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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 289

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 4, 2013

Establishing a joint committee of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections and the House Committee on Privileges and Elections to study the scheduling of elections in Virginia. Report.

Patron—Deeds

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Virginia is one of only five states (Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia) holding statewide elections every year and with elections for governor and state legislatures in odd-numbered years; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia practice of annual statewide elections strains the Commonwealth's elections system by the demands placed on election administrators, electoral boards, registrars, and officers of elections; and

WHEREAS, the costs inherent in conducting a statewide election exceed millions of dollars (i) in the sums paid for officers of election, custodian fees, equipment expenses, and other incidentals with these costs borne by the counties and cities and (ii) in the expenses incurred by the Commonwealth and State Board of Elections; and

WHEREAS, the impact of Virginia's unceasing rounds of elections on voter turnout and public participation appears to be detrimental but cannot be isolated from other factors such as uncontested elections and so merits close study and evaluation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint committee of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections and the House Committee on Privileges and Elections be established to study the scheduling of elections in Virginia. The joint committee shall have a total membership of eight members, consisting of three members of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections and five members of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections. The joint committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint committee shall examine the scheduling of elections in Virginia, evaluate the costs of annual statewide elections, and investigate various means to improve the scheduling of elections and to make possible accompanying improvements that will ensure efficient voting practices both at the polls and by absentee voting.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint committee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the State Board of Elections. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint committee for this study, upon request.

The joint committee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2013 interim. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint committee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint committee shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members or a majority of the House members of the joint committee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint committee.

The joint committee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2013, and the chairman shall submit an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2014 Regular Session of the General Assembly to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems. The executive summary shall state whether the joint committee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2013 interim.

INTRODUCED

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