in South Carolina has increased significantly which increases the costs to run an election.
- The State Election Commission provides tremendous financial support to the 46 county boards of voter registration and elections to help cover the cost of election expenses. Without this financial support, it would be impossible to carry out accessible, efficient, and accurate elections.
 - Examples of these expenses include legal notices, commercial ballot printing, voter registration applications, absentee ballots, ballot cards, ballot activation cards.

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Priority 3: The SEC is requesting \$500,000 in recurring funds to create a new program called the Polling Location Technician Certification Program.

- This request would be used to maintain a statewide pool of highly trained, compliant, and dependable Polling Location Technicians to serve in statewide elections.
- The Certified Polling Location Certification Program will assist in recruiting and retaining polling location technicians in all counties, which is currently a statewide challenge.

Priority 4: The SEC is requesting \$500,000 in recurring funds to support the mission and programs of the agency and provide funding for election integrity, voter list maintenance, and conduct risk limiting audits.

- Election integrity, election audits, and voter list maintenance is a top priority for the agency. The State Election Commission is tasked with maintaining the statewide voter registration system.
- With the growing amount of data the agency is receiving in order to keep the voter list as accurate as possible, ongoing software and technology upgrades are needed to ensure list accuracy. Additionally, it is imperative that are routinely performed.
- The funds will also be used to complete results verification audits, risk limiting audits, and necessary updates, enhancements, and technological upgrades to the statewide voter registration.

Priority 5: The SEC is requesting \$423,346 in recurring funds for 5 new FTES.

- The SEC saw an increase in workload regarding regulatory requirements and is adjusting to ensure continuity of services and performance throughout the agency. As such, certain staff are taking on additional job duties.
- Overall, being able to adequately compensate staff for performance of job duties is essential to the SEC being able to recruit and retain qualified individuals, enabling the accomplishment of the agency's goals and mission. Anticipated new positions are GIS manager and additional auditors.

Priority 6: The SEC is requesting \$500,000 in recurring funds for the agency's legal defense costs.

- The State Election Commission has gone from being a part of 1-2 lawsuits a year to 10-12 major, complex lawsuits. In order for the agency to properly manage the increasing lawsuits, the State Election Commission is requesting \$500,000 to allocate to its legal defense costs.

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Priority 7: The SEC is requesting \$4,000,000 in recurring funds to support the mission and programs of the agency and increase the amount of funds reimbursed to counties for poll worker pay.

- Election workers are critical to conducting fair and impartial elections. Ongoing harassment, threats, and increased demands have made it harder to recruit and retain poll workers. Many counties are experiencing a shortage of poll workers.
- The State Election Commission is requesting \$4,000,000 to allocate to poll worker pay. This request will allow for an overall increase of \$25 per day of work and an increase of \$15 per training bringing the total per day of work to \$100 and the total per training to \$75.
- This would be the first increase to poll worker pay in recent history. This request would also allow for standby poll workers to receive a per diem payment of \$75 whereas standby poll workers are not currently paid for training received if they are needed to work an election.
- If the funds are not provided, South Carolina elections will be severely impacted and it will grow increasingly more difficult to recruit, train, and retain poll workers.

| 2024 Statewide General Election Total Poll Workers | |
|---|--------|
| Total Early Voting Poll Workers | 1,524 |
| Election Day Poll Workers | 15,234 |

| State Reimbursement for Poll Worker Pay Historical Data | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2020 | 2022 | 2024 |
| General Election | \$3,582,639 | \$2,048,246.35 | \$3,115,605.52 |
| Statewide Primaries | | \$1,777,370 | \$838,650 |
| PPP Republican | | | \$1,004,954.88 |
| PPP Democratic | | | \$1,377,952.71 |

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| <i>Current</i> Poll Worker Pay Amounts | |
|--|-------|
| Current Poll Worker Pay – Training | \$60 |
| Current Poll Worker Pay – Election Day | \$75 |
| Total Poll Worker Pay (State Reimbursement Max) | \$135 |

| <i>Proposed Increase</i> Poll Worker Pay Amounts | |
|---|-------|
| Current Poll Worker Pay – Training | \$75 |
| Current Poll Worker Pay – Election Day | \$100 |
| Total Poll Worker Pay (State Reimbursement Max) | \$175 |

Priority 8: The SEC is requesting \$621,000 in recurring funds to support the mission and programs of the agency and increase the amount paid to county board members.

