Jackson, MS-- Democratic and Republican Party Primary Runoff Elections will be conducted on June 24, 2014. Although these primaries are conducted by the respective parties, strict adherence to Mississippi law should be followed.

Observers from both the Secretary of State’s Office and the Attorney General’s Office will be in Mississippi counties on Election Day. Matters of particular relevance:

**Poll watchers in polling place**

Miss. Code Ann. Sections 23-15-245 and 23-15-577 provide that in primary elections the only persons who may lawfully be within 30 feet of the polls are:

1) Voters approaching the polls, voting, and leaving the polling place
2) The poll managers (pollworkers),
3) One pollwatcher appointed, in writing, by each candidate whose name appears on the ballot

Miss. Code Ann. Section 23-15-245 states that it is the duty of the bailiff poll manager to prevent interference with the election and to keep the polling place clear of persons not authorized to be in the polling place. The bailiff may call upon other law enforcement officials for assistance in enforcing the law.

There is no authority in state law for a PAC or other outside group to place “election observers” in Mississippi polling places.
Crossover voting prohibited

Crossover voting is prohibited in the State of Mississippi. Crossover voting is defined as participation in the first primary of one political party and participation in the runoff primary of another party. Thus, a voter who cast his/her ballot in the Democratic Primary Election on June 3 is prohibited from casting his/her ballot in the Republican Primary Runoff Election on June 24, and vice versa. See MS AG Op., Brown (April 7, 1988).

Challenges

A person offering to vote may be challenged based upon the following grounds:

1) The voter is not a registered voter in the precinct,
2) The voter is not registered under the name he/she has applied to vote,
3) The voter has already voted in the election,
4) The voter is not a resident in the precinct where he/she is registered,
5) The voter has illegally registered to vote,
6) The voter has removed his/her ballot from the polling place, and
7) The voter is otherwise disqualified by law.

A person lawfully in the polling place may challenge a voter based on party loyalty only if the voter openly declares he does not intend to support the nominees of the party whose primary the voter is participating in.

Any criminal violation of Mississippi law should be reported to the local District Attorney’s Office and/or the Office of the Attorney General.