

## Save Our Secret Ballot

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### Save Our Secret Ballot Launches 11th State Campaign to Protect Secret Ballot; Florida the Latest State to Join National Movement

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA: Majority Leader Adam Hasner (R-87) and Senator Garrett Richter (R-37) filed legislation this morning to amend Florida's constitution to guarantee voters the right to vote by secret ballot. Florida is the latest state to join the national Save Our Secret Ballot (SOS Ballot) movement, which seeks to protect voters from intimidation and harassment by empowering them to vote whether they wish to have the right to a secret ballot guaranteed in their state constitution. SOS Ballot is currently conducting initiative or legislative campaigns in Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Missouri, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota and Utah.

The initiative language was written by noted attorney and constitutional scholar Clint Bolick, director of the Goldwater Institute's Scharf-Norton Center for Constitutional Litigation. The Goldwater Institute has pledged its efforts for legal defense of the language if challenged. The 48-word amendment says:

***"The right of individuals to vote by secret ballot is fundamental. Where local, state or federal law requires elections for public office or public votes on initiatives or referenda, or designations or authorizations of employee representation, the right of individuals to vote by secret ballot shall be guaranteed."***

SOS Ballot National Advisory Board Chairman Rep. Ernest Istook commented, "Floridians are fortunate to have leaders like Majority Leader Hasner and Senator Richter who understand just how imperiled and vulnerable the right to a secret ballot is. We applaud their leadership in making this issue a top priority and look forward to working with them to make sure Floridians never have to fear the losing their right to a secret ballot.

"We know some in Congress and some from big labor will fight this effort or even arrogantly say the people do not have a right to vote to protect their secret ballot. But rather than deter us, we take this as the proof that we must work diligently in every state to protect and re-affirm our secret

ballot rights. The more vocal the opposition, the more every voter will see why we must act immediately, lest we lose the secret ballot and return to the time when voter intimidation and even physical harm were commonplace.”

The secret ballot was used locally as an act of post-Civil war southern reconstruction, first as a way to impose a literacy requirement on newly freed slaves. But the secret ballot also protected mostly black voters who faced physical intimidation, even lynching depending on how their vote was cast. Secret ballots were first used statewide in the Massachusetts governor's race 1888 and nationally in 1892 to elect President Grover Cleveland.

**SOS Ballot National Advisory Board members include:**

Ernest Istook	Chairman, Former Congressman, Heritage Foundation
Gilbert Baker	Arkansas State Senator, Former Arkansas Republican Party Chair
Clint Bolick	Goldwater Institute, Director Scharf-Norton Center for Constitutional Litigation
Adam Hasner	Florida House Majority Leader
Sydney Hay	President, Arizona Mining Association
Paul Jacob	Citizens in Charge, Founder US Term Limits
Brian Johnson	Executive Director, Alliance for Worker Freedom
Jonathan Johnson	President, Overstock.com
John Loudon	Missouri State Senator
Mark Meierhenry	Former South Dakota Attorney General
Pat Toomey	President, Club for Growth

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