- Across the state, there are 46 boards of voter registration and elections consisting of three to nine board members per board. The State Election Commission is requesting \$621,000 for county board member stipends to include an overall increase of \$1,000 per year per board member bringing the total stipend paid per board member per year to \$2,500 with a maximum of \$22,500 per county.
 - Currently, counties are allotted a maximum of \$1,500 per year for up to 9 board members.
- There has not been an increase to the board member stipend in recent history. If the funds are not provided, South Carolina elections will be severely impacted and it will grow increasingly more difficult to recruit, train, and retain board members for county boards of voter registration and elections.

| County Board Member Stipend State Reimbursement Historical Data | |
|--|------------------------|
| 07/01/2021-06/30/2022 | \$ 448,717.63 |
| 07/01/2022-06/30/2023 | \$ 501,441.67 |
| 07/01/2023-06/30/2024 | \$ 453,709.98 |
| Total | \$ 1,403,869.28 |

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Priority 9: The SEC is requesting \$11,250 in recurring funds to support the mission and programs of the agency and increase the amount paid the State Board of Canvassers.

- The State Election Commission consists of a five-member board that constitutes as the State Board of Canvassers. The State Election Commission holds monthly meetings which the public are invited to attend. As the State Board of Canvassers, the Board meets as needed throughout the year to certify election results. The State Election Commission is requesting \$11,250 to increase the overall stipend for the State Board of Canvassers to \$2,250 per board member, per year.
- There has not been an increase to the State Board of Canvassers compensation in recent history. If the funds are not provided, South Carolina elections will be severely impacted and it will grow increasingly more difficult for the State Board of Canvassers to carry out their duties as defined by state law.

Priority 10: The SEC is requesting \$200,000 in non-recurring funds for the state match required by the federal funds received by the Help America Vote Act grant received in 2024.

- The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 provides funds to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) as authorized under Title 1, Section 101, of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, to make grant payments to states.
- The funds are provided to improve the administration of elections for federal office, including to enhance election technology and make security improvements.
- States are required to match 20% of amounts awarded. South Carolina's total award was \$1,000,000 making the required state match \$200,000.

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Agency Proviso List

- 102.1. (ELECT: County Boards of Voter Registration and Elections Compensation) The amounts appropriated in this section for "County Boards of Voter Registration and Elections Board Members," shall be disbursed annually to the County Treasurer at the rate of ~~\$1,500~~ \$2,500 for each member, not to exceed ~~\$13,500~~ \$22,500 per county. The County Treasurer shall use these funds only for the compensation of County Boards of Voter Registration and Elections Board Members. Any funds not used for this purpose shall be returned to the State Treasurer. These funds are exempted from mandated budget reductions. In addition, in the calculation of any across the board agency base reductions mandated by the Executive Budget Office or the General Assembly, the amount of funds appropriated for compensation of County Boards of Voter Registration and Elections Board Members shall be excluded from the agency's base budget. Unexpended funds shall be carried forward from the prior fiscal year and shall be utilized for special primaries, runoffs, and elections. ~~(KEEP)~~ (CHANGE)
- 102.2. (ELECT: Elections Managers & Clerks Per Diem) Managers and clerks of state and county elections shall receive a per diem of ~~\$75.00~~ \$100.00 for the day of work and ~~\$60.00~~ \$75.00 for training and paperwork. Managers shall not be paid for more than two days for any election and clerks for not more than three days for any election. The commission may adjust the per diem of ~~\$75.00~~ \$100.00 for the managers and clerks of the statewide election to a higher level only to the extent that the appropriation for the statewide election is sufficient to bear the added cost of increasing the per diem and the cost of the statewide election. Up to three additional managers per county may be appointed to assist county boards of voter registration and elections with the absentee/fail safe voting process prior to, on Election Day, and immediately following statewide elections. Managers assisting the county boards of voter registration and elections in the absentee/fail safe process may receive a per diem of ~~\$75.00~~ \$100.00 per day for not more than a total of fifteen days regardless of whether one, two, or three additional managers are used. ~~(KEEP)~~ (CHANGE)
- 102.3. (ELECT: Board of State Canvassers Compensation) ~~\$100.00~~ \$150.00 additional compensation per day may be paid to each member of the Board of State Canvassers up to a total of fifteen days that may be required for hearings held by the members of the Board of State Canvassers. ~~(KEEP)~~ (CHANGE)
- 102.4. (ELECT: Sale of Lists Revenue Carry Forward) Any revenue generated from the sale of election lists may be retained and expended by the South Carolina Election Commission to reimburse the Department of Administration, for the printing of such lists and to pay expenses of postage and shipment of these lists to electors who purchase them. After such reimbursement has been made an amount, not to exceed \$400,000, shall be used for nonrecurring expenses in conjunction with extraordinary special election and legal costs and costs for upgrading the Statewide Voter Registration System. Any balance in the Sale of Lists Account on June thirtieth, of the prior fiscal year may be carried forward and expended for the same purposes during the current fiscal year. (KEEP)

