

THE SC GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS EXTENDED ABSENTEE VOTING TO EVERYONE DURING GOVERNOR'S STATE OF EMERGENCY!

May 12, 2020

We are tremendously pleased that on May 12, 2020, the House and Senate accepted a free conference report on S.635 that extends excused absentee voting to all voters in the June primary and any runoffs for the June primary.

After several failed attempts to extend absentee voting through other measures today, late in the day both House and Senate accepted a report by the committee designated to work out differences between House and Senate versions of S.635, a bill originally intended to authorize "Drivers for a Cure" license plates.

The crucial language is: "SECTION 2. A. A qualified elector must be permitted to vote by absentee ballot in an election if the qualified elector's place of residence or polling place is located in an area subject to a state of emergency declared by the Governor and there are fewer than forty-six days remaining until the date of the election."

The amended bill also authorizes election managers to begin the process of examining return-addressed envelopes of absentee ballots on the day before the election, which will help to alleviate time pressures brought both by the new voting system and by the vastly expanded pool of those voting absentee by mail in this election.

No one should underestimate the dedication and persistence of our legislators and their staff attorneys in making this happen for the voters of South Carolina. Conference committee members who worked out this solution were representatives Gary Simrill, Todd Rutherford, and Gary Clary and senators Brad Hutto, Chip Campsen, and Shane Massey. However, it took the willingness of all to bring this to completion in the very short time available. We hope that League members will be quick to thank their legislators for doing the right thing for S.C. voters during this dangerous pandemic.

The full text of the bill is at https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess123_2019-2020/bills/635.htm.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Our members, our local Leagues, all South Carolinians who advocated for this, are greatly to be acknowledged for the work done to make this happen!