

ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Senator Jason Rapert
Chair

Representative Dwight Tosh
Chair

HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON STATE AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

October 7, 2022

The Honorable Terry Rice, Co-Chair
The Honorable Jeff Wardlaw, Co-Chair
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol, Room 315
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Senator Rice and Representative Wardlaw:

Pursuant to Act 421 of 2021 the House and Senate State Agencies and Governmental Affairs Committees shall conduct a study of election technology, including without limitation the use of biometric data and ballot tracking. This report provides a summary of the presentations on August 19, 2021, and September 20, 2022, before the committees.

While biometric technology is able to be used on a smaller scale, the technology is not yet feasible in handling a significant database and cannot be successfully deployed in the state. With further study, there is hope that the technology will be able to handle a larger database and could be used in the future. There are concerns about the storage of biometric data, voter privacy, and voter suppression with the use of biometric technology. The use of unique identifiers such as QR codes could be implemented easily as a method to track absentee ballots and reduce the possibility for ballot duplication. However, this method would duplicate current efforts used by the Secretary of State and is not something that would provide a benefit to the state.

This study did result in two additional areas that could be beneficial to the state. The use of technology to generate ballot styles that are currently produced by hand could be pursued in the future and could reduce human error and confusion. Additionally, mobile voting centers in local nursing homes would give those individuals the chance to vote in person rather than by absentee ballot. However, there were concerns regarding ballot harvesting and voter fraud. Similar technology could be used for veterans and overseas military to vote instead of using absentee ballots. This type of mobile voting technology is not developed, but could be studied for future use.

During our committee hearings, those presenting to our committee made the aforementioned declarations and this report is submitted in compliance with Act 421 of 2021. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions concerning this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Rapert/kc

Senator Jason Rapert, Chair

Dwight Tosh/kc

Representative Dwight Tosh, Chair