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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 703**

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 11, 2017

*Establishing a joint committee of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections and the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections to study the streamlining of special elections in the Commonwealth. Report.*

Patrons—Sickles, Bell, John J., Boysko, Cole, Hope, Kory, Krizek, Levine, Mullin, Plum, Simon and Torian; Senators: Ebbin, Howell, Spruill and Surovell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, a need exists to streamline the system of special elections in the Commonwealth; and  
 WHEREAS, the cost of conducting special elections is largely borne by the counties and cities; and  
 WHEREAS, the unpredictable nature and frequency of special elections strain the Commonwealth's elections systems by the demands placed on the local electoral boards, general registrars, officers of elections, and elections administrators; and

WHEREAS, a uniform schedule for special elections has the potential to reduce both the fiscal impact on the counties and cities and the administrative burdens placed on local electoral boards, general registrars, officers of elections, and elections administrators; and

WHEREAS, the laws governing the timing and scheduling of special elections are complex and vary with the elected office and any attempt to streamline these laws and to establish a system for special elections requires close study and evaluation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint committee of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections and the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections be established to study the streamlining of special elections in the Commonwealth. The joint committee shall have a total membership of seven members, consisting of four 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 and 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. The joint committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint committee shall (i) review the current laws governing special elections, (ii) evaluate the costs borne in recent years by the localities to conduct special elections as compared to voter turnout at such elections, and (iii) consider options for a cohesive set of laws to govern special elections and for scheduling special elections, including the merits of establishing a uniform schedule. The joint committee shall invite general registrars, members of local electoral boards, and other elections administrators to participate in the study.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. 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 Department 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 2017 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 House members or a majority of the Senate 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, 2017, and the chairman shall submit an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2018 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

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**58** Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or  
**59** delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2017 interim.