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SENATE BILL NO. 906

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 4, 2013

A BILL to amend and reenact § 24.2-101 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 24.2-307.1, relating to vote centers; pilot program.

 Patron—Deeds

 Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 24.2-101 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 24.2-307.1 as follows:

§ 24.2-101. Definitions.

As used in this title, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Candidate" means a person who seeks or campaigns for an office of the Commonwealth or one of its governmental units in a general, primary, or special election and who is qualified to have his name placed on the ballot for the office. "Candidate" shall include a person who seeks the nomination of a political party or who, by reason of receiving the nomination of a political party for election to an office, is referred to as its nominee. For the purposes of Chapters 8 (§ 24.2-800 et seq.), 9.3 (§ 24.2-945 et seq.), and 9.5 (§ 24.2-955 et seq.), "candidate" shall include any write-in candidate. However, no write-in candidate who has received less than 15 percent of the votes cast for the office shall be eligible to initiate an election contest pursuant to Article 2 (§ 24.2-803 et seq.) of Chapter 8. For the purposes of Chapters 9.3 (§ 24.2-945 et seq.) and 9.5 (§ 24.2-955 et seq.), "candidate" shall include any person who raises or spends funds in order to seek or campaign for an office of the Commonwealth, excluding federal offices, or one of its governmental units in a party nomination process or general, primary, or special election; and such person shall be considered a candidate until a final report is filed pursuant to Article 3 (§ 24.2-947 et seq.) of Chapter 9.3.

"Central absentee voter precinct" means a precinct established by a county or city pursuant to § 24.2-712 for the processing of absentee ballots for the county or city or any combination of precincts within the county or city.

"Constitutional office" or "constitutional officer" means a county or city office or officer referred to in Article VII, Section 4 of the Constitution of Virginia: clerk of the circuit court, attorney for the Commonwealth, sheriff, commissioner of the revenue, and treasurer.

"Election" means a general, primary, or special election.

"Election district" means the territory designated by proper authority or by law which is represented by an official elected by the people, including the Commonwealth, a congressional district, a General Assembly district, or a district for the election of an official of a county, city, town, or other governmental unit.

"Electoral board" or "local electoral board" means a board appointed pursuant to § 24.2-106 to administer elections for a county or city. The electoral board of the county in which a town or the greater part of a town is located shall administer the town's elections.

"Entrance of polling place" or "entrance to polling place" means an opening in the wall used for ingress to a structure.

"General election" means an election held in the Commonwealth on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November or on the first Tuesday in May for the purpose of filling offices regularly scheduled by law to be filled at those times.

"Officer of election" means a person appointed by an electoral board pursuant to § 24.2-115 to serve at a polling place for any election.

"Party" or "political party" means an organization of citizens of the Commonwealth which, at either of the two preceding statewide general elections, received at least 10 percent of the total vote cast for any statewide office filled in that election. The organization shall have a state central committee and an office of elected state chairman which have been continually in existence for the six months preceding the filing of a nominee for any office.

"Person with a disability" means a person with a disability as defined by the Virginians with Disabilities Act (§ 51.5-1 et seq.).

"Polling place" means the structure that contains the one place provided for each precinct at which the qualified voters who are residents of the precinct may vote, *except in a locality using one or more vote centers as provided in § 24.2-307.1.*

59 "Precinct" means the territory designated by the governing body of a county, city, or town to be
60 served by one polling place, *except in a locality using one or more vote centers as provided in*
61 *§ 24.2-307.1.*

62 "Primary" or "primary election" means an election held for the purpose of selecting a candidate to be
63 the nominee of a political party for election to office.

64 "Qualified voter" means a person who is entitled to vote pursuant to the Constitution of Virginia and
65 who is (i) 18 years of age on or before the day of the election or qualified pursuant to § 24.2-403 or
66 subsection D of § 24.2-544, (ii) a resident of the Commonwealth and of the precinct in which he offers
67 to vote, and (iii) registered to vote. No person who has been convicted of a felony shall be a qualified
68 voter unless his civil rights have been restored by the Governor or other appropriate authority. No
69 person adjudicated incapacitated shall be a qualified voter unless his capacity has been reestablished as
70 provided by law.

71 "Qualified voter in a town" means a person who is a resident within the corporate boundaries of the
72 town in which he offers to vote, duly registered in the county of his residence, and otherwise a qualified
73 voter.

74 "Referendum" means any election held pursuant to law to submit a question to the voters for
75 approval or rejection.

76 "Registered voter" means any person who is maintained on the Virginia voter registration system. All
77 registered voters shall be maintained on the Virginia voter registration system with active status unless
78 assigned to inactive status by a general registrar in accordance with Chapter 4 (§ 24.2-400 et seq.). For
79 purposes of applying the precinct size requirements of § 24.2-307, calculating election machine
80 requirements pursuant to Article 3 (§ 24.2-625 et seq.) of Chapter 6, mailing notices of local election
81 district, precinct or polling place changes as required by subdivision 13 of § 24.2-114 and § 24.2-306,
82 and determining the number of signatures required for candidate and voter petitions, "registered voter"
83 shall include only persons maintained on the Virginia voter registration system with active status.

84 "Registration records" means all official records concerning the registration of qualified voters and
85 shall include all records, lists, applications, and files, whether maintained in books, on cards, on
86 automated data bases, or by any other legally permitted record-keeping method.

87 "Residence" or "resident," for all purposes of qualification to register and vote, means and requires
88 both domicile and a place of abode. To establish domicile, a person must live in a particular locality
89 with the intention to remain. A place of abode is the physical place where a person dwells.

90 "Special election" means any election that is held pursuant to law to fill a vacancy in office or to
91 hold a referendum.

92 "State Board" or "Board" means the State Board of Elections.

93 "Virginia voter registration system" or "voter registration system" means the automated central
94 record-keeping system for all voters registered within the Commonwealth that is maintained as provided
95 in Article 2 (§ 24.2-404 et seq.) of Chapter 4.

96 "Vote center" means a structure that contains a place provided for two or more designated precincts
97 at which the qualified voters who are residents of the designated precincts may vote as provided in §
98 24.2-307.1.

99 **§ 24.2-307.1. Requirements for county and city vote centers; pilot program.**

100 A. The State Board of Elections shall be authorized to provide for pilot programs in one or more
101 localities with respect to the use of vote centers. The governing body of a locality may submit to the
102 State Board a plan, with the consent of the local electoral board, to designate by ordinance one or
103 more vote centers for use in a primary election.

104 B. The governing body of each locality shall establish by ordinance as many vote centers as it deems
105 necessary.

106 C. The State Board shall promulgate guidelines for facility selection criteria and administrative
107 procedures to be followed by any locality participating in the vote center pilot program.

108 D. The purpose of the pilot program is to study the efficacy and cost savings of vote centers in
109 primary elections.

110 E. All provisions of this title governing polling places shall apply to vote centers unless otherwise
111 provided in this section.

112 F. The State Board shall publish a report by August 15 of any year in which one or more localities
113 takes part in the pilot program.

114 **2. That the provisions of this act shall expire on December 31, 2016.**