By: Representative Sanford

To: Apportionment and Elections

HOUSE BILL NO. 1658

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 23-15-239, 23-15-266, 23-15-335, 23-15-265, 23-15-267, 23-15-333 AND 23-15-597, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 2 3 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT IF A COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTS TO ENTER INTO A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH THE CIRCUIT OR 5 MUNICIPAL CLERK OR THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL ELECTION COMMISSION 6 AUTHORIZING THE CIRCUIT OR MUNICIPAL CLERK OR THE COUNTY OR 7 MUNICIPAL ELECTION COMMISSION TO PERFORM ALL OF THE DUTIES 8 REQUIRED OF THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, THE 9 CIRCUIT OR MUNICIPAL CLERK OR THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL ELECTION COMMISSION SHALL ENTER INTO THAT AGREEMENT; AND FOR RELATED 10 11 PURPOSES.

- BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:
- SECTION 1. Section 23-15-239, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
- 14 amended as follows:
- 15 23-15-239. (1) The executive committee of each county, in
- 16 the case of a primary election, or the election commissioners of
- 17 each county, in the case of all other elections, in conjunction
- 18 with the circuit clerk, shall, in the years in which counties
- 19 conduct an election, sponsor and conduct, not less than five (5)
- 20 days before each election, not less than four (4) hours and not
- 21 more than eight (8) hours of poll manager training to instruct
- 22 poll managers as to their duties in the proper administration of

- 23 the election and the operation of the polling place. Any poll
- 24 manager who completes the online training course provided by the
- 25 Secretary of State shall only be required to complete two (2)
- 26 hours of in-person poll manager training. No poll manager shall
- 27 serve in any election unless he or she has received these
- 28 instructions once during the twelve (12) months immediately
- 29 preceding the date upon which the election is held; however,
- 30 nothing in this section shall prevent the appointment of an
- 31 alternate poll manager to fill a vacancy in case of an emergency.
- 32 The county executive committee or the election commissioners, as
- 33 appropriate, shall train a sufficient number of alternates to
- 34 serve in the event a poll manager is unable to serve for any
- 35 reason.
- 36 (2) (a) If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the
- 37 county executive committee may enter into a written agreement with
- 38 the circuit clerk or the county election commission authorizing
- 39 the circuit clerk or the county election commission to perform any
- 40 of the duties required of the county executive committee pursuant
- 41 to this section. If the county executive committee elects to
- 42 enter into a written agreement with the circuit clerk or the
- 43 county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the
- 44 county election commission to perform all of the duties required
- 45 of the county executive committee, the circuit clerk or the county
- 46 election commission shall enter into that agreement. Any
- 47 agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed

- 48 by the chair of the county executive committee and the circuit
- 49 clerk or the chair of the county election commission, as
- 50 appropriate. The county executive committee shall notify the
- 51 state executive committee and the Secretary of State of the
- 52 existence of the agreement.
- 53 (b) If it is eliqible under Section 23-15-266, the
- 54 municipal executive committee may enter into a written agreement
- 55 with the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
- 56 authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
- 57 commission to perform any of the duties required of the municipal
- 58 executive committee pursuant to this section. If the municipal
- 59 executive committee elects to enter into a written agreement with
- 60 the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
- 61 authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
- 62 commission to perform all of the duties required of the municipal
- 63 executive committee, the municipal clerk or the municipal election
- 64 commission shall enter into that agreement. Any agreement entered
- 65 into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by the chair of
- 66 the municipal executive committee and the municipal clerk or the
- 67 chair of the municipal election commission, as appropriate. The
- 68 municipal executive committee shall notify the state executive
- 69 committee and the Secretary of State of the existence of the
- 70 agreement.
- 71 (3) The board of supervisors and the municipal governing
- 72 authority, in their discretion, may compensate poll managers who

attend these training sessions. The compensation shall be at a rate of not less than the federal hourly minimum wage and not more than Twenty Dollars (\$20.00) per hour. Poll managers shall not be compensated for more than sixteen (16) hours of attendance at the training sessions regardless of the actual amount of time that

they attended the training sessions.

