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HOUSE BILL NO. 2415

Offered January 12, 2005

Prefiled January 12, 2005

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 24.2-653 and 24.2-671 of the Code of Virginia, relating to elections; provisional ballots; ascertaining election results.

Patron—Brink

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 24.2-653 and 24.2-671 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 24.2-653. Voter whose name does not appear on pollbook; handling of provisional ballots; ballots cast after normal close of polls due to court order extending polling hours.

A. When a person offers to vote pursuant to § 24.2-652 and the general registrar is not available or cannot state that the person is registered to vote, then such person shall be allowed to vote by paper ballot in the manner provided in this section.

Such person shall be given a paper ballot and provide, subject to the penalties for making false statements pursuant to § 24.2-1016, on a green envelope supplied by the State Board, the identifying information required in § 24.2-652. Such person shall be asked to present one of the forms of identification specified in subsection B of § 24.2-643. If he is unable to present one of these forms of identification, he shall sign a statement, subject to felony penalties for false statements pursuant to § 24.2-1016, that he is the named registered voter who he claims to be, and the officers of election shall note on the green envelope that the required statement was signed in lieu of presenting one of the specified forms of identification. The officers of election shall enter the appropriate information for the person on the pollbook in accordance with the instructions of the State Board but shall not enter a consecutive number for the voter nor otherwise mark his name as having voted.

The voter shall then, in the presence of an officer of election, but in a secret manner, mark the ballot as provided in § 24.2-644 and seal it in the green envelope. The envelope containing the ballot shall then be placed in the ballot container by an officer of election.

An officer of election, *by a written notice given to the voter*, shall inform ~~the voter~~ him that a determination of his right to vote shall be made by the electoral board on the ~~following~~ *second* day *following the election day* and advise the voter of the beginning time and place for the board's meeting and of the voter's right to be present at that meeting.

B. The provisional votes submitted pursuant to subsection A, in their unopened envelopes, shall be sealed in a special envelope marked "Provisional Votes," inscribed with the number of envelopes contained therein, and signed by the officers of election who counted them. All provisional votes envelopes shall be delivered either (i) to the clerk of the circuit court who shall deliver all such envelopes to the secretary of the electoral board or (ii) to the general registrar in localities in which the electoral board has directed delivery of election materials to the general registrar pursuant to § 24.2-668.

The electoral board shall meet on the *second* day following the election and determine whether each person having submitted such a provisional vote was entitled to do so as a qualified voter in the precinct in which he offered the provisional vote. One authorized representative of each political party or independent candidate in a general or special election or one authorized representative of each candidate in a primary election, who is a qualified voter of the city or county, shall be permitted to remain in the room in which the determination is being made so long as he does not impede the orderly conduct of the determination. Each authorized representative shall be a qualified voter of the county or city. Each representative, who is not himself a candidate or party chairman, shall present to the electoral board a written statement designating him to be a representative of the party or candidate and signed by the county or city chairman of his political party, the independent candidate, or the primary candidate, as appropriate. Such statement, bearing the chairman's or candidate's original signature, may be photocopied and such photocopy shall be as valid as if the copy had been signed.

If the electoral board determines that such person was not entitled to vote as a qualified voter in the precinct in which he offered the provisional vote, or is unable to determine his right to vote, the envelope containing his ballot shall not be opened and his vote shall not be counted. However, the provisional vote shall be counted if such person is entitled to vote in the precinct pursuant to § 24.2-401. The general registrar shall notify in writing pursuant to § 24.2-114 those persons found not properly registered.

If the electoral board determines that such person was entitled to vote, the name of the voter shall be

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59 entered in a provisional votes pollbook and marked as having voted, the envelope shall be opened, and
60 the ballot placed in a ballot container without any inspection further than that provided for in
61 § 24.2-646.

62 On completion of its determination, the electoral board shall proceed to count such ballots and certify
63 the results of its count. Its certified results shall be added to those found pursuant to § 24.2-671. No
64 adjustment shall be made to the statement of results for the precinct in which the person offered to vote.

65 The certification of the results of the count together with all ballots and envelopes, whether open or
66 unopened, and other related material shall be delivered by the electoral board to the clerk of the circuit
67 court and retained by him as provided for in §§ 24.2-668 and 24.2-669.

68 C. Whenever the polling hours are extended by an order of a court of competent jurisdiction, any
69 ballots marked after the normal polling hours by persons who were not already in line at the time the
70 polls would have closed, notwithstanding the court order, shall be treated as provisional ballots under
71 this section. The officers of election shall mark the green envelope for each such provisional ballot to
72 indicate that it was cast after normal polling hours due to the court order, and when preparing the
73 materials to deliver to the registrar or electoral board, shall separate these provisional ballots from any
74 provisional ballots used for any other reason. The electoral board shall treat these provisional ballots as
75 provided in subsection B of this section; however, the counted and uncounted provisional ballots marked
76 after the normal polling hours shall be kept separate from all other ballots and recorded in a separate
77 provisional ballots pollbook. The State Board of Elections shall provide instructions to the electoral
78 boards for the handling and counting of such provisional ballots pursuant to this section.

79 § 24.2-671. Electoral board to meet and ascertain results; conclusiveness of results.

80 Each electoral board shall meet at the clerk's or general registrar's office of the county or city for
81 which they are appointed at or before 5:00 p.m. on the *second* day after any election. The board may
82 adjourn to another room of sufficient size in a public building to ascertain the results. Written directions
83 to the location of any room other than the clerk's or general registrar's office where the board will meet
84 shall be posted at the doors of the clerk's and general registrar's offices prior to the beginning of the
85 meeting.

86 The board shall open the returns delivered by the officers.

87 If the electoral board has exercised the option provided by § 24.2-668 for delivery of the election
88 materials to the office of the general registrar on the night of the election, the electoral board shall meet
89 at the office of the general registrar at or before 5:00 p.m. on the *second* day after any election.

90 The board shall ascertain from the returns the total votes in the county or city, or town in a town
91 election, for each candidate and for and against each question and complete the abstract of votes cast at
92 such election, as provided for in § 24.2-675. For any office in which no person was elected by write-in
93 votes, and for which the total number of write-in votes for that office is less than (i) five percent of the
94 total number of votes cast for that office and (ii) the total number of votes cast for the candidate
95 receiving the most votes, the electoral board shall ascertain the total votes for each write-in candidate for
96 the office within one week following the election. For offices for which the electoral board issues the
97 certificate of election, the result so ascertained, signed and attested, shall be conclusive and shall not
98 thereafter be subject to challenge except as specifically provided in Chapter 8 (§ 24.2-800 et seq.) of this
99 title.

100 Once the result is so ascertained, the secretary of the electoral board shall deliver one copy of each
101 statement of results to the general registrar to be available for inspection when his office is open for
102 business. The secretary shall then return all pollbooks, any printed inspection and return sheets, and one
103 copy of each statement of results to the clerk.