

S. 973

Sponsors: Senator Leventis

Companion/Similar bill(s): 4339

Prefiled in the Senate on December 13, 2005

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Judiciary**

Summary: Elections Study Commission created

A BILL

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING ARTICLE 6 TO CHAPTER 5, TITLE 7 SO AS TO CREATE THE ELECTIONS STUDY COMMISSION, TO PROVIDE FOR ITS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, TO PROVIDE FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP, TO PROVIDE FOR APPOINTMENT OF ITS MEMBERS AND ELECTION OF ITS CHAIRMAN, TO PROVIDE FOR THE TERMS OF ITS MEMBERS, AND TO REQUIRE THE COMMISSION TO MAKE A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITHIN NINETY DAYS OF EACH GENERAL ELECTION CONTAINING RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE CITIZEN-INFORMED PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 5, Title 7 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Article 6

Elections Study Commission

Section 7-5-510. (A) The Elections Study Commission is created to investigate barriers to registration and voting, error rates and voting machine reliability, review state expenditures and federal grants related to voting, and propose ways to make the electoral system more efficient, accurate, verifiable, and accessible.

(B) The commission must be composed of forty-six members, one from each county and who are registered voters in South Carolina who have evidenced a commitment to voting rights. Each commission member must be chosen by each county legislative delegation and shall elect the commission chair from among their members. The director of the State Election Commission shall serve on the commission as an ex officio, nonvoting, member.

(C) Commission members shall serve for four-year terms and may be removed, for cause, by a majority vote of the commission. Initial appointments in twenty-three counties, determined alphabetically, must be for two-year terms. A vacancy must be filled in the manner of the original appointment.

(D) A vacancy on the commission must be announced by the county legislative delegations thirty days before the election in prominent newspapers in the respective counties and through nongovernmental organizations that do nonpartisan voter advocacy work.

(E) The commission shall meet at least four times a year at times and locations to be determined by the commission chair. The commission may form subcommittees, hold public hearings and meetings as determined by the committee chair or subcommittee chairs.

(F) Commission members shall act as Voting Rights Ombudsmen for their respective counties. County election commissions and entities charged by law with registration of electors shall make the contact information of their county’s ombudsman available to citizens with complaints regarding voter registration and elections.

(G) The commission shall make a report to the Governor and the General Assembly within ninety days of each general election containing recommendations to improve citizen-informed participation in the electoral process.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.