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Virginia Department of Elections  
Susan Beals, Commissioner  
Washington Building  
1100 Bank Street, First Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219  
May 12, 2023

Via Electronic Submission

Dear Commissioner Beals,

The League of Women Voters of Virginia is deeply concerned that Virginia has withdrawn from the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC). ERIC has been considered the most effective tool for states to maintain clean voter lists, and even recently our Attorney General cited the effectiveness of this organization. With this withdrawal, Virginia has undermined its laudable efforts to clean up its voter lists in preparation for the introduction of a new voter registration system. We urge the administration to reconsider this counterproductive action and provide more information on how Virginia will replace the vital services ERIC provided.

The reasons offered in Commissioner Beals' May 11, 2023 letter to Shane Hamlin, Executive Director of ERIC, argue for expanding states' membership in the multistate consortium and working with other member-states to resolve any issues in the collection and use of voter information, rather than abandoning a valuable tool. The letter offers several reasons, which bear scrutiny.

- One of the reasons given for membership in ERIC is that states can share the hefty expenses of such reports as the Limited Access Death Master File produced by the Social Security Administration. Without a collective compact to share such expenses, Virginia would have to pay more for these resources or rely on less comprehensive sources of information.
- A major concern is the collection of voter registration information from neighboring states, as required by Virginia Code §24.2-404.4. According to the Department of Elections 2022 Annual List Maintenance

Report, two of those states, North Carolina and Tennessee, have not complied. West Virginia recently withdrew from ERIC. The others, Maryland and Kentucky, and the District of Columbia, remain members of ERIC but, having withdrawn, Virginia can no longer obtain the information from them without further effort.

- Without membership in ERIC, Virginia does not have a ready source of voter registration information from states other than our neighbors, given that people move all over the country. On the one hand, the letter mentions momentum around creating an alternative information sharing compact, yet, on the other hand, suggests that Virginia could maintain its voting list autonomously. There appears to be a conflict between these two goals.

The League supports robust, comprehensive, accurate list maintenance. We do not endorse any single tool but it does seem like a self-inflicted wound to exit an existing organization, run by its member states, that Virginia helped to found and that has served the Commonwealth well. Effort should be put toward continual improvement in the interests of both transitioning to a new voter registration and election management system and keeping the voter rolls up to date. Without a viable alternative already in existence, the League urges the administration to reconsider its withdrawal from the most effective tool in voter list maintenance.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Wake". The signature is cursive and fluid.

Deb Wake, President  
League of Women Voters of Virginia

cc: Governor Glenn Youngkin