

Quarterly Report

April 2018



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Federal Judge Dismisses Lawsuit Against the Photo ID Law



Secretary Merrill wants to hear from you! Send him an email at John.Merrill@sos.alabama.gov.

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Secretary Merrill Attends the NASS Winter Conference



Secretary of State's Office Hosts the 4th Annual International Adoption Day Celebration



Secretary Merrill Visits with Alabamians Across the State



Federal Judge Dismisses Lawsuit Against the Photo ID Law

Alabama Secretary of State John H. Merrill is excited to announce that U.S. District Judge L. Scott Coogler has issued a 69-page ruling dismissing a lawsuit regarding Alabama's Photo ID Law. This ruling came as a result of a lawsuit that was filed by the Alabama NAACP and the Greater Birmingham Ministries, which charged that the Photo ID Law was created with a racially discriminatory purpose and violated the Voting Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution.

Secretary Merrill has worked tirelessly to ensure that every Alabamian has access to a Photo ID and that Alabama's only goals when it comes to the administration of elections are to ensure that every Alabamian has access to participate in a secure elections process. The Judge indicated in his ruling that, "it is so easy to get a Photo ID in Alabama, no one is prevented from voting."

Judge Coogler went on to assert that the ways in which Secretary Merrill has implemented the Photo ID Law provide proof that Secretary John H. Merrill is committed to ensuring every eligible Alabamian is afforded the opportunity to participate in the electoral process and to determine the people that represent them at the local, state, and federal level.

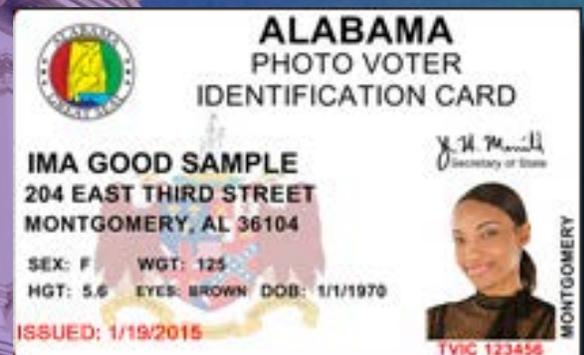
In regards to the ruling, Alabama Secretary of State John H. Merrill stated the following: "This ruling adds to the growing consensus from people all over the state and nation that we should begin to look to Alabama as a leader in the area of free, fair, and secure elections."

If you would like to obtain a free photo ID in Alabama, visit
<http://sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/photo-voter-id/obtain-free-photo-voter-id>

To Qualify for a Free Photo Voter ID:

- 1) Must be a Registered Voter in Alabama
- 2) Provide ONE of the following:
 - ~Birth Certificate
 - ~Marriage Certificate
 - ~Official School Record
 - ~Military Record
 - ~Non-Valid Photo ID (expired license, student or employee ID, etc.)

Do I Qualify???



Secretary Merrill Attends the NASS Winter Conference

The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) held its annual Winter conference in Washington, D.C. from February 16th through 19th in 2018. During the conference, Secretary Merrill attended a variety of informative meetings, such as the Executive Board Meeting held on the 16th to discuss election integrity and security with the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, a classified intelligence briefing on the integrity of the 2016 General Election, as well as the NASS Voter Participation Committee to discuss National Voter Registration Day and the public's attitude towards election administration. The conference also provided opportunities to discuss and learn about the establishment of standards for remote notarization in jurisdictional standards through the Remote Notarization Task Force, legislation on the collection of beneficial ownership in transferring business record data across state lines through the State Business Services Meeting, and the National Guard's availability to assist with elections and pending legislation in the U.S. Senate about secure elections through the NASS Elections Committee. Each year, all NASS members have the opportunity to nominate an individual or group to receive the Margaret Chase Smith American Democracy Award for acts of political courage. This year, the award was presented to "The Little Rock Nine," who was nominated by Arkansas Secretary of State Mark Martin. The group is known for the members' stance against discrimination and segregation in the Fall of 1957 when they enrolled as students at Central High School in Arkansas, and due to their courageous efforts, a nationwide, positive change ensued. Secretary Merrill and Mrs. Cindy Merrill were pleased to have the opportunity to meet four of the members at the conference, as they received their well-deserved award. (*See center photo).



International Adoption Day 2018



Secretary Merrill introduces the guest speakers at the beginning of the ceremony.



