



Alabama Secretary of State John H. Merrill Quarterly Report July 2015

Volume 1
Issue 2



Inside:

Secretary Merrill Promotes Alabama
Abroad
Quarterly Accomplishments
2015 Legislative Agenda
See what's coming up in our next
issue!

Office Locations:

Alabama State Capitol 600 Dexter Avenue Montgomery, AL 36130	<u>Executive</u> State Capitol First Floor, Suite 105	<u>Elections</u> State Capitol Second Floor	<u>Legal</u> State Capitol Second Floor	<u>Finance</u> State Capitol Second Floor	<u>Personnel</u> State Capitol Second Floor
Alabama State House 11 South Union Street Montgomery, AL 36130	<u>Business Services</u> State House First Floor, Suite 119	<u>Government Support</u> State House Room 226	<u>Information Systems</u> State House Room 125	<u>Authentications, Trademarks, & Lands</u> State House Room 224	

Stay up-to-date with all the latest news!

www.sos.alabama.gov
<https://www.facebook.com/alasecretaryofstate>
<https://www.facebook.com/JohnMerrill>
<https://twitter.com/alasecofstate>
<https://twitter.com/johnhmerrill>

Secretary Merrill Promotes Alabama Abroad

In April and May-June 2015, Alabama took a huge step in cultural relations with Taiwan, the Province of China, and China. From April 18-25, 2015, Secretary Merrill was invited to attend a set of meetings in Taiwan, the Province of China, that focused on geopolitical relations between the latter and the United States. The invitation was extended by the Taiwanese officials, and with the exception of some minor reimbursement, the trip wasn't funded by the State of Alabama. Fifteen individual groups were organized for the discussion of a wide variety of topics, which include governmental relations, elections, business climate, education, cultural exchanges, infrastructure, health care, and economic development. Secretary Merrill was honored and pleased to meet President Ma Ying-jeou, who gladly received an Alabama cookbook, amongst a few other tokens, as a gift from our state. (*See photo on left page, left-hand side). The Secretary was also pleased and excited to visit Taipei and the magnificently picturesque Taroko National Park.

May 30-June 7, 2015 marked Secretary Merrill's next cultural exchange trip, this time to the People's Republic of China. Once again, the invitation was extended by the Chinese government, and with the exception of some, if any, minor reimbursement, the State of Alabama was not responsible for the trip's funding. An orientation and cultural introduction



commenced the event, and Secretary Merrill attended five formal meetings with the Chinese governmental and local cultural officials to discuss governmental relations, cultural exchange, economic development opportunities, and educational exchanges. The Secretary, along with a few other invited American officials, were given the opportunity to visit Beijing, Henan, which is a province located in Central China's Yellow River Valley, and Shanghai, and the group even visited the renown Great Wall of China during their stay. (*See photo on right page, upper right-hand side).

"It was a privilege to be invited to participate in these cultural opportunities," Secretary Merrill stated.



Quarterly Accomplishments

Here's a quick look at some of Secretary Merrill's many accomplishments since our last Quarterly Report.

~Since his inauguration on Jan. 19, 2015, Secretary Merrill has reduced office expenses by approximately \$660,000. An itemized list of your savings is available for review upon your request.

~He ensures that the Secretary of State website is updated on a regular basis with only the most vital information.

~A new web link has been added to the SOS website to provide citizens with information regarding Alabama's upcoming statewide, local, and referendum elections.

~A minimum 24-hour turnaround time has been implemented for the fulfillment of public records requests.

2015 Legislative Agenda



The 2015 Alabama State Legislative Session commenced March 3, 2015 and came to a close on June 4, 2015. This year's Session was the first in several years where the Secretary of State has promoted an extensive list of bills. Here is an extensive, legislative package of the eight bills that passed.

SB 148 Senator Dial/Representative Sanderford

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-477*

Serving as a technical amendment to the Alabama Code, in regards to the statutes that govern the presidential elections for military men and women, this bill will change the primary runoff deadline in compliance with the Federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).

SB 210 Senator Brewbaker/Representative Givan

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-440*

Serving as another technical amendment to the Alabama Code, dates for the county wet/dry referendums will also comply with the federal UOCAVA standards.

SB 229 Senator Livingston/Representative England

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-479*

Due to this bill's enactment, business filing requirements will be filed directly and electronically through the Secretary of State's Office. The program is voluntary, and other counties may participate through written consent.

*Photograph of SEC Primary bill signing courtesy of Dionne Whetstone

SB 240 Senator Ross/Representative Henry

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-239*

Dubbed by the media as the "SEC Primary" due to its act of aligning Alabama's election with the other southern states' elections, this bill changes the date of the presidential preference primary from March 8, 2016 to March 1, 2016. Alabama will therefore have a larger voice in the presidential election process.

HB 41 Representative Standridge/Senator Shelnett

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-41*

To assist Alabama's seniors regarding the long lines at the polling stations, this bill will ensure that the physically disabled and those over 70 years old will move to the front of the line.

HB 204 Representative Wingo/Senator Beasley

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-290*

Initially, Legislators were required to *apply* for free copies of their district's registered voters list, but now Alabama Legislators will automatically receive a free copy of this list within 90 days of their appointment.