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- 102.5. (ELECT: Budget Reduction Exemption) Funds appropriated for recurring and nonrecurring general and primary election expenses are exempted from mandated across the board reductions. In addition, in the calculation of any across the board agency base reductions mandated by the Executive Budget Office or the General Assembly, the amount of funds appropriated for recurring and nonrecurring primary and general election expenses shall be excluded from the agency's base budget. **(KEEP)**
- 102.6. (ELECT: Primary and General Election Carry Forward) Filing fees received from candidates filing to run in statewide or special primary elections may be retained and expended by the State Election Commission to pay for the conduct of primary elections. Any balance in the filing fee accounts on June thirtieth, of the prior fiscal year may be carried forward and expended for the same purposes during the current fiscal year. In addition, any balance in the Primary and General Election Accounts on June thirtieth, of the prior fiscal year may be carried forward and expended for the same purposes during the current fiscal year. In addition, the aforementioned funds may also be utilized to conduct the Presidential Preference Primary elections. **(KEEP)**
- 102.7. (ELECT: Training & Certification Program) All members and staff of County Boards of Voter Registration and Elections will receive a common curriculum to include core courses on the duties and responsibilities of county boards of voter registration and elections and electives to promote quality service and professional development. The State Election Commission shall make these courses available in various locations, including but not be limited to, the upstate, coastal, and midlands areas of the state. Up to \$35,000 of revenue generated by charging a fee to attend these courses may be retained and expended by the South Carolina Election Commission to help cover the cost of providing the training. Any balance in the training and certification account on June thirtieth, of the prior fiscal year may be carried forward and expended for the same purpose during the current fiscal year. **(KEEP)**

The State Election Commission is required to withhold the stipend of members who do not complete the training and certification program as required in Section 7-5-10 of the 1976 Code. Additionally, funds will also be withheld if a board member completes the training and certification program, but fails to complete at least one training course per year. The board member and members of that county's legislative delegation will be notified of the withholding of the stipend and the requirements needed to bring the member into compliance with the law. If a board member cannot complete the program or complete the required continuing education due to extenuating circumstances, the board member must submit a written request to the county legislative delegation for approval or funds will continue to be withheld as described in this proviso. If a board member does not become compliant with the law within eighteen months of initial notification of stipend withholding, the county's legislative delegation must replace that person on the board. **(KEEP)**

- 102.8. (ELECT: Penalty for Late Submission of Reimbursable Expenses) In the event that a county submits reimbursable election expenses to the Commission for payment more than thirty days after the election is held, the Commission may deduct a penalty of ten percent of the late-submitted amount. The county is responsible for payment of this amount. If the

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Commission finds good reason for such late submission, the penalty may be waived. The Election Commission shall be authorized to expend funds appropriated/authorized in the current fiscal year to pay election expenses incurred by a county in the prior fiscal year. If a county submits a request for reimbursement of election expenses through any means other than the Voter Registration and Election Management System (VREMS), the Commission may deduct a penalty of ten percent of the amount submitted. **(KEEP)**