Secretary Merrill and guest speaker Lydia Martin
Photography by Dionne Whetstone



The McCullers Family
Photography by Dionne Whetstone



The Price Family
Photography by Dionne Whetstone



The Tuck Family & Representative Paul Beckman
Photography by Dionne Whetstone



Reception in Secretary Merrill's Office
Photography by Dionne Whetstone

The Secretary of State's Office hosted the 4th annual International Adoption Day celebration on January 29, 2018. The ceremony took place at the State Capitol Building's Old House Chamber in Montgomery, and Secretary Merrill was pleased to honor three more families for their newest, precious additions.: The McCullers Family, The Price Family, and The Tuck Family. After Secretary Merrill delivered the welcome and introduction, Yulisa Royston, a senior of Hewitt-Trussville High School, who was adopted from Guatemala at age six, led the Pledge of Allegiance, which was followed by a moment of prayer led by Pastor Chris Erwin of the Church of the Highlands in Montgomery. Josh Caldwell, the International Director of Lifeline Children's Services and an adoptive parent of two, attended the ceremony with his wife, Staci, and their sons (pictured on cover), and delivered remarks on the services that Lifeline provides to families seeking to adopt internationally. Afterwards, Secretary Merrill was pleased to introduce Lydia and Sondra Martin, a junior of Hewitt-Trussville High School and her mother, respectively, who shared their heartwarming international adoption experience. Each family received a congratulatory certificate signed by Secretary Merrill and Governor Kay Ivey, and once the ceremony concluded, all the families, guest speakers, and audience members were invited to the Secretary of State's Office for a reception with refreshments provided by Jared and Sarah McCrory of First Baptist Church's Children's Hope. The families were also invited to attend a free, private tour of the State Capitol Building and the Archives and History Museum.

Recognizing that his office is integral in the process that allows numerous international adoptions to occur, Secretary Merrill began International Adoption Day in January 2015 to celebrate and congratulate the families in their selfless efforts to adopt internationally. Hundreds of Alabama citizens decide to increase their families by offering their loving homes to children from other countries that are party to the Hague Convention and beyond. These countries require specific documentation that must be authenticated or certified by the Alabama Secretary of State's Office before granting the adoptions of their children.

The fifth annual International Adoption Day celebration will take place in January 2019.

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Secretary Merrill Visits Alabamians Across the State



Secretary Merrill & Ukrainian visitors at The Ministry of Bridges of Faith International in the Bridge Stone Prayer and Retreat Center in Chilton County. January 11, 2018



Secretary Merrill & Mrs. Merrill met with singer Taylor Hicks in Birmingham at Saw's Juke Joint to discuss his feature and participation in the next series of voter registration and photo ID promotional posters and commercials. February 20, 2018



Open House and ribbon-cutting dedication of the new Thompson High School in Alabaster. February 24, 2018



Visit with the Director General of the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office of Atlanta, Vincent Jing-Yen Liu. March 22, 2018

As a means to increase transparency and extend the services of the Secretary of State's Office to all Alabamians, Secretary Merrill's annual goal is to travel to each of Alabama's 67 counties at least once a year to speak to various groups of all ages, which includes but is not limited to fourth grade classes, graduation ceremonies, dinners, award presentations, and more.

The following list contains a select few of Secretary Merrill's visits from around the state for the **January through March 2018** quarter.

- Appeared as a guest on The Ford Faction Yellowhammer News Radio Network to discuss the recent Alabama Senate campaign and election. January 3, 2018
- Spoke to the second grade students at Cold Springs Elementary School in Cullman County to discuss the SOS Office. January 8, 2018
- Visited the Gulf Shores Law Enforcement Shooting Complex in Baldwin County to observe the active shooter/injured shooter training exercises for the law-enforcement officers from the Sheriff's Office and various local police departments. January 10, 2018
- Spoke to Ukrainian visitors at The Ministry of Bridges of Faith International in the Bridge Stone Prayer and Retreat Center in Chilton County. January 11, 2018
- Spoke to the members of the Greater Birmingham Republican Women about the SOS Office accomplishments and the U.S. Senate Election. January 15, 2018
- Spoke to the members of the Alabama Society of CPAs Montgomery Chapter at the Montgomery Country Club. January 16, 2018
- Spoke to the members of the Alabama Probate Judges Association at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery. January 18, 2018
- Served as the keynote speaker at the Madison Chamber of Commerce monthly meeting. February 8, 2018
- Interviewed by WVUA TV 23 in Montgomery to discuss the accomplishments of the SOS Office and Secretary Merrill's presentation to the members of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama during their Montgomery Drive-In. February 8, 2018
- Spoke to the seventh grade students at Phil Campbell High School in Franklin County. February 12, 2018
- Attended the Open House and ribbon-cutting for the new Crimson Care medical facility on Skyland Boulevard. February 14, 2018
- Met with singer Taylor Hicks in Birmingham at Saw's Juke Joint to discuss his feature and participation in the next series of voter registration and photo ID promotional posters and commercials. February 20, 2018
- Served as the keynote speaker at the Southeast WOW Worlds of Work Leadership Breakfast, which is an annual event that promotes technical and vocational education to students. February 21, 2018
- Met with Astronaut Tracy Dyson during the NASA Day breakfast in Montgomery. February 22, 2018
- Attended the Open House and ribbon-cutting dedication of the new Thompson High School in Alabaster. February 24, 2018
- Spoke to the Republican Executive Committee members from each Alabama congressional district prior to the Alabama GOP state executive committee meeting. February 24, 2018
- Spoke to Halcyon Elementary School in Montgomery during their Read Across America program. March 4, 2018
- Spoke to the Youth Leadership of Dallas and Youth Leadership of Marengo Counties at the RSA Plaza. March 6, 2018
- Visited with and spoke to a group of students from Auburn University. March 6, 2018
- Spoke to the Cadets in the Civil Air Patrol at their regular meeting at the Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport. March 6, 2018
- Spoke during the Buy Alabama's Best press conference at the State Capitol. March 7, 2018
- Spoke to the CEE 320 class at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. March 8, 2018
- Attended the Boy Scouts of America American Values luncheon at the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center. March 16, 2018
- Attended the retirement celebration for Chief Examiner Ron Jones at the State House. March 21, 2018
- Visited with the Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office of Atlanta Vincent Jing-Yen Liu at the State Capitol to discuss Secretary Merrill's geo-political visit to Taiwan in 2015. March 22, 2018

