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HOUSE BILL NO. 1780

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections
on February 17, 2009)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Athey)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 24.2-226 and 24.2-228 of the Code of Virginia, relating to elections; filling vacancies in certain local offices; special elections.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 24.2-226 and 24.2-228 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 24.2-226. Election to fill vacancy.

A. A vacancy in any elected local office, whether occurring when for any reason an officer-elect does not take office or occurring after an officer begins his term, shall be filled by special election except as provided for certain towns with a population of 3,500 or less by § 24.2-228 or for constitutional officers as provided in § 24.2-228.1; ~~or unless provided otherwise by statute or charter.~~ The governing body or, in the case of an elected school board, the school board of the county, city, or town in which the vacancy occurs shall, within 15 days of the occurrence of the vacancy, petition the circuit court to issue a writ of election to fill the vacancy as set forth in Article 5 (§ 24.2-681 et seq.) of Chapter 6. Either upon receipt of the petition or on its own motion, the court shall issue the writ ordering the election for the next ensuing general election to be held in November in the case of county, city, or town officers regularly elected in November, or in May in the case of other city and town officers. If the vacancy occurs within 120 days prior to that election, however, the writ shall order the election to be held at the second ensuing such general election. Upon receipt of written notification by an officer or officer-elect of his resignation as of a stated date, the governing body or school board, as the case may be, may immediately petition the circuit court to issue a writ of election, and the court may immediately issue the writ to call the election. The officer's or officer-elect's resignation shall not be revocable after the date stated by him for his resignation or after the thirtieth day before the date set for the special election. The person so elected shall hold the office for the remaining portion of the regular term of the office for which the vacancy is being filled.

B. Notwithstanding any provision of law or charter to the contrary, no election to fill a vacancy shall be ordered or held if the general election at which it is to be called is scheduled within 60 days of the end of the term of the office to be filled.

C. Notwithstanding any provision of law or charter to the contrary, when an interim appointment to a vacancy in any governing body or elected school board has been made by the remaining members thereof, no election to fill the vacancy shall be ordered or held if the general election at which it is to be called is scheduled in the year in which the term expires.

§ 24.2-228. Interim appointment to local governing body or elected school board; elected mayor.

A. When a vacancy occurs in a local governing body or an elected school board, the remaining members of the body or board, respectively, within forty-five days of the office becoming vacant, shall appoint a qualified voter of the election district in which the vacancy occurred to fill the vacancy. If a majority of the remaining members cannot agree, or do not act, the judges of the circuit court of the county or city shall make the appointment. ~~The Notwithstanding any charter provisions to the contrary,~~ the person so appointed in a county or city, or a town with a population greater than 3,500, shall hold office *only* until the qualified voters fill the vacancy by special election pursuant to § 24.2-226 and the person so elected has qualified. The person so appointed in a town with a population of 3,500 or less shall serve for the remainder of the term and no special election shall be held.

If a majority of the seats on any governing body or elected school board are vacant, the remaining members shall not make interim appointments and the vacancies shall be filled as provided in § 24.2-227.

B. When a vacancy occurs in the office of a mayor who is elected by the voters, the council shall make an interim appointment to fill the vacancy as provided in subsection A.

C. For the purposes of this article and subsection D of § 22.1-57.3, local school boards comprised of elected and appointed members shall be deemed elected school boards.