



Mississippi Secretary of State's Office

SECRETARY MICHAEL WATSON

February 25, 2021

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2405

Dear Senator Hyde-Smith,

For several years, H.R. 1, the "For the People Act," has been pushed as a way to federalize our nation's elections process. My team and I continue to monitor this legislation closely and, with a new Congress, we fear this Act will take center-stage in 2021. While the reforms outlined in H.R. 1 may stem from the best of intentions, I am asking you to do what's right and oppose this Act due to its unprecedented attempt to seize control of processes that should be left to the states.

Various provisions in this Act provide new pathways for election fraud, undermine the First Amendment right to free speech through censorship of campaign activity, and restrict states' authority to conduct local elections. H.R. 1 would force states to enact same-day voter registration, universal vote-by-mail, voting drop boxes, and ballot harvesting. It even goes as far as to disrupt voter eligibility verification. While some provisions in this Act, such as online voter registration, are worth bringing to the table, it is imperative these policies are implemented and regulated at the state level. As Mississippi's Chief Elections Officer, I trust our hardworking and well-versed election officials to efficiently and securely implement these provisions far more than federal bureaucrats and politicians who do not have our best interest in mind.

As you are well aware, Mississippians overwhelmingly supported Voter ID when it was passed by a citizen-initiated constitutional amendment in 2011. H.R. 1 would create a situation that nullifies the ID requirement for federal elections, resulting in a convoluted, two-tier system. Under H.R. 1, a voter would cast a regular ballot for federal elections after completing a pre-printed statement developed by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). The EAC pre-printed statement must be available at all polling locations. Also, they would **not** be required to come back and provide a photo ID within five (5) business days. Since photo ID will still be enshrined in our constitution and state laws, a voter would still be required to go through our *current* process, which is to vote by affidavit ballot then provide a photo ID within five (5) business days at their Circuit Clerk's Office, for state and local issues. Our goal is to reduce wait times at the polls, and the multi-ballot system combined with same-day voter registration would drastically increase the amount of time it takes to vote.

We continue to work closely with our local officials and legislative leaders to enact common-sense election reforms in an effort to strengthen our elections system and ensure every eligible Mississippian can vote. Federal overreach through H.R. 1 would drastically impede our progress and send us down the wrong path. H.R. 1 is clearly not “for the people” as the Act’s title suggests. I look forward to working together to oppose this federal overreach. My team and I are available to help in any way needed.

Accept, madam, my sincere regards.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Watson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MICHAEL WATSON
Secretary of State
State of Mississippi