
NEWS RELEASE

Louisiana
Department of State

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SECRETARY OF STATE KYLE ARDOIN ADDRESSES PRESS CLUB

BATON ROUGE, La.—As the last day of the special legislative session wrapped up, Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin spoke to members of the Press Club discussing how the final budget might impact critical services including the purchase of new voting machines. The Department of State is currently engaged in a request for proposals (RFP) process to replace the state’s 10,000 Election Day and early voting machines.

“We have oral presentations scheduled next week for three voting machine companies, and from there a choice will be made by the selection committee,” Secretary Ardoin reported. “We always anticipate this process to be highly competitive one, and are anxious to see what each group brings to table for us to consider,” he said. “Elections is the one area of our operation that keeps me awake at night because we all want fair and secure elections with a level playing field and reliable outcomes. We need them for our democracy and our state to thrive.”

Ardoin shared that despite recent turmoil in the office surrounding the departure of Secretary of State Tom Schedler, its operations are returning to normal and are focused on the fundamentals that the people of Louisiana expect. Secretary Ardoin will serve as Louisiana’s secretary of state until a special election can be held on Nov. 6, 2018 and Dec. 8, 2018 if a runoff is required. Ardoin has named to his executive team former Speaker of the House Joe Salter as first assistant secretary of state, Shanda Jones as undersecretary of management and finance, Sherri Wharton Hadskey as commissioner of elections and Meg Casper Sunstrom as deputy secretary of Communications and Outreach.

“This team is the reason the Secretary of State’s Office has flourished to date,” said Ardoin. “They work with our staff each and every day to accomplish some of the big wins we’ve achieved. I’m not surprised at all with the number of politicians pondering and praying about running for this office because they will undoubtedly walk into an operation that is flourishing and has tremendous room for growth and success.”

As the election approaches this fall, Ardoin challenged voters to look at the race with great scrutiny in terms of candidate qualifications as well as issues including voting machine security, automatic voter registration, voter fraud and historically low turnout.

“Voters need to be asking candidates tough questions about their vision for this office,” stressed Ardoin. “Confidence in our elections is one of the foundations of our democracy, and Louisiana does it well. You may hear candidates running for office say other states do elections differently, and they do. But

here in Louisiana, our history of public corruption and voting irregularities from decades ago led us to value things like secret ballots, photo ID and secure voting machines. In addition, we are able to provide election results within hours of our polls closing, not days or weeks later. Any changes to the fundamental way in which we conduct elections in Louisiana will have unintended consequences and voters need to be skeptical,” Ardoin said.

Qualifying for the 2018 fall congressional election cycle is fast approaching, and is scheduled for July 18-20. In addition to a special statewide election for secretary of state, voters will be considering candidates for U.S. representatives. Statewide elections, including the regular election for secretary of state, will be held in the fall of 2019.

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