**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECEIVES LEGAL INPUT ON ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Parliament, Friday, 6 May 2022** – The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs today received a legal opinion on legal and constitutional issues raised during the public consultation process around amending the Electoral Act 73 of 1998. This forms part of the broader process to amend the Act and a further realisation of the commitment the committee made to ensure an inclusive and thorough process that captures not only the views and aspirations of South Africans but also ensures a law that passes constitutional muster.

The committee has undertaken a deliberate and inclusive process, as it considers the Bill an important development in South Africa’s maturing democratic dispensation. Nonetheless, the committee is disappointed with a narrative heard from certain sections of society that seeks to undermine the process and deflect the committee from undertaking this important task.

The committee reiterates its commitment to ensuring that extensive consultations take place to ensure that the Bill is strong and addresses the questions raised by the Constitutional Court. To this end, the committee undertook an extensive public participation process that included written submissions, oral submissions conducted on 1 and 2 March, and extensive provincial hearings.

It must be emphasised that the committee has not at this point made a decision on the Bill. It is currently engaged with collating and considering all the submissions to ensure that all decisions made are fully informed. Also, the committee reiterates that there has been no tardiness on its part or on the part of Parliament in amending the Act. The committee takes exception to any suggestion that seeks to denigrate its work up to this point.

Furthermore, Parliament consists of two houses that will be seized with the responsibility of the amendment of this Act. Therefore, public consultations to further strengthen the Bill will be undertaken when the Bill is considered by the National Council of Provinces.

The committee will continue earnestly to process the Bill as it awaits further direction from the Constitutional Court on the application lodged for an extension. The committee will next week engage the department and the Electoral Commission of South Africa to seek further responses on the issues raised by the legal opinion. The committee remains determined to submit a worthy and strong Bill for the National Assembly to consider.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, MR MOSA CHABANE.**

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