

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2007 SESSION

CHAPTER 402

An Act to amend and reenact § 30-19.10 of the Code of Virginia, relating to fiscal impact statements for proposed statewide bond referenda and distribution to voters.

[H 2101]

Approved March 15, 2007

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 30-19.10 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 30-19.10. Distribution of information on proposed questions to be submitted to voters.

Whenever a statewide referendum on a matter other than a constitutional amendment is submitted to the voters by the General Assembly, the State Board of Elections shall cause to be printed and distributed to the general registrar of each county and city, not less than ninety days prior to the election, copies of ~~an explanation of information about~~ the referendum to be placed at each registration site in sufficient number to provide a copy to any interested person, and to election officials to be posted at the polling places on the day of the election. The State Board of Elections also shall cause the ~~explanation~~ information to be published by paid advertisement in each daily newspaper with an average daily circulation of more than 50,000 in Virginia, and published in Virginia or in a contiguous state or district, once during the week preceding the final day for registration and once during the week preceding the referendum.

The ~~explanation~~ information shall contain the ballot question and *either (i) a ~~statement~~ neutral explanation of not more than 500 words on the proposed question, or (ii) for any bond referendum, a fiscal impact statement.* The *neutral explanation or the fiscal impact statement* shall be presented in plain English, shall be limited to a neutral explanation, and shall not present arguments by either proponents or opponents of the proposal. *The fiscal impact statement shall include descriptions of the need for and anticipated uses of the bond proceeds.* The Division of Legislative Services, in consultation with such agencies of state government as may be appropriate, including the Office of the Attorney General, shall prepare the *neutral explanation as part of the legislation authorizing the referendum. The staff of the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance Committee shall each prepare a fiscal impact statement for any bond referendum and assist the Division of Legislative Services in preparing the explanation as part of the legislation authorizing the referendum.*

The ~~explanation~~ shall be approved for distribution as to form and content by the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the house of introduction of the legislation authorizing the referendum. For purposes of this section and § 30-19.9, "plain English" means written in nontechnical, readily understandable language using words of common everyday usage and avoiding legal terms and phrases or other terms and words of art whose usage or special meaning primarily is limited to a particular field or profession.

Any failure to comply with the provisions of this section shall not affect the validity of the statewide referendum.