- 79 The time and location of the training sessions required 80 pursuant to this section shall be announced to the general public 81 by posting a notice thereof at the courthouse and by delivering a copy of the notice to the office of a newspaper having general 82 83 circulation in the county five (5) days before the date upon which 84 the training session is to be conducted. Persons who will serve 85 as poll watchers for candidates and political parties, as well as 86 members of the general public, shall be allowed to attend the 87 sessions.
- 88 (5) Subject to the following annual limitations, the
 89 election commissioners shall be entitled to receive a per diem in
 90 the amount of One Hundred Ten Dollars (\$110.00), to be paid from
 91 the county general fund, for every day or period of no less than
 92 five (5) hours accumulated over two (2) or more days actually
 93 employed in the performance of their duties for the necessary time
 94 spent in conducting training sessions as required by this section:
- 95 (a) In counties having less than fifteen thousand 96 (15,000) residents according to the latest federal decennial 97 census, not more than five (5) days per year;

98	(b)	In	counties	having	fifteen	thousand	(15,000)

99 residents according to the latest federal decennial census but

100 less than thirty thousand (30,000) residents according to the

101 latest federal decennial census, not more than eight (8) days per

102 year;

103 (c) In counties having thirty thousand (30,000)

104 residents according to the latest federal decennial census but

105 less than seventy thousand (70,000) residents according to the

106 latest federal decennial census, not more than ten (10) days per

107 year;

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108 (d) In counties having seventy thousand (70,000)

residents according to the latest federal decennial census but

110 less than ninety thousand (90,000) residents according to the

111 latest federal decennial census, not more than twelve (12) days

112 per year;

(e) In counties having ninety thousand (90,000)

114 residents according to the latest federal decennial census but

115 less than one hundred seventy thousand (170,000) residents

116 according to the latest federal decennial census, not more than

117 fifteen (15) days per year;

118 (f) In counties having one hundred seventy thousand

119 (170,000) residents according to the latest federal decennial

120 census but less than two hundred thousand (200,000) residents

121 according to the latest federal decennial census, not more than

122 eighteen (18) days per year;

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123 (g)	In	counties	having	two	hundred	thousand	(200,0	00)
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- 124 residents according to the latest federal decennial census but
- 125 less than two hundred twenty-five thousand (225,000) residents
- 126 according to the latest federal decennial census, not more than
- 127 nineteen (19) days per year;
- 128 (h) In counties having two hundred twenty-five thousand
- 129 (225,000) residents or more according to the latest federal
- 130 decennial census, not more than twenty-two (22) days per year.
- 131 (6) Election commissioners shall claim the per diem
- 132 authorized in subsection (5) of this section in the manner
- 133 provided for in Section 23-15-153(6).
- 134 (7) (a) To provide poll manager training, the Secretary of
- 135 State has developed a single, comprehensive poll manager training
- 136 program to ensure uniform, secure elections throughout the state.
- 137 The program includes online training on all state and federal
- 138 election laws and procedures and voting machine opening and
- 139 closing procedures.
- 140 (b) County poll managers who individually access and
- 141 complete the online training program, including all skills
- 142 assessments, at least five (5) days before an election shall be
- 143 defined as "certified poll managers," and entitled to a
- "Certificate of Completion."
- (c) At least one (1) certified poll manager shall be
- 146 appointed by the county election officials to work in each polling
- 147 place in the county during each general election.

- 148 **SECTION 2.** Section 23-15-266, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
- 149 amended as follows:
- 150 23-15-266. (1) A county or municipal executive committee
- 151 shall be eligible to enter into written agreements with a circuit
- 152 or municipal clerk or a county or municipal election commission as
- 153 provided for in Section 23-15-239(2), 23-15-265(2), 23-15-267(4),
- 154 23-15-333(4), 23-15-335(2) or 23-15-597(2), only if the political
- 155 party with which such county or municipal executive committee is
- 156 affiliated:
- 157 (a) Has cast for its candidate for Governor in the last
- 158 two (2) gubernatorial elections ten percent (10%) of the total
- 159 vote cast for governor; or
- 160 (b) Has cast for its candidate for Governor in three
- 161 (3) of the last five (5) gubernatorial elections twenty-five
- 162 percent (25%) of the total vote cast for Governor.
- 163 (2) If a county or municipal executive committee elects to
- 164 enter into a written agreement with the circuit or municipal clerk
- or the county or municipal election commission authorizing the
- 166 circuit or municipal clerk or the county or municipal election
- 167 commission to perform all of the duties required of the county or
- 168 municipal executive committee, the circuit or municipal clerk or
- 169 the county or municipal election commission shall enter into that
- 170 agreement.
- 171 **SECTION 3.** Section 23-15-335, Mississippi Code of 1972, is

172 amended as follows:

