

# 1994 SESSION

ENROLLED

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 30

*Continuing the Joint Subcommittee Studying Ways to Improve the Registration and Electoral Process and Encourage Voter Participation.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 1994

Agreed to by the Senate, February 28, 1994

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Commonwealth to encourage voter participation, to increase the number of registered voters and the number of registered voters who vote, to promote the uniform application of the registration and election laws, and to protect the electoral process against fraud and abuse; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution No. 532 at the 1993 Session establishing the Joint Subcommittee Studying Ways to Improve the Registration and Electoral Process and Encourage Voter Participation; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee held two meetings and conducted four regional hearings to solicit comments and proposals for election reform from the public; and

WHEREAS, registrars, local electoral board members, election analysts and representatives from the League of Women Voters and other voter participation groups responded with more than 25 proposals for election reform, including a "no reason" absentee ballot and an early voting system, later registration deadlines and poll hours, enhanced voter education programs and a proportional system of assigning the state's presidential electors; and

WHEREAS, many speakers advocated clearer standards and guidelines for determining voter residence to ensure the uniform application of the registration and election laws; and

WHEREAS, many of the comments focused on Virginia's opportunities to increase voter participation through its implementation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, which was passed by Congress to increase voter registration and participation among eligible citizens through motor vehicle, mail and agency registration; and

WHEREAS, many issues relating to the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act have just begun to surface and more are expected when the Federal Election Commission proposes regulations in early 1994; and

WHEREAS, the complexity, breadth, and importance of all these issues warrant further review by the joint subcommittee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Subcommittee Studying Ways to Improve the Registration and Electoral Process and Encourage Voter Participation be continued.

The joint subcommittee shall (i) continue to review the recommendations presented at its public hearings; (ii) identify and recommend legislation needed to meet the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act; (iii) explore the options available under the National Voter Registration Act, particularly in regard to the designation of discretionary agencies as registration locations; (iv) monitor federal regulations pertaining to the Act and identify what, if any, complementary state action is necessary; (v) consider the recommendations of the State Board of Elections Task Force on the National Voter Registration Act; (vi) develop standards to promote uniformity in the administration of the registration and elections laws with particular emphasis on clarifying the term "voter residence" to ensure that eligible voters are not disenfranchised; and (vii) address other related issues to encourage voter participation and streamline election procedures in Virginia.

The membership of the joint subcommittee shall remain the same, with any vacancy to be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

The State Board of Elections shall provide technical assistance and all other agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance upon request as may be deemed appropriate by the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1995 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$8,100.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

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