

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2021-097

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3 REQUESTING THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO STUDY THE
4 FEASIBILITY OF CONSOLIDATING INDIVIDUAL VOTING PRECINCT LOCATIONS
5 FOR THE PURPOSE OF UTILIZING VOTE CENTERS AND ELIMINATING VOTING
6 PRECINCT DESERTS IN RURAL AREAS FOR STATEWIDE SPECIAL, PRIMARY,
7 AND GENERAL ELECTIONS.
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9 WHEREAS, elections are held through individual voting precincts for
10 statewide special, primary, and general elections; and
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12 WHEREAS, vote centers have been successfully used in addition to
13 individual voting precincts;
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15 WHEREAS, it is necessary to study the feasibility of consolidating
16 individual voting precinct locations for statewide special, primary, and
17 general elections for the purpose of utilizing vote centers in order to aid
18 in voting location awareness and visibility, as well as providing safer, more
19 secure, and more easily monitored elections; and
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21 WHEREAS, voting access is critical in all areas of the state as well as
22 ensuring voters are not disenfranchised due to voting precinct deserts or
23 lack of broadband access,
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25 NOW THEREFORE,

26 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE NINETY-THIRD
27 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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29 THAT the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs
30 invite the House Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs, the
31 Senate Committee on City, County, and Local Affairs, and the House Committee
32 on City, County, and Local Affairs to study the elimination of individual
33 voting precincts in favor of utilizing vote centers.
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35 BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study proposed may include without limitation
36 the examination and assessment of the:

- 1 (1) Feasibility and benefits of vote centers;
- 2 (2) Benefits of greater visibility, access, and awareness of
3 vote centers to voters;
- 4 (3) Security benefits of consolidating precinct locations;
- 5 (4) Viability of voters in rural counties to be able to access
6 broadband internet connections and address other accessibility concerns as
7 related to elections and vote centers;
- 8 (5) Benefits of real time record updates for electronic poll
9 books provided by broadband internet access for vote centers;
- 10 (6) Benefits of extending the hours of Saturday voting to the
11 same hours as on weekday voting and completing early voting at 1:00 p.m. on
12 the Monday before the election;
- 13 (7) Number of people designated as poll workers at each poll
14 site and vote center, the total number of poll workers physically present at
15 each poll site and vote center during early voting and on election day, and
16 any shortage of poll workers;
- 17 (8) Available census data to determine areas of population
18 growth and reduction in the state in relation to the number of poll sites and
19 vote centers in each county;
- 20 (9) Feasibility of utilizing an incentive program to increase
21 the number of counties utilizing vote centers;
- 22 (10) Feasibility of using voting centers to allow greater voter
23 choice and real time voting in each county;
- 24 (11) Benefits associated with the use of early voting vote
25 centers;
- 26 (12) Voting patterns of when and where voters have been and are
27 choosing to vote for the last fifteen (15) years, including without
28 limitation whether voters are using absentee ballots, early voting locations,
29 or vote centers and an analysis of voting patterns across the state;
- 30 (13) Use of initiatives to focus on increasing the number of
31 voters voting, to encourage voting, and to mobilize the electorate;
- 32 (14) Maintenance and operating expenses of current voting
33 equipment, and anticipated costs of voting equipment and maintenance for the
34 next ten (10) years; and
- 35 (15) Benefits associated with a clear chain of accountability
36 for absentee ballots.

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BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the Secretary of State may assist the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs, the House Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs, the Senate Committee on City, County, and Local Affairs, and the House Committee on City, County, and Local Affairs with any information needed to complete the study required in this proposal.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the House Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs shall submit to the Legislative Council a final written report of their activities, findings, and recommendations with regard to the study requested in this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Kim Hammer
District 33

Prepared by: MLD/MLD