173	23-15-335. (1) The county executive committee shall
174	designate a person whose duty it shall be to distribute all
175	necessary ballots for use in a primary election, and shall
176	designate one (1) among the poll managers at each polling place to
177	receive and receipt for the blank ballots to be used at that
178	place. When the blank ballots are delivered to a local poll
179	manager, the distributor shall take from the local poll manager a
180	receipt therefor signed in duplicate by both the distributor and
181	the poll manager, one (1) of which receipts the distributor shall
182	deliver to the circuit clerk and the other shall be retained by
183	the local poll manager and the last mentioned duplicate receipt
184	shall be enclosed in the ballot box with the voted ballots when
185	the polls have been closed and the votes have been counted. The
186	printer of the ballots shall take a receipt from the distributor
187	of the ballots for the total number of the blank ballots delivered
188	to the distributor. The printer shall secure all ballots printed
189	by him or her in such a safe manner that no person can procure
190	them or any of them, and he or she shall deliver no blank ballot
191	or ballots to any person except the distributor above mentioned,
192	and then only upon his or her receipt therefor as above specified.
193	The distributor of the blank ballots shall so securely hold the
194	same that no person can obtain any of them, and he or she shall
195	not deliver any of them to any person other than to the authorized
196	local poll managers and upon their respective receipts therefor.
197	The executive committee shall see to it that the total blank

198 ballots delivered to the distributor, shall correspond with the 199 total of the receipts executed by the local poll managers.

- 200 If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the (2) county executive committee may enter into a written agreement with 201 202 the circuit clerk or the county election commission authorizing 203 the circuit clerk or the county election commission to perform any 204 of the duties required of the county executive committee pursuant 205 to this section. If the county executive committee elects to 206 enter into a written agreement with the circuit clerk or the 207 county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the 208 county election commission to perform all of the duties required 209 of the county executive committee, the circuit clerk or the county 210 election commission shall enter into that agreement. Any 211 agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed 212 by the chair of the county executive committee and the circuit 213 clerk or the chair of the county election commission, as 214 appropriate. The county executive committee shall notify the state executive committee and the Secretary of State of the 215 216 existence of such agreement.
 - (b) If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the municipal executive committee may enter into a written agreement with the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission to perform any of the duties required of the municipal executive committee pursuant to this section. If the municipal

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223	executive committee elects to enter into a written agreement with
224	the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
225	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
226	commission to perform all of the duties required of the municipal
227	executive committee, the municipal clerk or the municipal election
228	commission shall enter into that agreement. Any agreement entered
229	into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by the chair of
230	the municipal executive committee and the municipal clerk or the
231	chair of the municipal election commission, as appropriate. The
232	municipal executive committee shall notify the state executive
233	committee and the Secretary of State of the existence of such

- 235 (3) Any person charged with any of the duties prescribed in 236 this section who shall willfully or with culpable carelessness 237 violate the same shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.
- 238 **SECTION 4.** Section 23-15-265, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:
- 23-15-265. (1) 240 The county executive committee of each 241 county shall meet not less than two (2) weeks before the date of 242 any primary election and appoint the poll managers for same, all 243 of whom may be members of the same political party. The number of 244 poll managers appointed by the county executive committee shall be 245 the same number as election commissioners are allowed to appoint 246 pursuant to Sections 23-15-231 and 23-15-235. If the county

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agreement.

247 executive committee fails to meet on the date named, supra,
248 further notice shall be given of the time and place of meeting.

- If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the (2) county executive committee may enter into a written agreement with the circuit clerk or the county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the county election commission to perform any of the duties required of the county executive committee pursuant to this section. If the county executive committee elects to enter into a written agreement with the circuit clerk or the county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the county election commission to perform all of the duties required of the county executive committee, the circuit clerk or the county election commission shall enter into that agreement. Any agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by the chair of the county executive committee and the circuit clerk or the chair of the county election commission, as appropriate. The county executive committee shall notify the state executive committee and the Secretary of State of the existence of the agreement.
 - (b) If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the municipal executive committee may enter into a written agreement with the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission to perform any of the duties required of the municipal executive committee pursuant to this section. If the municipal

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272	executive committee elects to enter into a written agreement with
273	the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
274	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
275	commission to perform all of the duties required of the municipal
276	executive committee, the municipal clerk or the municipal election
277	commission shall enter into that agreement. Any agreement entered
278	into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by the chair of
279	the municipal executive committee and the municipal clerk or the
280	chair of the municipal election commission, as appropriate. The
281	municipal executive committee shall notify the state executive

SECTION 5. Section 23-15-267, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

committee and the Secretary of State of the existence of such

- 23-15-267. (1) The ballot boxes provided by the election
 287 commissioners in each county shall be used in primary elections,
 288 and the county executive committees shall distribute them to the
 289 voting precincts of the county before the time for opening the
 290 polls, in the same manner, as near as may be, as that provided for
 291 in general elections.
- 292 (2) The boxes shall be securely sealed and locked beginning 293 at the start of voting on election day until the end of voting on 294 election day; and the box shall be kept by one (1) of the poll 295 managers, and the poll manager having the box shall carefully keep 296 it, and neither open it himself or herself nor permit it to be

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agreement.

