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HOUSE BILL NO. 1256

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections
on February 26, 2002)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Sherwood)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 24.2-613, 24.2-614, and 24.2-640 of the Code of Virginia, relating to ballot forms and party designations on ballots.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 24.2-613, 24.2-614, 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. A letter from the state chairman of a recognized political party certifying that a candidate is the nominee of that party shall constitute sufficient and appropriate evidence of nomination by a recognized political party.* The name of the political party, the name of the "recognized political party," or term "Independent" 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, *"recognized political parties" shall be treated as a class; the order of the recognized political parties within the class shall be determined by lot by the State Board; and the class shall follow the political parties as defined by § 24.2-101 and precede the independent class.* ~~independent~~Independent candidates shall be treated as a class under "Independent"; their names shall be placed on the ballot after the political parties *and recognized political parties*; and where there is more than one independent candidate 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.

§ 24.2-614. Preparation and form of presidential election ballots.

As soon as practicable after the seventy-fourth day before the presidential election, the State Board shall certify to the secretary of each county and city electoral board the form of official ballot for the presidential election which shall be uniform throughout the Commonwealth. Each electoral board shall have the official ballot printed at least forty-five days preceding the election.

The ballot shall contain the name of each political party and the party group name, if any, specified by the persons naming electors by petition pursuant to § 24.2-543. Below the party name in parentheses, the ballot shall contain the words "Electors for, President and, Vice-President" with the blanks filled in with the names of the candidates for President and Vice-President for whom the candidates for electors are expected to vote in the Electoral College. A printed square shall precede the name of each political party or party designation.

Groups of petitioners qualifying for a party name under § 24.2-543 shall be treated as a class; the order of the groups shall be determined by lot by the State Board; and the groups shall immediately follow ~~the~~ precede the independent class on the ballot. The ~~order~~ names of the candidates within the independent class shall be determined by lot by the State Board ~~and~~ listed alphabetically.

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

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. A letter from the state chairman of a recognized political party certifying that a candidate is the nominee of that party shall constitute sufficient and appropriate evidence of nomination by a recognized political party.* The name of the political party, the name of the "recognized political party," or term "Independent" may be shown by an initial or abbreviation to meet ballot requirements. All candidates shall be arranged on each device or other ballot to be electronically counted, either in columns or horizontal rows, and the caption of the various ballots on the devices shall be placed so that the voter knows what feature is to be used or operated to vote for his choice. No push knob, key lever or other device shall be used to vote for any candidate other than on an individual basis except for presidential electors. In districts in which more than one person is nominated by a single party for the same office, the names of the candidates shall appear alphabetically within their party groups.

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

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