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Minor Legislative Change for Voters this Session

The close of the 2017 Legislative Session brought only one minor change to the election code, and it addresses vote-by-mail voters whose signatures don't match what is on the voter registration books or precinct register. Voters now have until 5:00 p.m. the day before the election to complete a signature cure affidavit and submit a copy of an acceptable form of identification. The prior legislation required the affidavit to be on file before the first day of canvassing which by law is allowable up to 15 days prior to the election. Upon submission of the affidavit and proof of identification, the canvassing board compares the signatures and determines the legality of that vote-by-mail ballot.

Unfortunately, neither bill which represented the priorities of the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections passed both the House and the Senate. I have written before about ERIC, the Electronic Registration Information Center, which provides a vehicle for the Department of State to share voter registration information with other states to improve the accuracy of America's voter rolls. Despite my earlier reports that the bill seemed to be gaining momentum, the "ERIC" proposal stopped short of passing in both chambers.

In addition, the association's proposal to exempt from public record pre-registered minors' information also fell short of passage. With increasing concern from all voters over privacy of personal information issues, the association has for the past several years actively sought support for voter information protection legislation. We were hopeful that protection would be, at the very least, offered to minors who are particularly vulnerable to persons online with nefarious motives. The concern for privacy protection continues to grow daily, and voters should never have to choose between exercising their right to vote and protecting their privacy.

I have said before that there is no greater advocate for the voter than the Supervisor of Elections, but I can't encourage you enough to share your concerns firsthand with your representatives. In addition to voting, please remember to contact your elected officials with issues or concerns as they represent YOU!