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Indicates New Matter

AMENDED

May 3, 2012

**S. 391**

Introduced by Senators Campsen, Scott and Rose

S. Printed 5/3/12--H.

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, as last amended by Act 434 of 1996, is further amended to read:

“Section 7‑13‑35. 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~~ a person may register to be eligible to vote in the election for which notice is given, the date the make‑up election will be held if the originally scheduled election must be postponed due to inclement weather or other emergency, 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.”

SECTION 2. Section 7‑13‑40 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 236 of 2000, is further 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~~ fifth, or if April ~~ninth~~ 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~~ a 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~~ the candidate’s name ~~shall~~ must 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, as last amended by Act 3 of 2003, is further amended by adding:

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

SECTION 4. Section 7‑13‑350 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 3 of 2003, is further amended to read:

“Section 7‑13‑350. (A) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the nominees in a party primary or party convention held under the provisions of this title by ~~any~~ a political party certified by the commission for one or more of the offices, national, state, circuit, ~~multi‑county~~ multicounty district, countywide, less than countywide, or municipal to be voted on in the general election, held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November, must be placed upon the appropriate ballot for the election as candidates nominated by the party by the authority charged by law with preparing the ballot if the names of the nominees are certified, in writing, by the political party chairman, ~~vice‑chairman~~ vice chairman, or secretary to the authority, for general elections held under Section 7‑13‑10, not later than twelve o’clock noon on August fifteenth or, if August fifteenth falls on Saturday or Sunday, not later than twelve o’clock noon on the following Monday; and for a special or municipal general election, by at least twelve o’clock noon on the sixtieth day prior to the date of holding the election, or if the sixtieth day falls on Sunday, by twelve o’clock noon on the following Monday. Political parties nominating candidates by primary or convention must verify the qualifications of those candidates prior to certification to the authority charged by law with preparing the ballot. The written certification 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 the office for which he has filed. ~~Any~~ A 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 he has filed ~~shall~~ must not be nominated and certified, and ~~such~~ the candidate’s name ~~shall~~ must not be placed on a general, special, or municipal election ballot.

(B) Candidates for President and Vice President must be certified to the State Election Commission not later than twelve o’clock noon on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in September ~~September tenth 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. Section 5‑7‑200 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 5‑7‑200. ~~(a)~~(A) A mayor or councilman shall forfeit his office if he:

(1) lacks at any time during his term of office ~~any~~ a qualification for the office prescribed by the general law and the Constitution;

(2) violates ~~any~~ an express prohibition of Chapters 1 to 17; or

(3) is convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude.

~~(b)~~(B) A vacancy in the office of mayor or council ~~shall~~ must be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term either:

(1) at the next ~~regular~~ municipal election; or

(2) at a special election held pursuant to Section 7‑13‑190, if the vacancy occurs:

(a) one hundred eighty days or more, or

(b) ninety days or less

prior to the next ~~general~~ municipal election.”

SECTION 6. Section 7‑13‑190(B) of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 412 of 1998, is further amended to read:

“(B) In partisan elections, whether seeking nomination by political party primary or political party convention, filing by these candidates shall open for the office at twelve o’clock noon on the third Friday after the vacancy occurs for a period to close ten days later at twelve o’clock noon. If seeking nomination by petition, the petitions must be submitted not later than twelve o’clock noon, sixty days prior to the election. Verification of these petitions must be made not later than twelve o’clock noon forty‑five days prior to the election. If seeking nomination by political party primary or political party convention, filing with the appropriate official is the same as provided in Section 7‑11‑15 and if seeking nomination by petition, filing with the appropriate official is the same as provided in Section 7‑11‑70.

A primary must be held on the eleventh Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. A runoff primary must be held on the thirteenth Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. The special election must be on the eighteenth Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. If the eighteenth Tuesday after the vacancy occurs is no more than ~~sixty~~ one hundred twenty days prior to the general election, the special election shall be held on the same day as the general election. If the filing period closes on a state holiday, then filing must be held open through the succeeding weekday. If the date for an election falls on a state holiday, it must be set for the next succeeding Tuesday. For purposes of this section, state holiday does not mean the general election day.”

SECTION 7. 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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