HB 254 Representative Ainsworth/Senator Ross

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-459*

Secretary Merrill initially introduced this bill in the 2014 Legislative Session during his term as an Alabama House Representative. Unfortunately, the bill had died in the Senate. Now enacted, the Secretary of State may exchange free-of-charge, annual, electronic voter registration lists with other states, which will help eliminate double voting in Alabama.

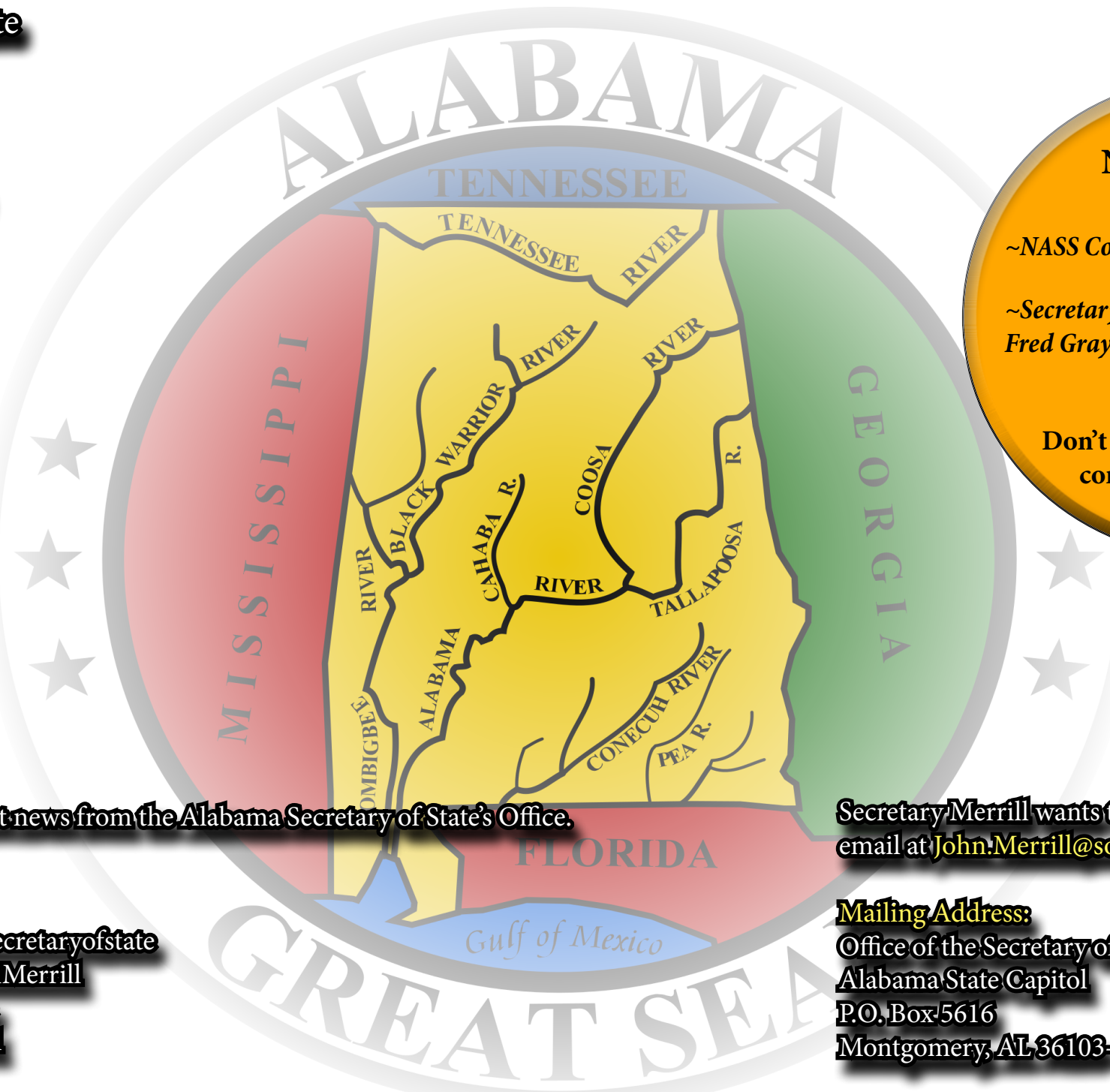
HB 323 Representative Davis/Senator Albritton

Status: *Enacted- Assigned Act No. 2015-367*

This bill will ensure that County Boards of Registrars investigate reports regarding deceased voters, as well as voters who are no longer residents of a precinct.

***For more information on these and other bills on this year's Legislative Agenda, please call Brent Beal at 334-353-7857.**

Office of Secretary of State
Alabama State Capitol
600 Dexter Avenue
Suite S-105
Montgomery, AL 36130
(334) 242-7200



NEXT ISSUE:

~NASS Conference 2015

~Secretary Merrill honors the Honorable Fred Gray & Dr. William Stewart

**Don't miss Volume 1 Issue 3,
coming October 2015!**

Stay up-to-date with all the latest news from the Alabama Secretary of State's Office.

www.sos.alabama.gov
<https://www.facebook.com/alasecretaryofstate>
<https://www.facebook.com/JohnMerrill>
<https://twitter.com/alasecofstate>
<https://twitter.com/johnhmerrill>

Secretary Merrill wants to hear from you! Send him an email at John.Merrill@sos.alabama.gov

Mailing Address:
Office of the Secretary of State
Alabama State Capitol
P.O. Box 5616
Montgomery, AL 36103-5616