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**HOUSE BILL NO. 992**

Offered January 14, 2004

Prefiled January 14, 2004

*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 of candidates on ballots.*

Patrons—Hugo, Athey, Black and Rapp

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~~ 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. *An endorsement by a political party or recognized political party of a candidate who has been nominated by petition pursuant to § 24.2-506 or § 10.1-523 shall not constitute grounds for identifying the candidate by that party name on the ballot.*

*No names of political parties or recognized political parties shall appear on the ballot to identify candidates in elections for (i) county, city, or town school boards or (ii) directors of soil and water conservation districts.*

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 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 that office. The following

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HB992

59 language shall be used: "Vote for not more than..... "

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

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

66 § 24.2-640. Ballots generally.

67 In every county and city using mechanical or direct electronic voting systems requiring printed  
68 ballots, the electoral board shall furnish a sufficient number of ballots printed on plain white paper, of  
69 such form and size as will fit the ballot frames. The names of the various candidates shall be printed in  
70 type not less than fourteen point. On mechanical devices, the name of the office for which candidates  
71 are offering for election shall be printed in reverse printing or overlaid with a colored plastic strip.

72 ~~For elections for federal, statewide, and General Assembly offices only, each~~Each candidate who has  
73 been nominated by a political party or in a primary election shall be identified by the name of his  
74 political party. Independent candidates shall be identified by the term "Independent." For the purpose of  
75 this section, any Independent candidate may, by producing sufficient and appropriate evidence of  
76 nomination by a "recognized political party" to the State Board, have the term "Independent" on the  
77 ballot converted to that of a "recognized political party" on the ballot and be treated on the ballot in a  
78 manner consistent with the candidates nominated by political parties. For the purpose of this section, a  
79 "recognized political party" is defined as an organization that, for at least six months preceding the filing  
80 of its nominee for the office, has had in continual existence a state central committee composed of  
81 registered voters residing in each congressional district of the Commonwealth, a party plan and bylaws,  
82 and a duly elected state chairman and secretary. A letter from the state chairman of a recognized  
83 political party certifying that a candidate is the nominee of that party shall constitute sufficient and  
84 appropriate evidence of nomination by a recognized political party. The name of the political party, the  
85 name of the "recognized political party," or term "Independent" may be shown by an initial or  
86 abbreviation to meet ballot requirements. All candidates shall be arranged on each device or other ballot  
87 to be electronically counted, either in columns or horizontal rows, and the caption of the various ballots  
88 on the devices shall be placed so that the voter knows what feature is to be used or operated to vote for  
89 his choice. No push knob, key lever or other device shall be used to vote for any candidate other than  
90 on an individual basis except for presidential electors. In districts in which more than one person is  
91 nominated by a single party for the same office, the names of the candidates shall appear alphabetically  
92 within their party groups. *An endorsement by a political party or recognized political party of a*  
93 *candidate who has been nominated by petition pursuant to § 24.2-506 or § 10.1-523 shall not constitute*  
94 *grounds for identifying the candidate by that party name on the ballot.*

95 *No names of political parties or recognized political parties shall appear on the ballot to identify*  
96 *candidates in elections for (i) county, city, or town school boards or (ii) directors of soil and water*  
97 *conservation districts.*

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101 or other device shall be used to vote for any candidate other than on an individual basis except for  
102 presidential electors. In districts in which more than one person is nominated by a single party for the  
103 same office, the names of the candidates shall appear alphabetically within their party groups.

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

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