~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

HOUSE AMENDMENTS AMENDED

June 1, 2011

**S. 391**

Introduced by Senators Campsen, Scott and Rose

S. Printed 6/1/11--S.

Read the first time February 22, 2011.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 7‑13‑35, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE NOTICE OF GENERAL, MUNICIPAL, SPECIAL, AND PRIMARY ELECTIONS, SO AS TO CHANGE THE TIME IN WHICH ABSENTEE BALLOTS MAY BE OPENED FROM 2:00 P.M. TO 9:00 A.M., AND TO PROVIDE FOR A DATE ON WHICH AN ELECTION WILL BE HELD IN THE EVENT THAT IT IS POSTPONED; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑13‑40, RELATING TO THE TIME OF PARTY PRIMARY, CERTIFICATION OF NAMES, VERIFICATION OF CANDIDATES’ QUALIFICATIONS, AND THE FILING FEE, SO AS TO CHANGE THE DATE FROM APRIL NINTH TO APRIL FIFTH; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑13‑190, RELATING TO SPECIAL ELECTIONS TO FILL VACANCIES IN OFFICE, SO AS TO ADD A SUBSECTION THAT PROVIDES FOR THE DATE OF AN ELECTION WHEN THE GOVERNOR DECLARES A STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR A JURISDICTION; AND TO AMEND SECTION 7‑13‑350, RELATING TO THE CERTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES AND VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS, SO AS TO CHANGE THE CERTIFICATION DATE FOR CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT FROM SEPTEMBER TENTH TO THE FIRST TUESDAY FOLLOWING THE FIRST MONDAY OF SEPTEMBER.

Amend Title To Conform

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 7‑13‑35 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 7‑13‑35. (A) The authority charged by law with conducting an election must publish two notices of general, municipal, special, and primary elections held in the county in a newspaper of general circulation in the county or municipality, as appropriate. Included in each notice must be a reminder of the last day persons may register to be eligible to vote in the election for which notice is given, notification of the date, time, and location of the hearing on ballots challenged in the election, a list of the precincts involved in the election, the location of the polling places in each of the precincts, and notification that the process of examining the return‑addressed envelopes containing absentee ballots may begin at ~~2:00 p.m.~~9:00 a.m. on election day at a place designated in the notice by the authority charged with conducting the election. The first notice must appear not later than sixty days before the election and the second notice must appear not later than two weeks after the first notice.

(B) In the event the election is postponed, the election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the originally scheduled election day.”

SECTION 2. Section 7‑13‑40 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 7‑13‑40. In the event that a party nominates candidates by party primary, a party primary must be held by the party and conducted by the State Election Commission and the respective county election commissions on the second Tuesday in June of each general election year, and a second and third primary each two weeks successively thereafter, if necessary. Written certification of the names of all candidates to be placed on primary ballots must be made by the political party chairman, vice chairman, or secretary to the State Election Commission or the county election commission, whichever is responsible under law for preparing the ballot, not later than twelve o’clock noon on ~~April ninth, or if April ninth~~April fifth, or if April fifth falls on a Saturday or Sunday, not later than twelve o’clock noon on the following Monday. Political parties nominating candidates by party primary must verify the qualifications of those candidates prior to certification to the appropriate election commission of the names of candidates to be placed on primary ballots. The written verification required by this section must contain a statement that each candidate certified meets, or will meet by the time of the general election, or as otherwise required by law, the qualifications for office for which he has filed. Political parties must not accept the filing of any candidate who does not or will not by the time of the general election, or as otherwise required by law, meet the qualifications for the office for which the candidate desires to file, and such candidate’s name shall not be placed on a primary ballot. The filing fees for all candidates filing to run in all primaries, except municipal primaries, must be transmitted by the respective political parties to the State Election Commission and placed by the executive director of the commission in a special account designated for use in conducting primary elections and must be used for that purpose. The filing fee for each office is one percent of the total salary for the term of that office or one hundred dollars, whichever amount is greater.”

