



## *The Secretary's Report*

**Secretary of State Mike Coffman**

**March 2007**

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Welcome to the inaugural Department of State's monthly newsletter - *The Secretary's Report*.

Here you'll read the latest news from the Department on important issues affecting Colorado elections, pending legislation, our efforts to keep Colorado economically competitive and other areas of concern for the Secretary of State's office.

I hope you find this newsletter informative.

*Mike Coffman*

**In the March issue...**

[Coffman's Guest Editorial in the Colorado Springs Gazette on Military Absentee Voting](#)

[The Hijacking of SB07-83, the Election Law Clean-Up Bill](#)

[A Public Hearing to Examine Electronic Voting Machines](#)

### **Secretary Coffman's Guest Editorial -** **Colorado Springs Gazette**

Feb. 11, 2007

#### **Military Absentee Voting Bill (HB07-1149)**

As a combat veteran and Colorado's Secretary of State, I want to ensure that every eligible member of our armed forces, who calls Colorado home, has the opportunity to vote. We should make sure that those who are willing to make tremendous sacrifices to defend our freedoms are never denied their voting privilege.

House Bill 1149, the Military and Overseas Absentee Voting bill, will help ensure that those who defend our right to vote are themselves able to cast a ballot... [read more.](#)

\* Since this publication, HB 1149 has unanimously passed through both the House and the Senate. However, due to amendments on the Senate floor the bill will go to conference committee for reconciliation.

## The Hijacking of SB07-83, the Election Law Technical Clean-UP Bill

The Secretary's office, along with county clerks from across Colorado, have been hard at work for several weeks on drafting SB07-83, a technical clean up bill to Colorado's election law, sponsored by Senator Tupa (D-Boulder).

The bill would make important changes to existing election statutes that will further clear the path for the Secretary's office and county clerks to more effectively run elections.

SB07-83 passed out of committee with a unanimous vote; and with support from the Secretary's office.

However, once the bill reached the Senate floor, it was saddled with controversial amendments, the most alarming of which would grant parolees the right to vote - a clear violation of the Colorado Constitution.

The constitution states that a qualified elector who has "served out his full term of imprisonment" shall only then have his full voting rights restored (Article VII, Section 10). Colorado statute denies parolees the privilege of voting, on the premise that a parolee has not yet completed his or her full term of imprisonment - C.R.S. section 1-2-103(4).

The Colorado Supreme Court ruled that this statute does not violate the constitution and further expressed the will of the people as follows:

"...the people of Colorado in adopting their constitution intended that those who commit crimes so severe that they warrant time in prison are subject to disenfranchisement and are reinvested with the right to vote only on completion of the entire sentence, or if pardoned." - Danielson v. Dennis (Case No. 06SA174).

This amendment attempts to usurp the clear intent of our constitution.

[Read the Secretary's statement](#) opposing this ill-advised amendment.

## Secretary Coffman Holds a Public Hearing to Examine Electronic Voting Machines

In the face of recent challenges from around the country questioning the reliability and accuracy of electronic voting machines, Secretary Coffman held a public hearing to discuss their use in elections overseen by the Colorado Department of State.

"Individuals and organizations on both sides of the issue have strong opinions when it comes to the use of electronic voting machines in our elections," Secretary Coffman said. "Some have questioned their accuracy and reliability, while others believe they satisfy an important need. I want to hear from all sides on this issue as we move closer to the 2008 election cycle."

[Listen to the proceedings](#) in the audio archive section of the Department's website.

### **Quick Links...**

[More News from the Secretary of State](#)

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### **In the April *Secretary's Report*...**

- Ensuring counties conduct secure and accurate elections
- SB07-46 and the national effort to end the Electoral College

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