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SENATE BILL NO. 1063

Offered January 20, 1997

A BILL to amend and reenact § 24.2-422 of the Code of Virginia, relating to appeals from denial of voter registration applications.

Patron—Whipple

Referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 24.2-422 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 24.2-422. Appeal of person denied registration.

A. A person denied registration shall have the right to appeal, without payment of writ tax or giving security for costs, to the circuit court of the county or city in which he offers to register by filing with the clerk of the court, within ten days after the denial, a petition in writing to have his right to register determined.

The petitioner may file his petition by completing and filing a form which shall be prescribed by the State Board and which shall be used by the general registrar to notify an applicant of the denial of his application to register and of the reasons for the denial. The form shall (i) state that an applicant denied registration has the right to appeal to the circuit court of the county or city in which he offers to register, (ii) give the name and address of the clerk of the circuit court for such county or city (to be supplied by the general registrar), (iii) state that a filing fee of ten dollars must be paid when filing the petition, (iv) contain a statement by which the applicant may indicate his desire to petition the court to have his right to register determined, and (v) provide space for the applicant to state the facts in support of his right to register.

On the filing of a petition to have the right to register determined, the clerk of the court shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the chief judge of the court for the scheduling of a hearing on the petition. The matter shall be heard and determined on the face of the petition, the answer made in writing by the general registrar, and any evidence introduced as part of the proceedings. The proceedings shall take precedence over all other business of the court and shall be heard as soon as possible.

On the filing of the petition, the clerk of the court shall immediately give notice to the attorney for the Commonwealth for his county or city, who shall appear and defend against the petition on behalf of the Commonwealth.

Judgment in favor of the petitioner shall entitle him to registration. From a judgment rendered against the petitioner, an appeal shall lie to the Supreme Court of Virginia.

B. The general registrar shall send a new application for registration to the applicant with the form prescribed in subsection A of this section. The general registrar shall advise the applicant that he may complete and return the new application, in lieu of filing an appeal, if the reason stated for denial is that the applicant has failed to sign the application or failed to provide a required item of information on the application. Any applicant who returns a second application and whose second application is denied shall have the right to appeal provided in subsection A of this section.

INTRODUCED

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