

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK IN SC

# Network Update

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'  
OF SOUTH CAROLINA



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## Redistricting Litigation and Elections Bills

### Redistricting

The NAACP and ACLU have added the South Carolina Congressional map to their federal lawsuit. We expect relatively rapid action since the court is aware that primary filing is scheduled by statute for mid-March. The League of Women Voters is not active in the litigation but supports the efforts of these partner organizations.

### Voting and Elections

The League supports no-excuse early voting, so long as it is implemented in an accessible and secure manner. The most important recent development in that area is filing yesterday by Speaker Jay Lucas of H.4919, with many co-sponsors. It is a development from Rep. Brandon Newton's earlier bill H.4150. Some problems identified in that 2021 bill have been corrected while other problematic features have been added. An initial analysis shows that the bill includes the following provisions:

§7-13-25 adds a two-week period preceding each general election to cast an early in-person ballot without excuse. The period of early voting begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. on each day of the early voting period, excluding Sunday, until the conclusion of the early voting period at 6:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately prior to the general election.

A formula is provided to establish early voting locations for general elections in each county. This formula improves on H.4150 by considering not just county population but also geography, so that large low-density counties would not be penalized. However, it also requires that early polling locations be at least 10 miles apart from one another and that the county election office be one of these offices. These provisions would ensure especially crowded polling places in urban areas with substantial minority populations. Also, the primary county election offices in Columbia and Charleston are very badly suited to serve in this role. This increases the potential for overcrowded polling places with voter delays in some of the state's larger cities.

§7-10-10 and §7-130329(D) prohibit multi-party candidates as well as candidates running for multiple offices.

§7-15-320 is amended to provide that persons must be absent for vacation or business during both the early voting period and election day to qualify for excused absentee voting.

§7-15-340 requires that absentee ballot applications include voters' driver's license or other government issued photo ID number. A similar provision in Texas has led to rejection of 20-50% of absentee ballot provisions when voters have provided a government ID number not on file with the elections office.

§7-15-385 requires that authorized returnees provide government-issued photo identification when returning ballots to election offices.

§7-15-420 requires that absentee ballot tabulations must not be reported until polls close on election day.

Again, the League enthusiastically supports no-excuse early voting, but it must be implemented in a sound and non-discriminatory way. We are also concerned about provisions that increase the probability that absentee ballots are rejected, especially when there is no provision for "notice-and-cure," a process to let voters know that their ballot may be rejected and allow them to correct the problem.

We hope that all of you will follow this and other voting and election bills to work for secure and accessible elections administered fairly and equitably.

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