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Mike Shower

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SB 116 -Sponsor Statement

Election Integrity

“An Act relating to elections and voter registration; designating as a class C felony the intentional opening or tampering with certain election materials; and providing for an effective date.”

Election integrity matters. Every vote counts. Gaps in the current law have changed the outcome of recent elections. In 2019 one vote was not counted because of the automatic mandatory voter registration on the Permanent Fund application. Other elections in the recent past have been called into question because of ambiguous election protocol policy. Patriots have given their last full measure for the sacred right to elect our representatives in our republic. We hold that sacrifice sacred.

SB 116 codifies strict chain of custody protocols into the handling of ballots and election reports. It mandates that all ballots be in a strict chain of custody all the way back to a central location where they can be destroyed after all ballots have been accounted for by the Elections Board. Current practice allows ballots to be destroyed in precinct without central accounting.

SB 116 requires the director to establish in regulation, best practices for chain of custody protocols, and provides affected parties reasonable notice for ballot handling observation opportunities. It establishes an election offence hotline number that is conspicuously posted at polling areas and on the election privacy envelopes. It “deputizes” citizens and every voter becomes empowered, if they see something, they can now effectively say something. It requires election workers to immediately notify the Director of any irregularities, then allows for an audit of ballots in precinct, immediately after the election;

There are no better checks and balances than empowering voters themselves to become election watchdogs.

Other Highlights in the bill:

- Requires reasonable notice to affected parties of ballot handling out of chain of custody;
- Eliminates mandatory PFD voter’s registration and converts it to “opt in”;
- Codifies the Division of Elections to notify voters if their ballot was not counted;
- Does not allow the Director or Lt. Governor to certify the results until every ballot has been accounted for;
- Requires electronic and paper ballots to be destroyed at a single location, only after the director expressly authorizes destruction and subsequently certifies via public notary, that the ballots and paper records have been destroyed;
- Prohibits facsimile voting;
- Makes it a Class C Felony to intentionally open or tamper with ballots without the express authorization of the Director