- 102.9. (ELECT: HAVA Carry Forward) The Election Commission shall be authorized to carry forward unexpended Help America Vote Act funds into the current fiscal year and to use these funds for the same purpose. **(KEEP)**
- 102.10. (ELECT: HAVA Match Funds) Funds appropriated through the General Fund for the purpose of providing a match for federal funds received through the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) shall be moved to a restricted account in order that the funds may accrue interest as per Section 254 (b) (1) of the Help America Vote Act. Unexpended funds shall be carried forward from the prior fiscal year and shall be utilized for special primaries, runoffs, and elections. These funds may also be used to reimburse local governmental entities for expenses incurred in the prior fiscal year associated with special primaries, runoffs, and general elections. **(KEEP)**
- 102.11. (ELECT: Use of Election Funds) Funds appropriated to the Election Commission for the purpose of conducting elections shall not be used for any other purpose unless specifically authorized in this act. However, up to \$200,000 may be transferred to other operating accounts from General Election accounts upon approval from the Executive Budget Office, which shall then notify the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Governor of such transfer of funds. **(KEEP)**
- 102.12. (ELECT: Match for Additional HAVA Funds) In the event that additional Help America Vote Act federal funds become available, the commission shall be authorized to utilize funds appropriated for primary and general elections and for voting system refurbishment to provide a match for the federal funds. **(KEEP)**
- 103.2 (RFAO: Election File Merge) In order to assist the County Registration and Election Commissions to ensure that registered voters are assigned to proper election districts, the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, in conjunction with the South Carolina Election Commission, shall merge the voter registration file with the office's Geocoded Address List and the district boundaries of the Congress, South Carolina Senate, South Carolina House of Representatives, county councils, and such other districts as the office possesses official district boundary records in electronic format. The merged systems will allow the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office to provide the respective county officials with a list of potential voters who are possibly assigned to the wrong election district. File merger is required only for those districts in which elections are scheduled. Counties and municipalities shall release GIS to the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office upon the office's written request. Written request must be sent to the chief administrative officer of the county or municipality and advise the county or municipality that failure to comply within thirty days of request may result in the withholding of ten percent of the county's or

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municipality's state aid. The Executive Director of the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office may grant additional time for good cause and must waive release if the county or municipality does not possess GIS data. For counties and municipalities that possess GIS data but do not release it, the Executive Director of the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office shall notify the State Treasurer of the failure to comply with this provision after the required notice. Notification shall result in the withholding of ten percent of subsequent payments of state aid to the entity until the GIS data is provided. Municipal and county data acquired by the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office in the course of performing its responsibilities may be used for other functions of the office as well as shared with other state agencies. For this provision GIS data includes, but is not limited to, road centerlines; orthophotography; parcel boundaries; address points; political boundaries; and administrative boundaries. **(KEEP)**

- 117.191 (GP: Actions on Election Law)
 - (A) The President of the Senate, on behalf of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, on behalf of the House of Representatives, have an unconditional right to intervene on behalf of their respective bodies in a state court action that challenges the validity of an election law, an election policy, or the manner in which an election is conducted.
 - (B) In a federal court action that challenges the validity of an election law, an election policy, or the manner in which an election is conducted, the President of the Senate, on behalf of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, on behalf of the House of Representatives, have standing to intervene as a party on behalf of their respective bodies, to file an amicus brief, or to provide evidence or argument, written or oral, in accordance with the federal rules of procedure, irrespective of whether any other officer of the State has appeared in the action.
 - (C) A federal court presiding over an action that challenges the validity of an election law, an election policy, or the manner in which an election is conducted is requested to allow the President, on behalf of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, on behalf of the House of Representatives, to intervene in any such action as a party.
 - (D) The State Election Commission and the Attorney General must notify the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives within twenty-four hours of the receipt of service of a complaint that challenges the validity of an election law, an election policy, or the manner in which an election is conducted.
 - (E) In any action in which the Senate or the House of Representatives intervenes or participates pursuant to this proviso, the Senate and the House of Representatives must function independently from each other in the representation of their respective bodies, unless otherwise agreed to by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
 - (F) The Senate and House of Representatives may expend funds appropriated in this act to exercise the unconditional right set forth in subsection (A) and to sustain any other action set forth in this proviso. No county election commission may accept or expend any funds other than public funds to prepare for or to conduct elections. **(KEEP)**

