**HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DEFERS DECISION ON ELECTORAL LAWS AMENDMENT BILL TO FRIDAY**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 9 March 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs has resolved to defer a decision on amendments to the Electoral Laws Amendment Bill (B22-2020) proposed by the National Council of Provinces to Friday, 12 March 2021, to enable political parties to consult their caucuses.

The committee received a report on the proposed amendments to the Bill, which has been passed by the National Assembly. The amendments proposed by the NCOP included revisions to Section 16 of the Electoral Act 1998 and Section 5 of Act 34 of 2003. “This process and amendments proposed by the NCOP highlights the importance of the two houses and strengthens the law-making process. The committee is of the view that the proposals made by the NCOP sought to find a balance between protection of personal information, on one hand, and the right to freedom of expression, on the other,” said Advocate Bongani Bongo, the Chairperson of the committee. Due to time constraints relating to passing the Bill, the committee will hold a special sitting on Friday to conclude the matter.

Meanwhile, the committee welcomes the department’s progress in addressing various matters of concern raised by the committee relating to the department’s operations. Among the areas of improvement include the filling of 14 senior management positions, which will stabilise the department and improve its performance.

Despite this, the committee has noted increasing concerns with queue management at Home Affairs’ offices across the country. It has therefore resolved to focus on the matter during its next oversight visit.

The committee also resolved to enhance its oversight over the Government Printing Works (GPW), following allegations that processes there have disintegrated. The committee believes the GPW is strategically positioned to increase South Africa’s revenue if it can expand its business across the African continent.

Regarding the report on statelessness in South Africa, the committee has resolved that the Department of Home Affairs must submit a detailed report in response to Lawyers for Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Issues the department must address in the report are determining exact figures for stateless people in South Africa and gaps in nationality laws. This resolution is to ensure holistic processing of the matter to guarantee lasting and workable resolutions to challenges faced by stateless people in South Africa.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, ADV BONGANI BONGO.**