

By Representative Richardson

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to elections; creating the  
 3           Election Reform Study Commission; providing for  
 4           appointment of members; providing for  
 5           administrative and fiscal support; authorizing  
 6           per diem and reimbursement of travel expenses;  
 7           providing for open meetings and records;  
 8           specifying duties; requiring a report;  
 9           providing for termination of the commission  
 10          upon submission of the report; providing an  
 11          effective date.

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 13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 15           Section 1. Election Reform Study Commission.--  
 16           (1) The Legislature finds that the 2000 presidential  
 17 election revealed a number of problems in the current election  
 18 process in this state and therefore has determined to form a  
 19 commission to review state election procedures, identify the  
 20 problems inherent in those procedures, take public testimony,  
 21 and recommend changes in the law to correct the problems  
 22 identified.

23           (2) The Election Reform Study Commission is created  
 24 and is assigned to the Division of Elections of the Department  
 25 of State for administrative and fiscal purposes only. In  
 26 addition, staff of the Senate Committee on Ethics and  
 27 Elections and the House Committee on Rules, Ethics, &  
 28 Elections shall provide administrative support for the  
 29 commission. The Election Reform Study Commission shall  
 30 consist of 13 members to be appointed on or before July 15,  
 31 2001, as follows:

1       (a) One member shall be the Secretary of State, or a  
2 designee thereof, who shall serve as chair.

3       (b) One member shall be the Director of the Division  
4 of Elections of the Department of State.

5       (c) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall  
6 appoint two members who are members of the House of  
7 Representatives, one of whom must be registered in the  
8 majority party in the House and the other registered in the  
9 minority party in the House.

10       (d) The President of the Senate shall appoint two  
11 members who are members of the Senate, one of whom must be  
12 registered in the majority party in the Senate and the other  
13 registered in the minority party in the Senate.

14       (e) The Governor shall appoint one member who is a  
15 member of The Florida Bar in good standing with expertise in  
16 state election law.

17       (f) The Secretary of State shall appoint two members  
18 who are registered electors of the two major political parties  
19 and who are chosen from the recommendations of organizations  
20 representing groups most adversely affected by voting  
21 irregularities during the 2000 general election.

22       (g) The President of the Florida State Association of  
23 Supervisors of Elections shall appoint four members who are  
24 supervisors of elections and who are representative of urban  
25 and rural counties and the two major political parties, at  
26 least one of whom must be an African American.

27       (3) Members of the commission shall serve without  
28 compensation, except for per diem and reimbursement of travel  
29 expenses as provided by s. 112.061, Florida Statutes. A  
30 vacancy on the commission shall be filled in the same manner  
31 as the original appointment.

1       (4) The commission shall hold its organizational  
2 meeting by August 1, 2001, and thereafter shall meet as  
3 necessary at the call of the chair at the time and place  
4 designated by the chair. A quorum is necessary for the  
5 purpose of conducting official business of the commission.  
6 The commission shall use accepted rules of procedure to  
7 conduct its meetings and shall keep a complete record of each  
8 meeting. All meetings and records of the commission shall be  
9 open and available to the public as provided by law.

10       (5) The duties of the commission, in examining the  
11 methods, systems, and procedures for voting throughout the  
12 state, shall be to consider, but not be limited to, the  
13 following:

14           (a) The establishment of a uniform statewide voting  
15 system, including the procurement of the system with state  
16 funds.

17           (b) The restriction or elimination of partisan  
18 political activity by election officials and their staff,  
19 including the Secretary of State, the Director of the Division  
20 of Elections, and each county supervisor of elections.

21           (c) A review of the provisions establishing the  
22 submission deadlines for election returns, including provision  
23 of specific applicability to the protest and contest of  
24 election procedures.

25           (d) A review of the provisions authorizing manual  
26 recounts, including adoption of specific standards required  
27 under any current voting system recommended for retention or  
28 any uniform statewide voting system recommended for purchase  
29 or development.

30           (e) A review of the registration process, including  
31 review of the registration procedures of the Department of

1 Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the various voter  
2 registration agencies and review of the procedures for  
3 removing the names of voters from the registration books who  
4 are deceased or have been convicted of a felony or adjudicated  
5 mentally incapacitated with respect to voting.

6 (f) A review of the procedures for identifying,  
7 instructing, and assisting voters in the polling place.

8 (g) A documentation, through public testimony, of the  
9 history of voting problems in the state to determine their  
10 degree and scope.

11 (6) The commission shall develop recommendations,  
12 based on its findings, to reform election procedures in this  
13 state. The commission shall report its recommendations,  
14 including any proposed legislation, to the Governor, the  
15 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
16 Representatives by December 30, 2001. Upon submission of the  
17 report, the commission shall be terminated.

18 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
19 law.

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22 HOUSE SUMMARY

23  
24 Creates the Election Reform Study Commission to review  
25 state election procedures and make recommendations for  
26 the improvement of such procedures. Provides for  
27 appointment of members. Authorizes per diem and  
28 reimbursement of travel expenses. Provides for  
29 administrative and fiscal support. Provides for open  
30 meetings and records. Requires a report, including any  
31 proposed legislation, to the Governor, the President of  
the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
Representatives, and provides for termination of the  
commission upon submission of the report.