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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 798

Offered January 19, 2001

*Requesting the State Board of Elections to review election policies and procedures.*

Patrons—Crittenden, Almand, Armstrong, Barlow, Baskerville, Christian, Darner, Day, Deeds, Diamonstein, Grayson, Jones, D.C., Jones, J.C., McEachin, Moran, Plum, Pollard, Robinson, Scott, Spruill, Stump, Van Landingham, Watts and Williams; Senator: Maxwell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, public confidence in the integrity of the ballot, access to participation, accuracy of the reported vote, and certainty of the election is crucial in a democratic process; and

WHEREAS, such public confidence is essential to acceptance of the legitimacy of the election outcome, an orderly transfer of power, and the stability of the political system itself; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Commonwealth to promote the integrity of the election process by ensuring the accurate recording and counting of all legal votes cast for candidates and on ballot questions; and

WHEREAS, the closeness of the popular vote and subsequent disputes over the counting of the vote in several states during the November 2000 presidential election have focused national attention on the manner in which votes are cast, ballots counted and recounted, and procedural disputes resolved; and

WHEREAS, the lack of standards in handling and counting ballots and the varying interpretations of what constituted the intent of voter compromised the orderly, expedient, and fair conduct of the election; and

WHEREAS, every citizen who is eligible has the right to vote and to have that vote counted; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's election laws should be evaluated to be certain that no citizen is excluded from the process; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the State Board of Elections be requested to review election policies and procedures.

In conducting the study, the Board shall examine (i) the administration of election laws; (ii) interpretations of election laws; (iii) standard procedures for absentee voting; (iv) the designation and finance of a statewide system of technology; (v) provisions for voter-friendly registration; (vi) standard procedures for assisting voters at the polls; (vii) the training of election officials; and (viii) any other recommendations for changes that may be desirable to advance the clarity and standardization of policies and procedures and the certainty of, and fairness in establishing, the outcome of elections in the Commonwealth.

In examining the issues and formulating recommendations, the Board shall solicit the advice and experience of local election registrars, local electoral board members, elected officials, and citizens that represent diverse backgrounds and regions of the state.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Board, upon request.

The State Board of Elections shall complete its work in time to submit its written findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2002 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

INTRODUCED

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