

Action Alert #5 – Senate Bills as of 2/1/15

This short session of the GA has been moving incredibly fast. I hear comments from "old-timers" that they do not remember any previous session that is as rushed as this one. We are all stretched to the limit. Extra subcommittee meetings have been scheduled less than 24 hours in advance for early morning hours – 6:30, 7:00 and 7:15. It has certainly been difficult for legislators to be in two places at once – to present their own bills and to hear bills in their assigned committee(s).

There is now the large need for action ASAP. The Senate committees have managed to get bills to the full Senate for debate much faster than the House. I hope I will have reports faster and farther ahead. The House generally has way too many members who look unfavorably on bills that we believe are helpful to voters.

I hope you have time to take action on more than one of these. The list is huge.

MONDAY afternoon on the Senate Floor:

SUPPORT: Senate Redistricting bill: SJ233 (Howell) is scheduled for its Third reading on the Senate floor so there will be debate Monday. Call Senators to vote in favor.

SUPPORT: SJ216 (Ebbin) is the **Equal Rights Amendment!** It is scheduled for its Third reading so significant debate is expected. It barely passed out of committee 8 to 7 so contact your Senator now.

SUPPORT: A Pilot program for Vote Centers: SB691 (Deeds/Vogel) is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor Monday afternoon. Ask Senators to vote YES and send this bill to the House for action. Remind them that this is just a PILOT program and needs approval by local officials before it would be used. It would be great to have just ONE jurisdiction allowed to try it.

SUPPORT: Vote YES on SB816 (Howell) to eliminate the requirement to explain the nature of a voter's religious obligation for voting absentee. This is just one very small step toward eliminating the need for excuses to vote absentee. Even one small step is important.

SUPPORT: SJ238 (Dance) proposes a Constitutional amendment that allows the General Assembly to pass laws to provide for restoration of nonviolent felons' civil rights, including to vote. It retains the authority of the Governor to restore felons' rights. This bill passed in committee 12 to 1, but a very strong message of support is still needed for the full Senate to pass it.

SUPPORT: No Excuse Absentee Voting for voters 65 and older: SB719 (McWaters). There was significant bipartisan support in the committee but a huge effort is necessary to get a majority in favor on the Senate Floor!

Not Yet Scheduled:

These Senate redistricting bills that passed in the Senate will be heard in House Committees so start contacting Delegates for **support:**

SB1000 (Lewis) This is not a constitutional amendment proposal. It would establish a temporary advisory commission.

SB824 (Miller) This provides for a statewide referendum in November 2015 that would give the public the opportunity to demonstrate their preference on adopting an amendment to the Constitution that would establish an independent redistricting commission, – passed the Senate and referred to House P&E.

OPPOSE: Photo ID for a mail-in Absentee ballot request. HB1318 (Campbell) would set up an increased workload for registrars and a system that is impossible to implement because the registrars do not have photos in the file for comparison with what a voter would send. This could cause a delay in sending a ballot to a voter and a late arrival of the return of the completed ballot. We are watching for it to be scheduled on the House floor now that it has been reported (16 to 6) out of the House P&E Committee. Call Delegates now before this is scheduled for a full House vote.

Scheduled Tuesday at 4:00 PM so call now:

SUPPORT: Prevent last-minute removal of voters from voter rolls. SB1337 (McEachin) prohibits periodic voter list maintenance within 90 days of ALL primary and general elections, not just Federal elections. It requires proper use of voter data from other states. Call these Senators who will hear the bill Tuesday afternoon: [Vogel \(Chairman\)](#), [Martin](#), [Howell](#), [Deeds](#), [Obenshain](#), [Edwards](#), [Smith](#), [Carrico](#), [Reeves](#), [Garrett](#), [Alexander](#), [Miller](#), [Cosgrove](#), [Dance](#)