



HENRY McMASTER  
GOVERNOR

March 8, 2021

To the Members of the General Assembly,

We have a solemn duty to protect the integrity of the voting process in South Carolina.

The right to vote is the single most important right afforded by the United States Constitution. As governor, I am committed to ensuring that all eligible South Carolinians can freely exercise that right with confidence in the fairness and integrity of the electoral process. As such, I am urging the General Assembly to immediately pass H.3444 and send it to my desk for signature. This critical legislation will enhance accountability at the State Election Commission and safeguard the voting process against the threat of fraud, which – if left unchecked – could do permanent damage to our republican form of government.

On September 15, 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation to allow universal absentee voting for the November general election, which I promptly signed into law. By preserving the requirement of a witness signature, the bill struck a good balance between protecting South Carolinians during the COVID-19 pandemic and maintaining the integrity of the voting process. Yet, while the witness signature requirement provided a basic measure of security, we learned that some counties were employing a hodgepodge of different and inconsistent processes. Our state's election laws must be applied fairly and consistently statewide.

Millions of Americans hold legitimate concerns about the integrity of the 2020 election. Though there were no reported voting irregularities in South Carolina, voter fraud remains a persistent and pervasive threat to the strength of our democracy. The Heritage Foundation – which maintains an Election Fraud Database documenting proven and prosecuted instances of election fraud – cites 1,311 recent cases of voter fraud across the country, resulting in more than 1,100 criminal convictions. While inexhaustive, the list serves as a salient reminder: our system is vulnerable, and we must remain resolute in our efforts to detect and deter fraud in every instance.

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H.3444 would provide for more robust oversight of South Carolina elections, giving the State Election Commission the authority to standardize – and ensure the uniformity of – election practices in all 46 counties. It would also enhance accountability at the Commission by adding four members appointed by the General Assembly.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt the lives of millions across the United States – and as governors and legislatures in other states continue to implement radical, unprecedented changes to our American system and way of life – South Carolina must take steps to maintain and strengthen public confidence and demonstrate its commitment to free and fair elections. I urge you to adopt H.3444 without delay.

Yours very truly,



Henry McMaster