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HOUSE BILL NO. 232

Offered January 11, 2006

Prefiled January 3, 2006

A BILL to amend and reenact § 24.2-310 of the Code of Virginia, relating to requirements for polling places.

Patron—Jones, D.C.

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 24.2-310 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 24.2-310. Requirements for polling places.

A. The polling place for each precinct shall be located within the county or city and either within the precinct or within one mile of the precinct boundary. The polling place for a county precinct may be located within a city if the city is wholly contained within the county election district served by the precinct. The polling place for a town precinct may be located within one mile of the precinct and town boundary.

B. The governing body of each county, city, and town shall provide funds to enable the electoral board to provide adequate facilities at each polling place for the conduct of elections. Each polling place shall be located in a public building whenever practicable. If more than one polling place is located in the same building, each polling place shall be located in a separate room or separate and defined space.

C. Polling places shall be accessible to qualified voters as required by the provisions of the Virginians with Disabilities Act (§ 51.5-1 et seq.), the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (42 U.S.C. § 1973ee et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act relating to public services (42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq.). The State Board shall provide instructions to the local electoral boards and general registrars to assist the localities in complying with the requirements of the Acts. *To the maximum extent possible, polling places shall be accessible to voters dependent on public transportation.*

D. If an emergency makes a polling place unusable or inaccessible, the electoral board shall provide an alternative polling place and give notice of the change in polling place, subject to the prior approval of the State Board. The electoral board shall provide notice to the voters appropriate to the circumstances of the emergency.

E. It shall be permissible to distribute campaign materials on the election day on the property on which a polling place is located and outside of the building containing the polling place except as specifically prohibited by law including, without limitation, the prohibitions of § 24.2-604 and the establishment of the "Prohibited Area" within 40 feet of the entrance to a polling place.

F. Any local government, local electoral board, or the State Board may make monetary grants to any non-governmental entity furnishing facilities under the provisions of § 24.2-307 or 24.2-308 for use as a polling place. Such grants shall be made for the sole purpose of meeting the accessibility requirements of this section. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to obligate any local government, local electoral board, or the State Board to appropriate funds to any non-governmental entity.