**5. Report of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs on the Electoral Amendment Bill [B24- 2018], dated 12 February 2019.**

The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs (the Committee), having considered the Electoral Amendment Bill [B24 - 2018], classified by the Joint Tagging Mechanism (JTM) as a section 75 Bill, reports as follows:

The Electoral Amendment private member’s bill, was tabled and referred to the Committee on 12 July 2018. The Committee met with the sponsor of the Bill, Mr M. Waters, MP, on 23 and 30 October as well as 13 November 2018, to consider the Bill.

The aim of the Bill was to amend the Electoral Act, 1998, so as to apply a single standard of identification to all South African voters; to provide for increased geographical coverage of registration and voting stations in foreign countries with significant numbers of eligible voters; to provide for voting to take place on weekends; to provide for time zones to be taken into account when setting deadlines for receipt and counting of votes from citizens ordinarily resident at a place outside the Republic; to provide for special votes in elections for a provincial legislature of persons ordinarily resident outside the Republic; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Discussion on the Private Member’s Electoral Amendment Bill was focused on the logistical challenges in the provision of voting stations and coping with different time zones, as well as identity document and passport requirements.

The IEC clarified that the provision of provincial ballots for South Africans would involve providing the correct numbers of ballots in time for 9 provincial and 1 national vote to all the current stations at embassies and missions, let alone to the additional proposed voting stations abroad, would be prohibitively expensive and very logistically complex. At present even citizens living in South Africa, that are outside of their province on the day of elections, are not able to cast a provincial vote. Some members argued that citizens who did not contribute to South Africa by residing here should not qualify for the significant additional expense to vote provincially.

The DHA indicated that South Africans living abroad who had lost their citizenship because they had taken up citizenship of other countries, needed to confirm if they were still on the voters’ register. That was why citizens abroad needed to have a South African ID and passport.

Concerns that votes from abroad had not being counted because they had not arrived in time had been due to no aircraft to ferry the ballots to South Africa in time, and this had been outside the IEC’s purview. The practicality of voting during weekends could be considered but this would mean extending security for a longer time.

The motion for desirability on the Electoral Amendment Bill [B24-2018] was moved by Mr MH Hoosen and seconded by Mr AM Figlan, while the motion for non-desirability was moved by Ms DD Raphuti and seconded by Mr DM Gumede. The Chairperson thus put both motions to a vote and more Members were in favour of the motion for non-desirability.

The Committee acknowledged that Mr M Waters had assisted the Committee by getting it more informed. Mr Waters thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address it.

Report to be considered.