- done, nor permit any person to have any access to it throughout voting during election day. The box shall not be removed from the polling place after the polls are open until the polls close and the count is completed.
- 301 (3) After each election, the ballot boxes shall be delivered 302 to the clerk of the circuit court of the county for preservation; 303 and he or she shall keep them for future use, and, when called 304 for, deliver them to the election commissioners.
- 305 If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the (4)(a) 306 county executive committee may enter into a written agreement with 307 the circuit clerk or the county election commission authorizing 308 the circuit clerk or the county election commission to perform any 309 of the duties required of the county executive committee pursuant 310 If the county executive committee elects to to this section. 311 enter into a written agreement with the circuit clerk or the 312 county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the 313 county election commission to perform all of the duties required 314 of the county executive committee, the circuit clerk or the county 315 election commission shall enter into that agreement. Any 316 agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed 317 by the chair of the county executive committee and the circuit 318 clerk or the chair of the county election commission, as 319 appropriate. The county executive committee shall notify the 320 State Executive Committee and the Secretary of State of the 321 existence of such agreement.

323	municipal executive committee may enter into a written agreement
324	with the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
325	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
326	commission to perform any of the duties required of the municipal
327	executive committee pursuant to this section. If the municipal
328	executive committee elects to enter into a written agreement with
329	the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
330	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
331	commission to perform all of the duties required of the municipal
332	executive committee, the municipal clerk or the municipal election
333	commission shall enter into that agreement. Any agreement entered
334	into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by the chair of
335	the municipal executive committee and the municipal clerk or the
336	chair of the municipal election commission, as appropriate. The
337	municipal executive committee shall notify the State Executive
338	Committee and the Secretary of State of the existence of such
339	agreement.

If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the

(5) The person, or persons, whose duty it is to comply with the provisions of this section and who shall fail, or neglect, from any cause, to deliver the boxes or any of them as herein provided shall, upon conviction, be fined not less than Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) and be imprisoned in the county jail of the residence of the person, or persons, who violates any of the provisions of this section, for a period of not less than thirty

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(b)

- 347 (30) days or more than six (6) months, and fined not more than 348 Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00).
- 349 **SECTION 6.** Section 23-15-333, Mississippi Code of 1972, is 350 amended as follows:
- 351 23-15-333. (1) The county executive committee shall have 352 printed all necessary ballots, for use in primary elections. 353 county executive committee shall have printed all necessary 354 absentee ballots forty-five (45) days before the election as 355 required by law. The ballots shall contain the names of all the 356 candidates to be voted for at the election, and there shall be 357 left on each ballot one (1) blank space under the title of each 358 office for which a nominee is to be elected; and in the event of 359 the death of any candidate whose name shall have been printed on 360 the ballot, the name of the candidate duly substituted in the 361 place of the deceased candidate may be written in such blank space 362 by the voter. Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2) of 363 this section, the order in which the titles to the various offices 364 shall be printed, and the size, print and quality of the paper of the ballot is left to the discretion of the county executive 365 366 committee. Provided, however, that in all cases the arrangement 367 of the names of the candidates for each office shall be 368 alphabetical. No ballot shall be used except those so printed.
- 369 (2) The titles for the various offices shall be listed in 370 the following order:

371	(a) Candidates, electors or delegates for the following
372	national offices:
373	(i) President of the United States of America;
374	(ii) United States Senator or United States
375	Representative;
376	(b) Candidates for the following statewide offices:
377	Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney
378	General, State Treasurer, Auditor of Public Accounts, Commissioner
379	of Agriculture and Commerce, Commissioner of Insurance;
380	(c) Candidates for the following state district
381	offices: Mississippi Transportation Commissioner, Public Service
382	Commissioner, District Attorney;
383	(d) Candidates for the following legislative offices:
384	Senator and House of Representatives;
385	(e) Candidates for countywide office;
386	(f) Candidates for county district office.
387	The order in which the titles for the various offices are
388	listed within each of the categories listed in paragraphs (e) and
389	(f) are left to the discretion of the county executive committee.
390	Candidates' names shall be listed alphabetically under each office
391	by the candidate's last name.
392	(3) If after the deadline to qualify as a candidate for an

office, only one (1) person has duly qualified to be a candidate

for the office in the primary election, the name of that person

shall be placed on the ballot; provided, however, that if not more

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than one (1) person has duly qualified to be a candidate for each office on the primary election ballot, the election for all offices on the ballot shall be dispensed with and the appropriate executive committee shall declare each candidate as the party nominee if the candidate meets all the qualifications to hold the office.

