# Model Impartial Election Administration Task Force Study Bill

*A bill to provide for the creation of a task force to research and make recommendations regarding expanded capacity and professional independence in election administration.*

**Drafted by**

[Election Reformers Network](Election Reformers Network)

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## Section 1. Findings and Purpose

(a) The Legislature finds that
      (1) modern, secure, professional, and impartial election administration is a priority for the state;
      (2) the goal listed above requires that senior election officials be consistently provided with adequate capacity and resourcing;
      (3) the goal listed above also requires that senior election officials be selected and retained in a way that insulates them from partisan political pressure or the appearance thereof; and
      (4) the state would be well-served by implementing policies designed to promote expanded capacity and professional independence in election administration.

(b) It is the purpose of this act:
      (1) to bring together a diverse group of experts and stakeholders in election administration to study and make recommendations for policies promoting expanded capacity and professional independence in election administration; and
      (2) to aid the legislature in identifying the most impactful policies for promoting expanded capacity and professional independence in election administration so that they may be adopted.

## Section 2. Establishment of Task Force

(a) There is a task force on impartial election administration.

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(b) The task force shall study the risks of potential or perceived partisan influences on election administration and what policies or changes in state law may mitigate or eliminate those risks in order to ensure public confidence in the professional independence of election administrators from partisan or other public pressures.

## Section 3. Membership

(a) The task force consists of the following 13 members:
    (1) One former judge appointed by the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, who shall serve as chair;
    (2) One member licensed to practice law in the state with experience in election law, appointed by the State Bar Association;
    (3) The state's chief election official or designee;
    (4) Two representatives of the state association of election administrators, one with election administration experience in an urban jurisdiction and one with election administration experience in a rural jurisdiction;
    (5) Two members who are academics at a postsecondary institute, one of whom has expertise in American political history, and one of whom has expertise in comparative political science, appointed by the governor from a slate of four or more candidates nominated by the president of the state public university system;
    (6) One representative of the state affiliate of the League of Women Voters;
    (7) One unaffiliated or third-party candidate or former elected official, appointed by the chief election official; and
    (8) Four other members, one each appointed by the majority leader in the state house, the majority leader in the state senate, the minority leader in the state house, and the minority leader in the state senate.
(b) To the extent practicable, appointments shall be made to ensure regional, racial, ethnic, economic, and gender diversity on the task force.

## Section 4. Duties of Task Force

(a) The task force shall study the present capacity and professional independence of election administration in the state, including but not limited to:
    (1) the sufficiency of election worker recruitment to meet future election staffing needs;
    (2) the state of training, credentialing, and professional development in election administration;

(3) the state of, need for, and sustainability of funding and other resources for election administration;

(4) the conflicts of interest created by partisan or electoral influences on election officials;

(5) the sources of risks to voter confidence, including any risks presented by such conflicts of interest; and

(6) the state of voter education and engagement between election officials and the public.

(b) The task force shall research policies to address any needs identified in subsection (a) and mitigate or eliminate any risks or the appearance of such risks identified in subsection (a), including but not limited to:

(1) updating the state budget or updating budgetary processes to ensure adequate and sustainable funding for election administration needs;

(2) providing for expanded recruitment, training, credentialing, and professional development of election administrators;

(3) adopting a code of ethics for senior election officials restricting certain partisan activities, prohibiting conflicts of interest, and requiring an oath of impartiality;

(4) adopting a set of minimum professional qualifications for senior election officials;

(5) establishing protocols for when election officials may or should recuse themselves in situations of conflict of interest and to whom they should transfer responsibilities because of such recusal;

(6) creating alternatives for the selection of senior election administration and governance positions that reduce the risk of partisan influence; and

(7) other policies the task force finds will address problems identified under subsection (a).

(c) On or before May 30, 2024, the task force shall provide a preliminary report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and both houses of the state legislature.

(d) On or before December 31, 2024, the task force shall publish a final report of its findings and recommendations, including proposed legislative language implementing such recommendations.

## Section 5. Staff and Compensation

(a) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(b) The members of the task force listed in section 3(a)(6)-(8) may be compensated according to the annual budget.