

2016 Second Extraordinary Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 8

BY REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the secretary of state to examine the feasibility and advisability of allowing a person who appears in person at the office of the registrar of voters during the early voting period to register to vote and to vote on the same day and to include his findings and recommendations in the report required to be filed prior to January 1, 2017, pursuant to R.S. 18:135.1.

WHEREAS, elections are a fundamental part of federal, state, and local government; they allow citizens to exercise their right to vote and thereby to participate in the government of their country, state, and community; and

WHEREAS, voting is therefore a civic duty of paramount importance; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana and the Louisiana Election Code require a person to be registered to vote in order to participate in an election; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Election Code currently provides that voter registration records close thirty days prior to an election; and

WHEREAS, this has been the case for the majority of the time that Louisiana has provided for voter registration; and

WHEREAS, the legislature changed the timing of the close of voter registration records in the 2016 Regular Session; and

WHEREAS, beginning February 1, 2017, voter registration records will close twenty days prior to an election for those who register to vote online; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Election Code provides that any qualified voter may vote in person during the early voting period; and

WHEREAS, early voting is conducted at the main offices of registrars of voters, at branch offices of registrars, and at certain additional locations designated by the secretary of state; and

WHEREAS, the early voting period is fourteen to seven days prior to the election; and

WHEREAS, the voter registration records, therefore, are closed prior to early voting; and

WHEREAS, R.S. 18:135.1 requires the secretary of state to examine all of the issues regarding shortening the time period between the close of voter registration and the election, including the availability and use of new voting technology and equipment, any necessary procedural changes relative to voter registration, the conduct of the election, and whether or not it is feasible to shorten the period of time between the close of voter registration and the election; and

WHEREAS, this provision of law also requires the secretary of state to submit a report to the governmental affairs committees of the legislature at least every other year; the initial report was due January 1, 2007; and

WHEREAS, allowing a person who appears at the office of the registrar of voters during the early voting period to register to vote and to vote on the same day could increase citizen participation in the electoral process and at the same time protect the integrity of the electoral process.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the secretary of state to examine the feasibility and advisability of allowing a person who appears in person at the office of the registrar of voters during the early voting period to register to vote and to vote on the same day and to include his findings and recommendations in the report required to be filed prior to January 1, 2017, pursuant to R.S. 18:135.1.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of state.