402 If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the (4)(a) 403 county executive committee may enter into a written agreement with 404 the circuit clerk or the county election commission authorizing 405 the circuit clerk or the county election commission to perform any 406 of the duties required of the county executive committee pursuant 407 to this section. If the county executive committee elects to 408 enter into a written agreement with the circuit clerk or the 409 county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the 410 county election commission to perform all of the duties required 411 of the county executive committee, the circuit clerk or the county 412 election commission shall enter into that agreement. agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed 413 414 by the chair of the county executive committee and the circuit 415 clerk or the chair of the county election commission, as 416 appropriate. The county executive committee shall notify the 417 state executive committee and the Secretary of State of the 418 existence of such agreement.

419 (b) If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the
420 municipal executive committee may enter into a written agreement

421	with the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
422	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
423	commission to perform any of the duties required of the municipal
424	executive committee pursuant to this section. If the municipal
425	executive committee elects to enter into a written agreement with
426	the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
427	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
428	commission to perform all of the duties required of the municipal
429	executive committee, the municipal clerk or the municipal election
430	commission shall enter into that agreement. Any agreement entered
431	into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by the chair of
432	the municipal executive committee and the municipal clerk or the
433	chair of the municipal election commission, as appropriate. The
434	municipal executive committee shall notify the state executive
435	committee and the Secretary of State of the existence of such
436	agreement.
437	SECTION 7. Section 23-15-597, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
438	amended as follows:
439	23-15-597. (1) The county executive committee shall meet
440	no later than one (1) week from the day following each primary
441	election to receive and canvass the returns that must be made
442	within the time fixed by law for returns of general elections and
443	declare the result, and announce the name of the nominees for

county and county district offices and the names of those

candidates to be submitted to the second primary. The vote for

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447 tabulated by precincts and certified to and returned to the State 448 Executive Committee, such returns to be mailed by registered 449 letter or any safe mode of transmission within thirty-six (36) 450 hours after the returns are canvassed and the result ascertained. 451 The State Executive Committee shall meet one (1) week from the day 452 following the first primary election held for state, state 453 district offices and legislative offices, and shall proceed to 454 canvass the returns and to declare the result, and announce the 455 names of those nominated for the different offices in the first 456 primary and the names of those candidates whose names are to be 457 submitted to the second primary election. The State Executive 458 Committee shall also meet one (1) week from the day on which the 459 second primary election was held and receive and canvass the returns for state and district offices, if any, and legislative 460 461 offices, if any, voted on in the second primary. An exact and 462 full duplicate of all tabulations by precincts as certified under 463 this section shall be filed with the circuit clerk of the county 464 who shall safely preserve the same in his or her office.

state, state district offices and legislative offices shall be

(2) (a) If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the county executive committee may enter into a written agreement with the circuit clerk or the county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the county election commission to perform any of the duties required of the county executive committee pursuant to this section. If the county executive committee elects to

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472	county election commission authorizing the circuit clerk or the
473	county election commission to perform all of the duties required
474	of the county executive committee, the circuit clerk or the county
475	election commission shall enter into that agreement. Any
476	agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed
477	by the chair of the county executive committee and the circuit
478	clerk or the chair of the county election commission, as
479	appropriate. The county executive committee shall notify the
480	State Executive Committee and the Secretary of State of the
481	existence of the agreement.
482	(b) If it is eligible under Section 23-15-266, the
483	municipal executive committee may enter into a written agreement
484	with the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
485	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
486	commission to perform any of the duties required of the municipal
487	executive committee pursuant to this section. If the municipal
488	executive committee elects to enter into a written agreement with
489	the municipal clerk or the municipal election commission
490	authorizing the municipal clerk or the municipal election
491	commission to perform all of the duties required of the municipal
492	executive committee, the municipal clerk or the municipal election
493	commission shall enter into that agreement. Any agreement entered
494	into pursuant to this subsection shall be signed by the chair of
495	the municipal executive committee and the municipal clerk or the

496	chair of the municipal election commission, as appropriate. The
497	municipal executive committee shall notify the State Executive
498	Committee and the Secretary of State of the existence of the
499	agreement.

500 **SECTION 8.** This act shall take effect and be in force from 501 and after July 1, 2024.