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Voter Registration Advisory Board
Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting
March 25, 2009

The regular meeting of the Voter Registration Advisory Board was convened by Chairman Mike Gomez at approximately 2:15pm at the office of the Secretary of State in Montgomery. Members present were Mike Gomez, Lynda Hairston, Benjamin Jones, Mike Smith, Curtis Travis and Fran Whitaker. Others present were Secretary of State Beth Chapman, Jean Brown, Ed Packard and Adam Thompson.

Secretary Chapman provided an update on HB711, a bill that would assist military personnel stationed overseas vote by absentee ballot. She reported that the bill had been approved by the state House of Representatives and was sent to the Senate. She also reported on several bills that would, if approved, modify the appointment process for members of the Boards of Registrars in certain counties: Chilton (HB731), Russell (HB707) and Walker (HB354). Shelby County was identified as another county that was considering changing the appointment process for Registrars.

Chairman Gomez called the meeting to order and welcomed the members.

Mr. Travis made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 15, 2007, meeting. Mr. Packard, Supervisor of Voter Registration for the Secretary of State's office, reminded the members that these minutes were on the agenda for consideration at the previous scheduled meeting, March 25, 2008. However, attendees at that meeting did not constitute a quorum for conducting business. After a second by Mr. Jones, the motion carried.

Mr. Packard discussed the postcard verification program required by state law and its purpose as a tool in maintaining accurate in the statewide voter registration list. He outlined the logistics and costs for mailing the required notices to approximately 3,000,000 registered voters. He said that the first mailing in the program was completed January 31, 2009, and Registrars were processing the undeliverable postcards. He said the second mailing in the program would be sent later in the spring.

Mr. Packard informed the members that he was working with the Local Government Records Commission (LGRC) and Registrars to update the Records Disposition Authority (RDA) for Boards of Registrars to account for changes in state laws and procedures. He explained that the revised RDA should be ready for consideration by the LGRC at its summer meeting with a goal of lifting the moratorium on destruction of records by Registrars once the new RDA is ready for implementation.

Mr. Thompson provided information on the performance of the statewide voter registration system in the general election. He said the system performed well although some issues had been identified due to the increased workload generated by the high-profile presidential

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election. He also updated the Board on the secondary data center, currently housed in the Folsom building in the capitol complex in Montgomery.

Mr. Thompson further reported that the Secretary of State is exploring a program with the Board of Pardons and Paroles to receive notices from that Board when an individual has received a restoration of voting rights.

Mrs. Hairston raised the issue of the voter registration deadline and its impact on Registrars and election preparation, especially in the context of high registration levels as experienced in the last general election. She stated that Registrars need more time than the current close of registration permits for processing forms and finalizing the county voter list. Mr. Travis said that additional staff should be provided to Registrars offices to assist with the processing of forms. He suggested that the state should consider providing funding the additional staff.

Members conducted a general discussion of Registrar appointments.

Members discussed possible dates for the next meeting and suggested June 3 and June 10.

With no other business pending, Chairman Gomez adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by
Ed Packard