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MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK IN SC: A NATIONAL TRAGEDY AND A SOUTH CAROLINA HEARING

BRNOVICH V. DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE

These updates don't usually address national issues, but today one demands attention. This morning the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) released its decision in *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*. The court majority ruled, in essence, that voting rights protected under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act are frozen in time in 1982. Improvements in ballot access developed in the intervening decades are not protected by this court. Building on the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision that gutted Section 5, it is hard to believe that this SCOTUS values the right of all qualified electors to participate in our democracy.

SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE HEARING ON VOTER ROLLS

Yesterday Rep. Weston Newton chaired a committee hearing to review State Election Commission (SEC) procedures for maintenance of the voter registration rolls, inspired by April testimony by Laurie Zapp of Beaufort.

For those of us who have followed this issue closely for years, it was déjà vu as we heard Ms. Zapp, affiliated with the allegedly nonpartisan organization "Engage the Right" (<https://engagetheright.com>), testify under oath that thousands of deceased voters remain on the rolls and that she had identified cases in which

those deceased persons voted. It is the 2012-13 Zombie Voter debacle all over again, in which inadequately supported accusations were made with immense conviction. However, there was SEC testimony that examination of Ms. Zapp's claims has not revealed any evidence of actual cases of deceased voters participating in elections. This is no surprise to those of us who have followed this issue for many years.

Those who testified were supposedly confined to three minutes speaking. This was true for those of us representing LWVSC, Carolina for All, and the NAACP LDF. However, during the question period Ms. Zapp and her associates were encouraged to vent at great length. The meeting lasted about six hours as we heard that we must question election results and the integrity of the ballot because there was "something not quite right" about voter totals for President Biden and that Lindsey Graham could not possibly have been legitimately elected because "no true conservative would vote for him." We were also told that South Carolina should adopt a voting system based on blockchain voting (respected election cybersecurity experts are united in loathing this idea).

The substantive portion of the hearing involved discussion by agency officials of ways to improve information exchange to update rolls more promptly. The outcome of the hearing was a resolution by the committee that the agencies should continue to pursue those efforts. SEC will explore the possibility of acquiring Social Security death information directly from the Social Security Administration rather than through DHEC. That would be the only positive contribution of this effort, but since dead people haven't been voting anyway, it will not represent a major change for the South Carolina electorate.

The committee gave no consideration to recommendations made by the LWVSC and supported by Carolina for All and LDF testimony.

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