**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND ACT 589 OF 1986, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE BEAUFORT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, SO AS TO REQUIRE THOSE CANDIDATES SEEKING TO FILL A BOARD VACANCY IN A SPECIAL ELECTION TO SUBMIT A STATEMENT OF CANDIDACY RATHER THAN SUBMIT SIGNED PETITIONS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 1(C) of Act 589 of 1986, as last amended by Act 716 of 1990, is further amended to read:

“(C) If a vacancy occurs on the board and the unexpired term is twelve months or less, the office must be filled by appointment by the Governor upon the recommendation of a majority of the legislative delegation representing Beaufort County. If the unexpired term is more than twelve months, a special election must be conducted to fill the vacancy. The board, by the first Tuesday after the vacancy occurs, shall notify the Beaufort County Election Commission of the vacancy. Notice of the special election must be published by the Beaufort County Election Commission in a newspaper of general circulation in the district from which the vacancy is to be filled and the notice must contain appropriate information concerning the election. The notice must be published ~~not later than~~ by the second Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. ~~To have his name placed on the ballot as a candidate in the special election, a person shall submit to the county election commission a petition which, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 7‑11‑70 of the 1976 Code, must contain the signatures of at least two and one‑half percent of the qualified registered electors of the district. The name of the candidate, if he is otherwise qualified, must be placed upon the special election ballot if the petition is submitted not later than twelve o’clock noon on the eighth Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. The Beaufort County Board of Voter Registration shall check the petition at the request of the authority charged with preparing the ballot and certify the results to that authority not later than twelve o’clock noon on the tenth Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. Once submitted for verification, the petition may not be returned to the petitioner but must become a part of the public record of the special election.~~ To have his name placed on the ballot as a candidate in the special election, a person shall submit to the Beaufort County Board of Voter Registration and Elections a statement of candidacy by twelve o’clock noon on the tenth Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. Section 7‑13‑352 of the 1976 Code shall govern the process of nomination by statement of candidacy and verification of candidates’ qualifications for the elections established by this act. The special election must be set for the seventeenth Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. If any of the days dealing with the special election fall on a holiday, then the required date is set as the next normal working day. If a vacancy occurs in more than one office requiring separate special elections to be held within twenty‑eight days under the provisions of this act, the authority responsible for the conduct of the special election shall conduct all of the special elections on the same date. The special elections must be held on the latest date required for a special election during the twenty‑eight day period.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor and applies to a vacancy existing on or after the effective date of this act.

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