

Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and distinguished members of this committee: good morning and thank you for having me. I am especially pleased to be speaking before you today because Louisiana has unique experience in election preparation that lent itself to the successful execution of our 2020, 2021, and 2022 statewide elections.

In 2020, not only did Louisiana face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic—as did my colleagues across the country—but we also had to contend with several hurricanes and tropical storms in a major election cycle, the last of which made landfall six days before the Presidential Election. In 2021, we had to contend with another major storm, Hurricane Ida, which made landfall in southeast Louisiana six weeks prior to a statewide election. The damage caused by Ida was so widespread and severe that we were forced to reschedule the election.

Thankfully, we developed a contingency plan in 2020—Operation Geaux Vote—which gave our office, election workers, and partners across the state the tools necessary to successfully execute these major elections. In fact, despite the

storms and ongoing pandemic, over 70.1 percent of eligible voters in Louisiana participated in the 2020 Presidential Election.

Since 2014, Louisiana has successfully carried out nine statewide elections in a row. This track record of success was once again on display in the 2022 congressional midterm elections, where we were able to roll back our COVID restrictions and, thankfully, did not have to contend with any major storms. As usual, we finalized the tabulation of results in a matter of hours.

This consistency is why the Louisiana Legislative Auditor released a 45-page report last year which confirmed the effectiveness of our policies and procedures. The report stated that “overall, we found the Department of State has procedures and practices to ensure election integrity.”

The policies they site, in addition to my office’s work with the legislature, have been vital in promoting integrity and efficiency in Louisiana’s elections.

We have worked to pass legislation that banned ballot harvesting, provides more accurate data from the Louisiana

Department of Health to conduct more accurate audits of our voter rolls, holds managed service providers accountable, and strengthened the testing of our voting equipment. I have also taken the step of banning TikTok from the Louisiana Department of State's devices and network as a means of protecting our constituents' personally identifiable information. I am pleased to say that our governor, at my urging, followed suit and banned the app from devices and networks under his jurisdiction. This app has strong ties to the Chinese Communist Party and has no business being anywhere near government devices.

Further, I am happy to say that Louisianians overwhelmingly voted in favor of a constitutional amendment in December that prohibits non-citizens from registering or voting in any election in our state. Participation in our democracy is both a right of American citizens, and a tremendous responsibility for those that exercise it. It is how we, as Americans, exercise political power over our government, our nation, and ultimately, each other. As citizens, we rely on the assumption that those who have a say over how we govern ourselves are our countrymen.

That is why the practice of non-citizen voting is particularly egregious. It is wrong in principle, and in practice it could open the door for foreign nationals with no loyalty to our communities and country to exercise political power over our citizens.

The Washington Post's editorial board even expressed their opposition to the bill that has been recently become law in Washington, D.C. that allows for non-citizen voting in local elections. I am grateful to the House for moving swiftly to block this measure. Unfortunately, your colleagues in the Senate did not follow suit. This law has the potential to irreparably weaken one of the strongest ties that binds us together as a nation. I would suggest that other states move swiftly to enact legislation or amendments similar to Louisiana's. It is yet another safeguard that ensures our election integrity.

Our state utilizes a top-down approach to the administration, preparation, and execution of its elections, whereby our policies and procedures are set in the Secretary of State's office and flow downstream to the Registrars of Voters and Clerks of Court in all 64 parishes. This gives Louisiana much-needed uniformity in

our elections. Whether a voter is in St. Bernard, Beauregard, or Bossier Parish, they will be voting on the same system, in the same manner, with the same procedures for tabulation and reporting.

This top-down approach to elections is what allowed us to have over 1.4 million votes tabulated within five hours of poll closure on election night. It is this system that keeps Louisianians from having to wait two weeks to learn who their elected representatives are going to be. Where some states counted their returns in terms of days and weeks, we counted ours in terms of hours.

Unfortunately, there are some states across the union that failed to produce timely results during the most recent election cycle. We are 22 years removed from the logistical and operational debacle of *Bush v. Gore*, and despite the resources available to election officials, it took some states days and weeks to tabulate their results. This, in turn, has created space for some to question the integrity of their state elections.

As election officials, we have to get it right the first time, every time—any deviation from that standard risks losing the trust of

the voters. That trust is the lifeblood of our democracy. Our social contract rests on the assumption that the power we delegate to our elected officials is done so in a uniform, fair, and consistent manner. If we as election officials fail to maintain the voters' faith in their elections, then the political health and long-term stability of the republic is put at risk.

The best way for officials to counter claims of stolen elections, fraud, or interference is to leave no room for doubt. I would humbly suggest that other states look to Louisiana as a model for conducting elections and maintaining their integrity.

Consider adopting some of the standards and practices Louisiana has in place. If we leave zero room for doubt, we will give the voters every reason to trust in their elections and our democracy.