

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 90

SPONSOR: Senator Meek

SUBJECT: Voting System Technology Task Force

DATE: January 26, 2001 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Fox</u>	<u>Bradshaw</u>	<u>EE</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>AGG</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

Senate Bill 90 creates a temporary task force within the Department of State for the purpose of studying the issues and costs associated with developing and implementing an on-line voting system in Florida.

II. Present Situation:

Senate Bill 90 implements one of the recommendations in the committee interim project report entitled, *Strategies for Increasing Voter Participation in Florida* (October 1999). The report concluded that Internet or on-line voting appears to be the next major innovation in voting technology. It offers the *promise* of increasing voter turnout by making voting more convenient and energizing younger voters, a demographic group which historically posts the lowest voter turnout.

Several states and the federal government have either begun studying or implementing pilot projects involving Internet voting. Arizona recently used binding Internet voting for the first time in its 2000 Democratic presidential preference primary. For the 2000 Presidential general election, 84 overseas military voters (including 52 in Florida) cast eballots via the Internet as part of a pilot project between selected states and the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Senate Bill 90 creates a 21-member Voting System Technology Task Force chaired by the Secretary of State. The task force is composed of public and private members with both technical and public policy backgrounds. Specifically, membership on the task force is as follows:

- \$ Secretary of State
- \$ One Senator appointed by the Senate President
- \$ One House member appointed by the Speaker of the House
- \$ One Senator appointed by the minority leader of the Senate and one House member appointed by the minority leader of the House
- \$ Chair of the Information Service Technology Development Task Force (“IT Florida”)
- \$ One member appointed by the Governor
- \$ Two faculty members in the State University System with technical expertise, appointed by the Chancellor of the State University System
- \$ The Secretary of State shall appoint:
 - Four supervisors of elections, two from urban counties and two from rural counties
 - Two public or private technical experts
 - Four interested citizens, diverse in terms of age, race, gender, economic and other relevant demographic characteristics, including one from the Florida branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and one from the League of United Latin American Citizens
 - Two other individuals, at the Secretary’s discretion.

The task force will look at several Internet voting system options --- including those operated under the control of election officials and more expansive remote systems (involving vote from home, office, or other computer system controlled by a third party). For all types of systems examined, the task force is generally charged with addressing both technical questions (Can it be done?) as well as policy questions (Should it be done?). Specifically, the task force is charged with addressing, at a minimum, the following issues:

- \$ Security and voter fraud;
- \$ Public accessibility to the voting system (“digital divide” issues);
- \$ Voter acceptance and support for the voting system;
- \$ Costs estimates for developing and implementing pilot projects; and,
- \$ Costs and savings in development and implementation of an Internet voting system over time.

The task force must submit a written report with its recommendations to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2002.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Senate Bill 90 appropriates \$200,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of State, which includes the creation of two FTEs within the Department.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

The bill designates the chair of IT Florida, or the chair's designee, as a member of the Voting System Technology Task Force. IT Florida is dissolved by operation of law on July 1, 2001, in the absence of further legislative action. Ch. 99-354, § 11, p. 3615, Laws of Fla.

Also, the bill provides that the Chancellor of the State University System will appoint two faculty members from the State University System to serve on the Voting System Technology Task Force. If it appears likely that the Chancellor's position will be abolished as a result of governmental reorganization, it would be prudent to amend the bill to designate a different appointing authority --- possibly the Commissioner of Education.

VIII. Amendments:

None.