Quarterly Accomplishments

- As of **March 30, 2018**, there are **3,359,573** registered voters in the State of Alabama. **943,353** Alabamians have registered to vote since Secretary Merrill took office in **January 2015**.
- The SOS Office released its **third Annual Report** in January 2018.
- All SOS staff members have attended the annual **ethics training meeting**, which is a requirement set by Secretary Merrill to ensure that the staff understands and follows the state's ethics laws.
- The Business Entities Division has provided a new, downloadable form online called the **Certification of Reinstatement for a Domestic LLC**.
- Two out of Alabama's 67 counties provide **online business filings** for Domestic LLCs and For-Profit Corporations.
- The application for **trademarks, trade names, and service marks** was updated on the SOS website.
- The search functionality for **locating a UCC lien online** was expanded.
- Secretary Merrill worked with the State Comptroller to **authorize the reimbursement of 50%** to the counties who use the electronic **Poll Books** during an election reimbursable by the state.



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Attention All Undergraduate Students!

Secretary of State John Merrill is looking for interns to work within the office during the **Summer of 2018**. If you are **18 years or older** and currently enrolled as an **undergraduate student**, or if you know someone who fits this criteria and may be interested in applying, please see our internship application at <http://sos.alabama.gov/sites/default/files/form-files/sosInternshipPacket.pdf>.

FAQs

When is the deadline to apply?

All applications and requested materials must be received by **April 30, 2018**.

Are the essay and recommendation letter mandatory?

Yes. Applicants who do not submit a completed essay along with at least one letter of recommendation from their school will be immediately disqualified. Essays that do not adhere to the assigned topic and word count are also subject to immediate disqualification.

Is this a paid internship?

Yes. All interns will be paid on an hourly basis. The pay will be approximately **\$8.03 per hour worked**.

How long will I have to work?

The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and each employee and intern is allowed a one-hour lunch break each day. Interns must set their work schedules with the Chief of Staff to fit within this time frame. Regardless of the number of hours worked each day and week, all interns are required to work at least 360 total hours (9 weeks) to complete the internship.

Do I have to be a resident of Alabama to apply?

No.

Where can I stay if I don't reside within or near Montgomery?

Please see the page on "Housing Arrangements" in the internship packet. You will be responsible for arranging your housing.

If chosen, which Secretary of State Division will I be assigned?

Your assigned division depends on your preference, as well as the demand of assistance needed within the office. Most interns work within the Elections and/or Executive Divisions, but some may work within Business Services, the Legal staff, or Information Technology, if they prefer.

I'm interested in applying but would prefer to complete my internship during the Fall, Winter, or Spring. Is this possible?

Yes. If you're chosen and would like to complete your internship during another time within the year due to a conflicting schedule or other issue, we will make the necessary arrangements.

If you have additional questions, email Brittany Hamilton at Brittany.Hamilton@sos.alabama.gov or call the Secretary of State's Office at 334-242-7200.

Internships are limited! Apply today!

Office Contact Info.

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Montgomery, AL 36130

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Suite S-105
334-242-7200

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State Capitol
Second Floor
334-242-7210

Finance
State Capitol
Second Floor
334-353-2022

Alabama State House
11 South Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130

Business Entities
State House
Suite 119
334-242-5324

UCC
State House
Room 220
334-242-5970

Information Systems
State House
Room 125
334-242-7222

Government Support / Authentications & Trademarks
State House
Rooms 224 & 226
334-242-7224 / 334-242-5325

Don't Miss **Volume 4 Issue 2**,
Coming **July 2018!**