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HOUSE BILL NO. 1210

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

A BILL to amend and reenact § 24.2-105 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 6 of Chapter 1 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-124, relating to minority language accessibility; voting and election materials.

Patrons—Tran, Guzman, Kory and Levine

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 24.2-105 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 6 of Chapter 1 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-124 as follows:

§ 24.2-105. Prescribing various forms.

A. The State Board shall prescribe appropriate forms and records for the registration of voters, conduct of elections, and implementation of this title, which shall be used throughout the Commonwealth.

B. The State Board shall prescribe voting and election materials in languages other than English for use by a county, city, or town that is subject to the requirements of § 24.2-124. For purposes of this subsection, voting and election materials include registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, voter information pamphlets, ballots, sample ballots, candidate qualification information, and notices regarding changes to local election districts, precincts, or polling places. Registration notices include any notice of voter registration approval, denial, or cancellation, required by the provisions of Chapter 4 (§ 24.2-400 et seq.).

The State Board may make available voting and election materials in any additional languages other than those required by subsection A of § 24.2-124 as it deems necessary and appropriate. The State Board may accept voting and election materials translated by volunteers but shall verify the accuracy of such translations prior to making the translated materials available to a county, city, or town, or any voter.

§ 24.2-124. Minority language accessibility; covered localities.

A. The State Board shall designate a county, city, or town as a covered locality if it determines, in consultation with the Director of the Census, based on the 2010 American Community Survey census data and subsequent American Community Survey data in five-year increments, or comparable census data that (i) either (a) more than five percent of the citizens of voting age of such county, city, or town are members of a single language minority and are unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process; (b) more than 10,000 of the citizens of voting age of such county, city, or town are members of a single language minority and are unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process; or (c) in the case of a county, city, or town containing all or any part of an Indian reservation, more than five percent of the American Indian citizens of voting age within the Indian reservation are members of a single language minority and are unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process and (ii) the illiteracy rate of the citizens of the language minority as a group is higher than the national illiteracy rate.

B. Whenever a covered locality provides any voting or election materials, it shall provide such materials in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language. For purposes of this requirement, voting and election materials include registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, voter information pamphlets, ballots, sample ballots, candidate qualification information, and notices regarding changes to local election districts, precincts, or polling places. Registration notices include any notice of voter registration approval, denial, or cancellation, required by the provisions of Chapter 4 (§ 24.2-400 et seq.).

INTRODUCED

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