

SENATE BILL NO. 744

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Privileges and Elections

on _____)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Senator Vogel)

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 64, consisting of sections numbered 30-409, 30-409.1, and 30-409.2, relating to establishment of Virginia Elections Commission.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 64, consisting of sections numbered 30-409, 30-409.1, and 30-409.2, as follows:

CHAPTER 64.

VIRGINIA ELECTIONS COMMISSION.

§ 30-409. Virginia Elections Commission; purpose; membership; meetings.

A. The Virginia Elections Commission (the Commission) is hereby created as an advisory commission in the legislative branch to study, report, and make recommendations on matters related to the administration and conduct of elections in the Commonwealth in order to ensure the accessibility, integrity, efficiency, and security of elections in the Commonwealth.

B. The Commission shall consist of 15 members as follows: seven members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, of whom two shall be members of the House of Delegates representing the political party of the Speaker, two shall be members of the House of Delegates representing the minority political party in the House of Delegates, one shall be a member of a local electoral board designated by the Virginia Electoral Board Association, one shall be a general registrar designated by the Voter Registrars Association of Virginia, and one shall be a nonlegislative citizen member; seven members appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, of whom two shall be members of the Senate of Virginia representing the political party of the President pro tempore, two shall be members of the Senate

27 of Virginia representing the minority political party in the Senate, one shall be a member of a local
28 electoral board designated by the Virginia Electoral Board Association, one shall be a general registrar
29 designated by the Voter Registrars Association of Virginia, and one shall be a nonlegislative citizen
30 member; and the Commissioner of Elections or his designee to serve ex officio with voting privileges.
31 Nonlegislative citizen members of the Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
32 Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the Commission and the respective Clerk,
33 nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the
34 Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings.

35 C. Nonlegislative citizen members shall serve for terms of four years, except that appointments to
36 fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired term, and shall not be eligible to serve for more than two
37 successive four-year terms. All other members shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office and
38 may serve for successive terms.

39 D. The members of the Commission shall elect from among its membership a chairman and a vice-
40 chairman, who shall be members of the General Assembly. The chairman and vice-chairman shall serve
41 a term of two years and may not succeed themselves to the same position.

42 E. The Commission shall hold meetings quarterly or upon the call of the chairman. A majority of
43 the Commission shall constitute a quorum. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection C, if any
44 nonlegislative citizen member of the Commission fails to attend a majority of meetings of the Commission
45 in a calendar year, the Commission shall notify the member's appointing authority. Upon receipt of such
46 notification, the appointing authority may remove the member and appoint a successor as soon as
47 practicable.

48 F. No recommendation of the Commission shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members
49 or a majority of the House members appointed to the Commission (i) vote against the recommendation
50 and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the Commission.

51 G. Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be
52 reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as

53 provided in §§ 2.2-2813, 2.2-2825, and 30-19.12, as appropriate. Funding for expenses of the members
54 shall be provided from existing appropriations to the Commission.

55 **§ 30-409.1. Powers and duties of the Commission.**

56 At the direction of the General Assembly and upon request of the Governor, or upon its own
57 motion, the Commission shall study matters related to the administration and conduct of elections in order
58 to ensure the accessibility, integrity, efficiency, and security of elections in the Commonwealth and shall
59 report on its findings and make legislative recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor.

60 The chairman of the Commission shall submit to the General Assembly and the Governor an
61 annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Commission no later than the deadline
62 for submitting drafting requests for legislation to be prefiled to the Division of Legislative Services
63 established by the procedural resolution adopted by the General Assembly, or in default thereof, adopted
64 by the Joint Rules Committee. The executive summary shall be submitted as provided in the procedures
65 of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports
66 and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

67 **§ 30-409.2. Staffing; cooperation of other state agencies and political subdivisions.**

68 The Commission may appoint and employ staff as it deems necessary to assist it in carrying out
69 its duties. The Commission may determine their duties and fix their salaries or compensation within the
70 amounts appropriated therefor. In the absence of such staff, administrative staff support shall be provided
71 by the Office of the Clerk of the chairman of the Commission, and the Division of Legislative Services
72 shall provide legal research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the Commission. Technical
73 assistance shall be provided by the Department of Elections. All agencies of the Commonwealth and its
74 political subdivisions shall, upon request by the Commission, provide cooperation and assistance to the
75 Commission in the performance of its duties.

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