



ELECTION REFORM 2022

20 CHANGES SC NEEDS NOW

Secure, honest elections are a bedrock of our republic. Thanks to strong state laws and aggressive legal initiatives taken to defend them (one of which was fought—and won—before the US Supreme Court) South Carolina has preempted many problems and largely avoided debacles like those experienced by our neighbors in Georgia and elsewhere.

But we can't afford to rest on our laurels: potential future fraud and federal threats to our elections loom. We have reviewed ideas from top national election lawyers, conservative scholars, and best practices from other states* to develop this list of the 20 most urgent and common sense reforms.

This is not an exhaustive list: no doubt other reforms may have merit. But with these essential pillars in place, our Palmetto State can boast the most free and fair elections in America. We urge the General Assembly to pass these critical reforms well in advance of the June 2022 party primaries to allow for implementation time. We will track legislative progress at PalmettoPromise.org when session resumes in January.

Voting in a representative democracy is a sacred trust. Safeguarding the security and integrity of our voting process must be a paramount priority. These reforms will do that.

ABSENTEE BALLOT SECURITY

1

Require a voter's DOB and last 4 digits of their SSN on absentee ballot applications and use this information along with signatures on file to verify voter's identity before a ballot is sent.

ID HB290, FL SB90 sect. 24

2

Strengthen witness ID requirements (require name, address, and phone number and verify witness' identity and signature).

3

Crack down on ballot harvesting by limiting how many absentee ballots a single person may witness and who may deliver an absentee ballot to an election office.

KS HB2183 sect. 2

4

Allow in-person no-excuse absentee voting up to 14 days prior to an election and expand the number of in-person absentee voting locations. Narrow reasons for mail-in absentee voting and ban absentee ballot drop boxes.

SC H.4150, H.3372

5

Invest in technology required to barcode and track all absentee ballot envelopes and develop a companion online dashboard to allow for real-time public reporting of requests, transmittal, and receipt of absentee ballots.

TX HB1382, UT HB70, IA SF568 sect. 42

6

Allow absentee ballot identity verification to begin at 8:30 AM the day before the election and tabulation to start at 7:00 AM on Election Day.

SC H.4150, H.3372
AL HB538

*PLEASE NOTE: Where possible, we have provided bill numbers for legislation (both **in-state** and **out-of-state**) for ease of reference. This does not imply PPI's endorsement of any bill and specific bill language cited as an exemplar may require careful revision(s).

VOTER ROLL INTEGRITY

7

Require and fund ongoing, continuous, and comprehensive accuracy updates, including merging duplicates & comparing with National Change of Address Registry.

IA SB413 sect. 25, MT SB170

8

Require state election commission to collaborate with other states to keep database current and prevent voting in more than one state (interstate).

OK SB710

9

Require all South Carolina counties to collaborate to account for deceased voters and voters moving across county lines (intrastate).

TX SB1 sect. 1.02 and sect.1.05

10

Require registrations to be compared with county tax records to ensure that the address on file is actually a residence.

TX SB1111 sect. 2

POLLING PLACE STANDARDS

11

Require poll books to include photographs of the voter from their driver's license or other state-issued photo ID. Set deadline and security standards for shifting to electronic poll books ("e-polls").

See NY Election Statute sect. 1-104-38. No state has fully implemented this reform.

12

Reinforce in statute the right of election observers/watchers to see and hear all election activity at a polling place.

TX SB1 sect. 3.03-3.06

13

Limit individuals allowed to provide assistance to a voter in casting his or her ballot, and require each individual doing so to take an oath of impartiality.

AL HB575, TX SB1. sect. 5.03

14

Allow all parties to charge filing fees and require proof of membership or participation in primaries as a condition for filing as a candidate of that party.

SC H.3372 sect. 5

15

Limit a candidate to appearing on the ballot for a particular office once, not as the nominee of multiple parties.

SC H.3261, H.3206, S.559

LEGAL & OTHER STATUTORY REFORMS

16

Ensure that the General Assembly is a "necessary party" with standing to sue other state officials who make or attempt to make unauthorized changes in state election laws.

SC S.499 sect. 2, H.3444 sect. 2
FL SB 90 sect. 1

17

Clarify in statute that a voter may seek a writ of mandamus compelling any state or local official to abide by or enforce state election laws.

18

Codify requirements for physical vote counting to begin immediately, be open to all observers, and continue without pauses until the tabulation is complete.

SD HB1125

19

Standardize in statute procedures and responsibilities of local election commissions and their relationship with the state election commission.

SC S.499, H.3444

20

Ban outside fund contributions toward election administration.

SC H.3877
TN SB1315, GA SB202 sect. 9, FL SB90 sect. 2