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Budget Vs. Actual – Current YTD and Prior FY

| Category | Budget 25 | Actual 25 | Budget 24 | Actual 24 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Personnel Budget | \$7,025,298.00 | \$2,444,313.43 | \$6,668,283.00 | \$3,037,810.49 |
| Operating Budget | \$4,046,237.00 | \$3,052,464.55 | \$3,746,237.00 | \$4,016,491.17 |
| Elections Budget | \$6,813,000.00 | \$3,440,168.77 | \$6,063,000.00 | \$6,276,859.50 |
| Federal Budget | \$5,413,977.00 | \$- | \$5,413,977.00 | \$2,297,462.46 |
| Fringe Budget | \$1,683,548.00 | \$1,053,130.38 | \$1,521,198.00 | \$1,320,193.18 |
| Total Budget | \$24,982,060.00 | \$9,990,077.13 | \$23,412,695.00 | \$16,948,816.80 |
| Non-recurring - Elections Operations | \$11,500,000.00 | \$8,801,967.38 | | |
| Non-recurring - Federal Match | \$216,977.00 | \$- | \$216,977.00 | \$216,977.00 |
| Non-recurring - Florence County | | | \$500,000.00 | \$500,000.00 |

General and Special Carry-Forward

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|--|---|
| Statewide Carry-Forward | \$1,655,118.30 | | The funds will be used for election related expenses and to finish office projects. |
| Special | \$187,251.12 | | The funds will be used for election related expenses. |

Data or metrics highlighting efficiency and successes for the last FY with all the funds provided to agency

- **Increased Workforce Efficiency:** Allocated \$3,037,810.49 to personnel expenses, enabling the agency to fill critical positions and improve operational responsiveness.
- **Resource Utilization:** Utilized \$4,016,491.17 for operational needs, maintaining agency functions despite fluctuating demands.
- **Elections Operations:** Spent \$6,276,859.50 to support election activities, ensuring smooth operation and transparency during elections.
- **Benefits and Retention:** Invested \$1,320,193.18 to provide competitive employee benefits, aiding in staff retention.

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Administration

| Position Title | GF Filled | GF Vacant | Other Filled | Other Vacant | Total |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Agency Head | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Program Manager II | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Program Manager I | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Attorney IV | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Senior Paralegal | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Administrative Manager II | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Administrative Manager I | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| Senior Acct/Fiscal Analyst | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Administrative Coordinator I | | 3 | | | 3 |
| Administrative Coordinator II | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Administrative Assistant | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |
| Postal Center Director I | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Postal Specialist | | | 0.5 | | 0.5 |
| Total Administration | 11 | 5 | 2.5 | 0 | 18.5 |

Public Information

| Position Title | GF Filled | GF Vacant | Other Filled | Other Vacant | Total |
|--|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Program Manager II | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Public Information Director I | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Program Coord. II | 4 | | | | 4 |
| Total Public information/Training | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |

Training

| Position Title | GF Filled | GF Vacant | Other Filled | Other Vacant | Total |
|--|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Program Manager II | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Administrative Coordinator II | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Program Manager I | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Program Coordinator II | 4 | | | | 4 |
| Training Coordinator II | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Training Coordinator I | 8 | 4 | | | 12 |
| Total Public information/Training | 17 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 21 |

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Voter Services

| Position Title | GF Filled | GF Vacant | Other Filled | Other Vacant | Total |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Program Manager II | 1 | | | | 1 |
| IT Manager I | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Endpoint Tech II | 1 | | | | 1 |
| IT Counsultant I | 2 | | | | 2 |
| IT Security Specialist I | 1 | | | | 1 |
| IT Customer Support Specialist III | 7 | | | | 7 |
| IT Customer Support Specialist II | 3 | | | | 3 |
| GIS MANAGER II | 1 | 0 | | | 1 |
| Total Voter Services | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 |

Audit

| Position Title | GF Filled | GF Vacant | Other Filled | Other Vacant | Total |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Program Manager II | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Audit Manager I | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Professional Auditor | 7 | 1 | | | 8 |
| Total Audit | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 11 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Grand Total Authorized Positions | <u>62</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>2.5</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>74.5</u> |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|

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