



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

May 15, 2015

Secretary Kenneth W. Detzner
Department of State
R.A. Gray Building, Room 316
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

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Dear Secretary Detzner:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, and under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Florida Constitution, I do hereby approve of and transmit Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 228, enacted during the 117th Session of the Legislature of Florida, during the Regular Session of 2015 and entitled:

An act relating to Online Voter Registration...

It is with some hesitation that I have signed Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 228 into law.

Serious concerns were expressed during the course of the legislative session regarding the implementation of an online voter registration system. I am thankful that the House of Representatives amended the legislation on the floor to add further safeguards, and while I support this legislation, there remain some concerns regarding its implementation.

My initial concern relates to the timing of required deliverables. The legislation does not implement an online voter registration system until 2017, but does require the Secretary of State to begin providing deliverables prior to 2017. These requirements coincide with Department of State's ("Department") ongoing efforts to modernize the Florida Voter Registration System. This system has been experiencing maintenance issues, which election supervisors have rightly cited as a challenge to their duties. As a result, the Department has expedited work to replace equipment and programming.

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The legislation also requires the Department to submit a report to the Legislature at the beginning of 2016, which should highlight how preparing for online voter registration has coincided with the changes to equipment and programming for the run-up to the 2016 Presidential election.

Another concern relates to cyber security because added technology results in added challenges and vulnerabilities. Cyber-attacks are on the front pages almost every day, and fraud and identification theft issues arise whenever a new avenue for information transmittal is created. While these challenges exist, I am confident that the Department and the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will act carefully and prudently in developing needed protection for citizen information.

Despite these real world concerns, I agree that we must do everything possible to encourage 100 percent participation in elections, with zero percent fraud. That is why the Department will develop an implementation plan and work with the Legislature and election supervisors to ensure this law is implemented successfully.

Thanks to the Legislature's election reforms in 2013, we were able to both expand access and execute one of Florida's most well-run elections in 2014. It is in that spirit of collaboration that we look forward to continuing to make improvements that build on our success.

For the reasons stated above, I hereby sign into law Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 228.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Rick Scott
Governor