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HOUSE BILL NO. 1858

Offered January 10, 2001

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A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 24.2-710 and 24.2-711 of the Code of Virginia, relating to duties of the electoral board, general registrar, and officers of election with respect to absentee voting and absentee voter applicant lists.

Patron—McQuigg

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 24.2-710 and 24.2-711 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 24.2-710. Further duties of electoral board and general registrar; absentee voter applicant lists.

On receipt of an absentee ballot, the electoral board or general registrar shall mark the date of receipt in the appropriate column opposite the name and address of the voter on the absentee voter applicant list maintained in the general registrar's office. A board member or registrar shall deposit the return envelope and the unopened ballot envelope in an appropriate container provided for the purpose, in which they shall remain until the day of the election.

On the day before the election, the general registrar shall (i) make out in triplicate on a form prescribed by the State Board the absentee voter applicant list containing the names of all persons who applied for an absentee ballot through the third day before the election and (ii) by noon on the day before the election, deliver two copies of the list to the electoral board ~~and post a copy in the general registrar's office~~. The general registrar shall make out a supplementary list containing the names of all persons voting absentee in person pursuant to § 24.2-705.1 for delivery and posting by 4:00 p.m. on the day before the election. The supplementary list shall be deemed part of the absentee voter applicant list and shall be prepared and delivered in accordance with the instructions of the State Board. The general registrar shall maintain one copy of the list in his office for two years as a public record open for inspection *upon request* during regular office hours.

On the day before the election, the electoral board shall deliver one copy of the list provided to it by the general registrar to the chief officer of election for each precinct. The list shall be attested by the secretary of the electoral board who shall be responsible for the delivery of the attested lists to the chief officer of election for each precinct.

Absentee ballots shall be accepted only from voters whose names appear on the attested list.

Before the polls close on the day of the election, the electoral board shall deliver the absentee ballot containers to, and obtain a receipt from, the officers of election at each appropriate precinct. The containers shall be sealed prior to delivery to the officers and shall contain the sealed absentee ballots, the accompanying return envelopes, and a copy of the absentee voter applicant list for each precinct.

If the county or city uses a central absentee voter precinct pursuant to § 24.2-712, the lists and containers shall be delivered, as provided in this section, to the officers of election for the absentee precinct.

Before noon on the day following the election, the general registrar shall deliver all applications for absentee ballots for the election, under seal, to the clerk of the circuit court for the county or city. The clerk shall retain the sealed applications with the counted ballots.

The secretary of the electoral board shall deliver all absentee ballots received after the election to the clerk of the circuit court.

§ 24.2-711. Duties of officers of election.

Before the polls open, the officers of election at each precinct shall mark, for each person on the absentee voter applicant list, the letters "AB" (meaning absentee ballot) in the voting record column on the precinct registered voter list.

~~Before the polls open, the~~ The chief officer of election shall ~~post~~ keep the copy of the absentee voter applicant list in the polling place *as a public record open for inspection upon request at all times while the polls are open*.

If a voter, whose name appears on the absentee voter applicant list, has not returned an unused ballot and offers to vote in his precinct, the officers of election in the precinct shall determine the matter pursuant to § 24.2-708 or, if the locality has a central absentee voter precinct, shall refuse to give him a ballot and shall refer him to the officers of the absentee precinct for an appeal pursuant to § 24.2-712.

After the close of the polls, the container of absentee ballots shall be opened by the officers of election. As each ballot envelope is removed from the container, the name of the voter shall be called

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59 and checked as if the voter were voting in person. If the voter is found entitled to vote, his name shall
60 be entered in the pollbook. The ballot envelope shall then be opened, and the ballot deposited in the
61 ballot box without being unfolded or examined. If the voter is found not entitled to vote, the unopened
62 envelope shall be rejected. A majority of the officers shall write and sign a statement of the cause for
63 rejection on the envelope or on an attachment to the envelope.

64 When all ballots have been accounted for and either voted or rejected, the officers shall place the
65 empty ballot envelopes, the return envelopes, and any rejected ballot envelopes, in one envelope
66 provided for the purpose and seal and deliver it with the ballots cast at the election as provided in this
67 title.