**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS NA PASS ELECTORAL LAWS AMENDMENT BILL [B22B-2020]**

**Parliament, Friday, 12 March 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs has today adopted the Electoral Laws Amendment Bill (B22B-2020) with amendments proposed by the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The committee will recommend to the National Assembly (NA) to adopt and pass the bill.

The committee received a report on the proposed amendments to the bill, which had previously 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. One of the most important amendment proposed by the NCOP is the protection of personal information, with recommendation that some of the digits of identification numbers will be redacted in the voters roll made available to political parties and independent candidates.

The committee believes that the amendments achieve the intentions of the bill, which are to enhance the existing legislative mechanisms that ensure free and fair elections, in accordance with the Constitution; provide legislative authorisation for innovations in electoral practices in keeping with best practice to improve the commission’s efficiency in managing elections; and aligns the Electoral Act with the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013) regarding the protection of voters’ personal information.

“This committee appreciates all the work that has been done leading to this point in the process. This includes the participation of the public, which is a mainstay in our democratic processes. Furthermore, the strengthening of the bill by the NCOP highlights the importance and relevance of the two houses of Parliament in the law-making process. The committee remains of the view that the proposals made by the NCOP found 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.

The adopted report will be tabled before the NA for consideration and adoption.

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