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HOUSE BILL NO. 1256

Offered January 17, 2002

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 24.2-613 and 24.2-640 of the Code of Virginia, relating to ballot forms and party designations on ballots.

Patron—Sherwood

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 24.2-613 and 24.2-640 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 24.2-613. Form of ballot.

The ballots shall be white paper without any distinguishing mark or symbol and shall contain the names of all the candidates qualifying to have their names printed on the official ballot as provided by law. Their names shall be printed in black ink, immediately below the office for which they have qualified as candidates. The names on the ballot shall be in clear print; each name shall be on a separate line; and the type used in printing the ballots shall be plain roman type, not smaller than twelve-point pica. Immediately to the left of and on the same line with the name of each candidate shall be printed a square, not less than one-quarter, nor more than one-half inch in size, printed thus:

JOHN DOE

However, the provisions of this title pertaining to ballot squares shall not be applicable to punchcard or mark sense ballots.

For elections for federal, statewide, and General Assembly offices only, each candidate who has been nominated by a political party or in a primary election shall be identified by the name of his political party. Independent candidates shall be identified by the term "Independent." *For the purpose of this section, any Independent candidate may, by producing sufficient and appropriate evidence of nomination by a "recognized political party" to the State Board, have the term "Independent" on the ballot converted to that of a "recognized political party" on the ballot and be treated on the ballot in a manner consistent with the candidates nominated by political parties. For the purpose of this section, a "recognized political party" is defined as an organization that, for at least six months preceding the filing of its nominee for the office, has had in continual existence a state central committee composed of registered voters residing in each congressional district of the Commonwealth, a party plan and bylaws, and a duly elected state chairman and secretary. The name of the political party or, the term "Independent," or the name of the "recognized political party" may be shown by an initial or abbreviation to meet ballot requirements.*

Except as provided for primary elections, the State Board shall determine by lot the order of the political parties, and the names of all candidates for a particular office shall appear together in the order determined for their parties. In an election district in which more than one person is nominated by one political party for the same office, the candidates' names shall appear alphabetically in their party groups under the name of the office, with sufficient space between party groups to indicate them as such. For the purpose of this section and § 24.2-640, except as provided for presidential elections in § 24.2-614, ~~independent~~ Independent candidates and candidates of a "recognized political party" as defined above shall be treated as a class under "Independent"; their names shall be placed on the ballot after the political parties; and where there is more than one ~~independent~~ candidate in this class for an office, their names shall appear alphabetically.

No individual's name shall appear on the ballot more than once for the same office.

In preparing the ballots for general, special and primary elections, the State Board and electoral boards shall cause to be printed in not less than ten-point type, immediately below the title of any office, a statement of the number of candidates who may be voted for for that office. The following language shall be used: "Vote for not more than..... "

At any precinct at which mark sense ballots are used, the mark sense ballot may be used in lieu of the official paper ballot with the approval of the State Board.

Any locality which uses mark sense ballots at one or more precincts, including any central absentee precinct, may, with the approval of the State Board, use the mark sense ballot or printed reproductions of the mark sense ballot in lieu of the official paper ballot. Such reproductions shall be printed and otherwise handled in accordance with all laws and procedures that apply to official paper ballots.

§ 24.2-640. Ballots generally.

In every county and city using mechanical or direct electronic voting systems requiring printed ballots, the electoral board shall furnish a sufficient number of ballots printed on plain white paper, of

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59 such form and size as will fit the ballot frames. The names of the various candidates shall be printed in
60 type not less than fourteen point. On mechanical devices, the name of the office for which candidates
61 are offering for election shall be printed in reverse printing or overlaid with a colored plastic strip.

62 For elections for federal, statewide, and General Assembly offices only, each candidate who has been
63 nominated by a political party or in a primary election shall be identified by the name of his political
64 party. Independent candidates shall be identified by the term "Independent." *For the purpose of this*
65 *section, any Independent candidate may, by producing sufficient and appropriate evidence of nomination*
66 *by a "recognized political party" to the State Board, have the term "Independent" on the ballot*
67 *converted to that of a "recognized political party" on the ballot and be treated on the ballot in a*
68 *manner consistent with the candidates nominated by political parties. For the purpose of this section, a*
69 *"recognized political party" is defined as an organization that, for at least six months preceding the*
70 *filing of its nominee for the office, has had in continual existence a state central committee composed of*
71 *registered voters residing in each congressional district of the Commonwealth, a party plan and bylaws,*
72 *and a duly elected state chairman and secretary. The name of the political party or, the term*
73 *"Independent," or the name of the "recognized political party" may be shown by an initial or*
74 *abbreviation to meet ballot requirements. All candidates shall be arranged on each device or other ballot*
75 *to be electronically counted, either in columns or horizontal rows, and the caption of the various ballots*
76 *on the devices shall be placed so that the voter knows what feature is to be used or operated to vote for*
77 *his choice. No push knob, key lever or other device shall be used to vote for any candidate other than*
78 *on an individual basis except for presidential electors. In districts in which more than one person is*
79 *nominated by a single party for the same office, the names of the candidates shall appear alphabetically*
80 *within their party groups.*

81 The electoral board in any locality which converted from a mechanical to an electronic voting system
82 after January 1, 1994, may use a ballot which (i) is similar to the ballot used on the mechanical system
83 previously used in the locality, (ii) aligns the candidates of each political party and independent
84 candidates on the same row or column, and (iii) provides a separate row or column for each political
85 party and for independent candidates.

86 The provisions of general law concerning ballots shall apply unless in conflict with this section.