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SURE Updates Enhance Transparency, Security, Efficiency

HARRISBURG (Jan. 28, 2021) – As Pennsylvania prepares to update its Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors (SURE) system, the House State Government Committee today convened its second in a series of hearings to review the commonwealth's election processes, with state and county officials testifying virtually about the database.

The SURE system, managed by the Department of State, is the state's centralized voter registration and election management system. Pennsylvania counties own voter registration records, but federal law requires the state to ensure the data held by the SURE system is accurate and secure.

"All of us want the same thing --- elections that are safe, secure, accessible and fair," said Ray Murphy, state coordinator for Keystone Votes, a nonpartisan coalition comprising 42 civil rights, civil liberties, and good government groups. "For as much as we've accomplished over the last 18 months, we still have work to do to modernize our election process --- and updating the SURE system is central to that effort.

"This is an issue that has bipartisan support and the backing of both the administration and the General Assembly because it enhances transparency, security and efficiency," Murphy said. "It is encouraging to see elected leaders working together to ensure voters have the best experience possible and election directors have the tools they need to run elections efficiently --- and all of us can remain confident in the accuracy of the final count."

In December 2019, the state Auditor General's Office released an audit of the SURE system with recommendations to improve the accuracy of Pennsylvania's voter registration records.

The afternoon House hearing was the second election-related event of the day. In the morning, the Joint State Government Commission convened to formally establish the Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board, which was established under Act 12 of 2020. The board will review election laws and make recommendations to the General Assembly about ways to improve the process through legislative changes or implementation of best practices.

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Keystone Votes, a nonpartisan coalition comprising 42 advocacy and community organizations working to update Pennsylvania's election system, has been urging the state to start working now on reforms that would modernize the state's election system, help counties buy modern machines, and update technology to enhance security and accessibility before the 2020 elections. More at www.keystonevotes.org.