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January 10, 2012

Speaker Rick Thompson
President Jeff Kessler
Chairs, Joint Committee on Government and Finance

Re: Required Report on Special Elections

Honorable Speaker and President:

As required by WV Code §3-10-2(d)

“(d) The Secretary of State shall by January 10, 2012 report to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance findings regarding of the operation of the new election undertaken pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. This report shall provide analysis of the direct and indirect costs to the state associated with the conduct of the new election.”

I am pleased to submit this report on the special elections conducted in 2011 pursuant to HB 2853. At the outset I note that the accounting for reimbursement of county expenses is not complete. Two counties have yet to submit all documentation for the primary and only eighteen counties have been reimbursed for the general. I intend to submit a supplemental report once we have achieved a complete accounting.

Fiscal impact of special elections:

The State reimbursed the county commissions a sum of \$3,183,522.30¹ in direct costs related to the special primary election. That figure represents an increase

¹ Actual costs were reduced by several cost-saving measures specifically permitted by HB 201 (including: consolidated precincts; fewer poll workers employed; fewer paper ballots printed; etc.). For the 2010 special U.S. Senate election, the Secretary of State estimated the savings at a

of approximately \$100,000 over the cost of the special U.S. Senate primary in 2010.

Additional indirect cost estimates include:

\$16,321.59 in overtime, compensatory time, and travel for Secretary of State employees;
\$12,200.61 notice publication payments to media;
\$ 4,125.00 Technical support on election day and night.

\$32,647.20 subtotal²

For the general, the state has reimbursed eighteen counties \$1,050,083.23. Thirty-seven counties have yet to be reimbursed. Eight of those are in the final stages of approval and fourteen others are in the initial stages of approval.

Additional indirect cost estimates include:

\$17,674.97 in overtime, compensatory time, and travel for Secretary of State employees;
\$25,440.00 notice publication payments to media;
\$ 4,125.00 Technical support on election day and night;
\$ 805.00 Contractor

\$43,964.97 subtotal³

The estimated total direct and indirect cost for the special election (primary and general) was more than \$4,313,492.70.

minimum of \$500,000. For this primary election the savings procedures were fewer (poll worker training expense savings in particular). Because of that the savings would be significantly less than in 2010.

² Last year's report noted that the state incurred costs for overtime pay to state employees who worked on what became, by law, a state holiday (election-day). The amount, according to the State Auditor, could not be calculated nor estimated. The Auditor again has been unable to calculate or estimate this figure. A recent audit of West Virginia colleges and universities conducted by the Post Audit Division of Legislative Services was able to estimate salary costs for 15 institutions regarding their election-day payment to employees by conducting a limited survey. The West Virginia Secretary of State was not able to conduct a similar survey of all the approximately 150 state agencies regarding their election-day salary costs.

Furthermore, counties may have been forced to pay regular employees for election-day holiday pay. Last year we attempted to estimate that figure by a survey of a limited number of counties. Because of the questionable accuracy of such technique, we did not include the estimate in this report.

³ See footnote 2 supra

Other indirect impacts:

- Training of municipal election officials for (2011) municipal elections had to be delayed due to the time demands placed upon our election division employees.
- Other functions and duties of county clerks' offices were delayed due to time demands placed upon employees.
- Other projects and functions of the Secretary of State (including bill drafting, etc.) were delayed.

Thank you for your consideration of this report. We will submit an amended report when final numbers are available.

Respectfully submitted,



Natalie E. Tennant
West Virginia Secretary of State