Government Administration and Elections Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

11:00 AM in Room 1C of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 11:14 AM by Chairman, Sen. Flexer M. S29.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Flexer M. S29; Haskell W. S26; Maroney J. S14; Sampson R. S16

Representatives: Blumenthal M. 147; Fox D. 148; France M. 042; Haddad G. 054; Harding S. 107; Labriola D. 131; Mastrofrancesco G. 080; McCarthy Vahey C. 133; Perillo J. 113; Phipps Q. 100; Santiago H. 084; Winkler M. 056

Absent were:

Senators:

Representatives:

I. Senator Flexer convened the meeting at 11:12 am and immediately recessed. Senator Flexer reconvened the meeting at 11:40 AM

II. No Remarks from the Chairs

III. Bills and Resolutions for Final Action

1. S.B. No. 156 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE AND ABSENTEE VOTING. (GAE) (JF)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Motion made by Representative Fox and seconded by Representative Santiago.

Representative France remarked that he is concerned about the cybersecurity issues that the Secretary of the State is working on, and
thinks that we’re not ready technologically for this bill, although he supports the effort.

Representative Mastrofrancesco expressed concern about fraud occurring with the state saving electronic signatures. Senator Haskell remarked that the purpose of this bill was to make it easier for people to get absentee ballots, and that the Secretary of the State already captures online signatures.

Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 10 Yea, 6 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.

Motion passed.

2. S.B. No. 265 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF MODERATORS AND ALTERNATE MODERATORS. (GAE) (JF)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Motion made by Representative Fox and seconded by Senator Maroney.

No discussion.

Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.

Motion passed.

3. H.J. No. 161 (COMM) RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING AND NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING. (GAE) (JFS)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JFS to the floor. Motion made by Senator Haskell and seconded by Representative Fox.

Representative France asked for the substitute language to be explained. Senator Flexer said the change is to make the question more clear and also changes how votes are delivered to the Secretary of the State’s Office. Representative France asked if there are a minimum number of early voting days stipulated in the question. Senator Flexer answered that lines 14 – 16 say yes there are. Representative France remarked that he has concerns over the required three days of early voting. He believes this takes the purview of the legislature out of it and shouldn’t be in the Constitution. Senator Flexer remarked that she is sure that the Secretary would be willing to work with Representative France regarding this.

Final Vote Tally: 16 voting, 10 Yea, 6 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.

Motion passed.
4. H.B. No. 5817 AN ACT CONCERNING OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL CHECKERS IN POLLING PLACES. (GAE)

   Item removed from agenda

5. S.J. No. 27 (COMM) RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ALLOWING FOR NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING. (GAE) (JF)

   Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Representative Fox made the motion and Representative Santiago seconded.

   Representative France said that the Town Clerks Association raised the issue of how many absentee ballots are rejected under our current system and are concerned that issuing more absentee ballots will mean more rejected ballots. Representative France believes that the absentee ballot process needs to be fixed with fewer rejections before voting in favor of a no-excuse system.

   **Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 11 Yea, 5 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.**

   **Motion Passed.**

6. S.B. No. 683 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING A PENALTY FOR LATE PAYMENTS OF STATE CONTRACTORS BY THIRD-PARTY ENTITIES. (GAE) (JF)

   Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Senator Maroney made the motion and Representative Fox seconded.

   Representative France asked which government agency would be responsible for ensuring that the goods and services were performed or received. Representative Fox answered that the agency which received the goods or services would be the ones to say whether they received said goods or services.

   **Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.**

   **Motion passed.**

7. S.B. No. 1036 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONALISM FOR ELECTIONS. (GAE) (JFS)

   Representative France commented that the substitute language adds an appointment by the majority leaders of the House and Senate, which is a positive change.

   Representative Mastrofrancesco asked for a summary as to why this study group is needed. Senator Flexer said that the Secretary of the State has said that most states administer elections on a regional basis. Representative Mastrofrancesco asked if the goal is to regionalize the registrars of voters. Senator Flexer answered that she is not sure if that is a goal. Representative
Mastrofrancesco stated that she is a proponent of local control and will be voting no on this bill.