SECTION 3. Section 7‑13‑190 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“(F) In the event the Governor declares a state of emergency covering an entire jurisdiction holding an election, the election shall be postponed and held on the following Tuesday. This subsection does not apply to statewide primaries and general elections, unless the state of emergency declaration covers the entire State.”

SECTION 4. Section 7‑13‑350(B) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(B) Candidates for President and Vice President must be certified not later than twelve o’clock noon on ~~September tenth~~the first Tuesday following the first Monday in September to the State Election Commission~~, or if September tenth falls on Sunday, not later than twelve o’clock noon on the following Monday~~.”

SECTION 5.A. Article 1, Chapter 13, Title 7 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 7‑13‑25. (A) Notwithstanding the provision of this chapter or Chapter 5 of this title, the authority charged by law with conducting an election shall establish a procedure by which a qualified elector may cast his ballot, without excuse, during an early voting period for all elections. The qualified elector may cast a ballot during an early voting period pursuant to this section.

(B) Early voting centers must be established and maintained to ensure that voters may cast only one ballot.

(C) A qualified elector may cast his ballot at an early voting center in the county in which he resides.

(D) Each county board of registration and elections must establish at least one early voting center and may establish up to three early voting centers. The county board of registration and elections will determine the location of the early voting center or centers. Each early voting center must be supervised by election commission employees.

(E) The early voting period begins eleven days before an election and ends three days prior to the election.

(F) The county board of registration and elections must determine the hours of operation and location for an early voting center. However, the early voting center must be open for two Saturdays within the early voting period for statewide primaries and general elections.

(G) In addition to the early voting centers established pursuant to Section 7‑13‑25, a county board of registration and elections may authorize up to two additional early voting centers if the county board of registration and elections finds there is a need for additional early voting centers after holding a public hearing on the matter. The county board of registration and elections will determine the location of the early voting center or centers.”

(H) A sign must be posted prominently in an early voting center and must have printed on it, ‘VOTING MORE THAN ONCE IS A MISDEMEANOR AND, UPON CONVICTION, A PERSON MUST BE FINED IN THE DISCRETION OF THE COURT OR IMPRISONED NOT MORE THAN THREE YEARS’.”

B. Section 7‑3‑20(C) of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 253 of 2006, is further amended to read:

“(C) The executive director shall:

(1) maintain a complete master file of all qualified electors by county and by precincts;

(2) delete the name of any elector:

(a) who is deceased;

(b) who is no longer qualified to vote in the precinct where currently registered;

(c) who has been convicted of a disqualifying crime;

(d) who is otherwise no longer qualified to vote as may be provided by law; or

(e) who requests in writing that his name be removed;

(3) enter names on the master file as they are reported by the county registration boards;

(4) furnish each county registration board with a master list of all registered voters in the county, together with a copy of all registered voters in each precinct of the county, at least ten days prior to each election. The precinct copies shall be used as the official list of voters;

(5) maintain all information furnished his office relating to the inclusion or deletion of names from the master file for four years;

(6) purchase, lease, or contract for the use of such equipment as may be necessary to properly execute the duties of his office, subject to the approval of the State Election Commission;

(7) secure from the United States courts and federal and state agencies available information as to persons convicted of disqualifying crimes;

(8) obtain information from any other source which may assist him in carrying out the purposes of this section;

(9) perform such other duties relating to elections as may be assigned him by the State Election Commission;

(10) furnish at reasonable price any precinct lists to a qualified elector requesting them;

(11) serve as the chief state election official responsible for implementing and coordinating the state’s responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993; ~~and~~

(12) serve as the chief state election official responsible for implementing and enforcing the state’s responsibilities under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), as set forth in the United States Code, Title 42, Section 1973ff, et seq; and

(13) enter into the master file a separate designation each for voters casting absentee ballots and early ballots in a general election.”

C. Section 7‑15‑320 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately numbered subsection at the beginning to read:

“( ) Any qualified elector may vote during the early voting period pursuant to Section 7‑13‑25.”

SECTION 6. This act takes effect upon preclearance approval by the United States Department of Justice or approval by a declaratory judgment issued by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, whichever occurs first.

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