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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 78

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study and compare the costs and benefits of early voting versus mail voting. Report.

Patron—Sickles

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, early voting is a voting option that allows a qualified voter to cast a ballot in person during a designated period prior to Election Day; and

WHEREAS, mail voting is a voting option by which all qualified voters are automatically mailed a ballot for every election; and

WHEREAS, the National Conference of State Legislatures reports 39 states and the District of Columbia offer early voting and five states offer mail voting; and

WHEREAS, studies show that early voting facilitates voter participation in elections, in addition to being more secure and more accurate than absentee voting; and

WHEREAS, studies show that mail voting increases voter turnout by being more convenient and accessible, and decreases elections costs over time; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study and compare the costs and benefits of early voting versus mail voting.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall consider the initial and long-term costs of moving from Virginia's current absentee voting system to early voting and to mail voting and the potential for increased voter participation under both systems. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall also consider the merits and risks of both systems related to security, accessibility, transparency, and accuracy.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by the Department of Elections. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2020, and for the second year by November 30, 2021, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission 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 summaries and reports 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.

INTRODUCED

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