**Final Vote Tally:** 16 Voting, 12 Yea, 4 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.  
**Motion passed.**

8. **S.B. No. 1038 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DUE TO AN EMPLOYER OTHER THAN THE STATE UNDER THE STATE CODE OF ETHICS. (GAE)**

Item removed from agenda.

9. **S.B. No. 1039 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL INTEREST. (GAE) (JF)**

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Motion was made by Representative Fox and seconded by Representative Haddad.

No discussion.

10. **S.B. No. 1040 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE EMPLOYEE CAMPAIGN. (GAE) (JFS)**

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JFS to the floor. Motion was made by Representative Fox and seconded by Representative Santiago.

Representative France asked the intention of this bill with regards to removing the campaign from the control of the Comptroller and to another campaign committee. Senator Flexer said that the Comptroller wants to figure out if the program is working or if it can work better. Representative France asked who would have oversight of this committee. Senator Flexer asked him to clarify his question. Representative France said that he doesn't see in the bill who has the oversight of the campaign committee. Senator Flexer believes the Comptroller has the oversight. Representative France said that this needs tightening up. Senator Flexer stated that she thinks this may be addressed later in the bill.

**Final Vote Tally:** 16 Voting, 10 Yea, 6 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.  
**Motion passed.**

11. **S.B. No. 1041 (RAISED) AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AUDITORS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS. (GAE) (JF)**

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Senator Maroney made the motion, Representative Santiago seconded.
Senator Flexer remarked that this is a good bill that comes from the auditors.

**Final Vote Tally:** 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.

**Motion passed.**

12. S.B. No. 1045 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND FILING OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE STATEMENTS. (GAE) (JFS)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JFS to the floor. Motion was made by Representative Fox and seconded by Senator Haskell.

Representative France stated that he believes that this bill would make the process of making an online contribution easier but said that he is opposed to the State Elections Enforcement Commission’s future vision of being the direct recipient of funds as it is not a proper role of government.

**Final Vote Tally:** 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.

**Motion passed.**

13. S.B. No. 1047 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING BALLOT ACCESS FOR PETITIONING CANDIDATES. (GAE) (JF)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Motion was made by Representative Fox and seconded by Senator Maroney.

No discussion.

**Final Vote Tally:** 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.

**Motion passed.**

14. S.B. No. 1048 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ONLINE DATABASE FOR STATE EXPENDITURES. (GAE) (JF)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Representative Haddad made the motion and was seconded by Senator Haskell.

No discussion.

**Final Vote Tally:** 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.

**Motion passed.**
15. H.B. No. 7323 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING AN EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN EXPENDITURES CLEARLY IDENTIFYING GOVERNOR OR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. (GAE) (JFS)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JFS to the floor. Motion was made by Representative Fox and seconded by Representative Santiago.

Representative France asked for a summary of the JFS language. Senator Flexer said that this language comes from the State Elections Enforcement Commission and concerns minor party chairmen.

**Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.**

**Motion passed.**

16. H.B. No. 7324 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR CIRCULATORS OF NOMINATING AND PRIMARY PETITIONS. (GAE)

Removed from agenda.

17. H.B. No. 7327 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS. (GAE) (JFS)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JFS to the floor. Representative Fox made the motion and was seconded by Representative Santiago.

No discussion.

**Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.**

**Motion passed.**

18. H.B. No. 7328 (RAISED) AN ACT REVISING CERTAIN ETHICS CODE DEFINITIONS AND GIFT PROVISIONS. (GAE) (JF)

Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Motion was made by Representative Fox and seconded by Representative Santiago.

No discussion.

**Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 16 Yea, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.**

**Motion passed.**

19. S.J. No. 28 (COMM) RESOLUTION ALLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED THE AGE OF SIXTEEN TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION AS ELECTORS AND TO BE SO ADMITTED UPON ATTAINING THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN. (GAE) (JF)
Senator Flexer called for a motion to JF to the floor. Motion was made by Representative Fox and seconded by Representative Santiago.

No discussion.

**Final Vote Tally: 16 Voting, 12 Yea, 4 Nay, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent and not voting.**

Motion passed.

IV. **ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

No announcement was made.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

Senator Flexer recessed the meeting at 12:14 PM. The votes will be held open until 4 PM at which time the meeting will be adjourned.

Nick Rogers

Maureen O'Reilly
Melissa Russell

Clerk
Assistant Clerks