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HOUSE BILL NO. 850

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 11, 2012

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 24.2-110, 24.2-111, and 24.2-411 of the Code of Virginia, relating to elections; appointment, compensation, and offices of general registrars.

Patrons—O'Quinn and Lopez

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 24.2-110, 24.2-111, and 24.2-411 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 24.2-110. Appointment, qualifications, and term of general registrar; vacancies; certain prohibitions.

Each electoral board shall meet in the month of May or June in 2007, and every four years thereafter, and shall appoint a general registrar, who shall be a qualified voter of the county or city for which he is appointed. However, in the case of a city that is wholly contained within one county, the city electoral board may appoint a qualified voter of that county to serve as city general registrar. General registrars shall serve *full time and for* four-year terms beginning July 1, 2007, and each fourth year thereafter, and continue in office until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

The electoral board shall fill any vacancy in the office of general registrar for the unexpired term. The electoral board shall declare vacant and fill the office of the general registrar if the appointee fails to qualify and deliver a copy of his oath to the secretary of the electoral board within 30 days after he has been notified of his appointment.

No general registrar shall hold any other office, by election or appointment, while serving as general registrar; however, with the consent of the electoral board, he may undertake other duties which do not conflict with his duties as general registrar. General registrars shall not serve as officers of election. The election or appointment of a general registrar to any other office shall vacate the office of the general registrar.

No general registrar shall be eligible to offer for or hold an office to be filled by election in whole or in part by the qualified voters of his jurisdiction at any election held during the time he serves as general registrar or for the six months thereafter.

The electoral board shall not appoint to the office of general registrar any person who is the spouse of an electoral board member or any person, or the spouse of any person, who is the parent, grandparent, sibling, child, or grandchild of an electoral board member.

No general registrar shall serve as the chairman of a political party or other officer of a state, local or district level political party committee. No general registrar shall serve as a paid or volunteer worker in the campaign of a candidate for nomination or election to an office filled by election in whole or in part by the qualified voters of his jurisdiction. The restrictions of this paragraph shall apply to paid assistant registrars but shall not apply to unpaid assistant registrars.

§ 24.2-111. Compensation and expenses of general registrars.

The General Assembly shall establish a compensation plan in the general appropriation act for the general registrars *all of whom shall serve on a full-time basis*. The governing body for the county or city of each general registrar shall pay compensation in accordance with the plan and be reimbursed annually as authorized in the act. The governing body shall be required to provide benefits to the general and assistant registrars and staff as provided to other employees of the locality, and shall be authorized to supplement the salary of the general registrar to the extent provided in the act.

Each locality shall pay the reasonable expenses of the general registrar, including reimbursement for mileage at the rate payable to members of the General Assembly. In case of a dispute, the State Board shall approve or disapprove the reimbursement. Reasonable expenses include, but are not limited to, costs for: (i) an adequately trained registrar's staff, including training in the use of computers and other technology to the extent provided to other local employees with similar job responsibilities, and reasonable costs for the general registrar or at least one member of the registrar's staff to attend the annual training offered by the State Board; (ii) adequate training for officers of election; (iii) conducting elections as required by this title; and (iv) voter education.

§ 24.2-411. Office of the general registrar.

Each local governing body shall furnish the general registrar with a clearly marked and suitable office which shall be the principal office for voter registration. The office shall be owned or leased by the city or county, or by the state for the location of Department of Motor Vehicles facilities, adequately

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59 furnished, and located within the city or within the county or a city in which the county courthouse is
60 located. The governing body shall provide property damage liability and bodily injury liability coverage
61 for the office and shall furnish the general registrar with necessary postage, stationery, equipment, and
62 office supplies. The telephone number shall be listed in the local telephone directory separately or under
63 the local governmental listing under the designation "Voter Registration."

64 No private business enterprise shall be conducted in the general registrar's office.

65 The general registrar's office in counties with a population under 10,000 and in cities with a
66 population under 7,500 shall be open a minimum of three days each week and additional days as
67 required by the general appropriation act. The general registrar's office in all other counties and cities
68 shall be open a minimum of five days each week. The specific days of normal service each week for
69 general registrars shall be determined by the State Board.

70 Additional hours, if any, that the general registrar's office is open for voter registration may be
71 determined and set by the general registrar or the electoral board.

72 **2. That the provisions of this act shall not become effective unless an appropriation effectuating**
73 **the purposes of this act is included in the general appropriation act passed during the 2012**
74 **Regular Session of the General Assembly that becomes law.**