

July 1, 2021

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Page Cortez
Louisiana Senate President
Louisiana State Senate
Post Office Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: Veto of Senate Bill 220 of the 2021 Regular Session

Dear President Cortez:

Please be advised that I have vetoed Senate Bill 220 of the 2021 Regular Session.

This bill requires the legislative auditor to annually audit state, local, and federal elections. The legislative auditor is already tasked with performing an audit of the Secretary of State on a routine schedule, at least once every seven years. This bill is an amalgamation of legislative overreach and an expansion of government in that the constitution names the Secretary of State the chief election officer of the state and requires him to administer all election laws. The legislative auditor has had the ability, for decades, to perform an audit of the legal compliance of statutory election law by the Secretary of State and has chosen not to, while still performing financial audits of the State Department as required. While costs should not be the only consideration in discussing election integrity, it certainly is a consideration in this instance when there has been no legitimate allegation that statutory election processes have not been followed. Discussion of the fiscal note for this bill focused only on the added cost for the legislative auditor. It failed to discuss the fact that the cost of every audit performed on local elections would be borne by the Secretary of State. For the legislature to encroach on the constitutional authority of the Secretary of State as part of the Executive branch and mandate the legislative auditor audit state, local, and federal elections annually not only poses a separation of powers issue but also adds an additional layer of bureaucracy in the elections process.

Sincerely,

John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Honorable Clay Schexnayder
Speaker of the House of Representatives