**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND ACT 278 OF 1985, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE JASPER COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, SO AS TO REQUIRE CANDIDATES SEEKING ELECTION TO SUBMIT A STATEMENT OF CANDIDACY RATHER THAN SIGNED PETITIONS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 1 of Act 278 of 1985, as last amended by Act 476 of 1998, is further amended to read:

“Section 1. The central authority of Jasper County’s education system is the Jasper County Board of Education (board) which is, ex officio, the board of trustees of the Jasper County School District, and all powers and functions vested in school trustees by general or special enactment are vested in the board.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board is composed of nine members whose terms shall be four years except that the initial term for Districts 2, 4, 6, and 8 shall be two years and four years thereafter. Each trustee must be a resident elector of the single member district from which the trustee is elected as designated in Section 2 of this act. A vacancy must be filled by special election as provided in Section 7‑13‑190.

Notice of the election must be published by the Jasper County Board of Elections and Voter Registration in a newspaper of general circulation in the district which shall contain appropriate information concerning the election, such as the date of the election, the qualifications of a candidate for election, the method of securing a place on the ballot, ~~the legal requirements regarding the number of necessary signatures on the required petition,~~ all pertinent deadlines, and the authority to whom the candidate’s ~~petition~~ statement of candidacy must be submitted. The notice must be published not earlier than one hundred fifty days, and not later than one hundred twenty days, before the date of the election. The notice published pursuant to this act is additional to any general law requirements of notice of election pursuant to Title 7 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976.

~~To have his name placed on the ballot as a candidate, a person shall submit to the county election commission a petition which, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 7‑11‑70 of the 1976 Code, shall contain the signatures of at least two and one‑half percent of the qualified registered electors of the single member district.~~ To have his name placed on the ballot as a candidate in the general election, a person shall submit to the Jasper County Board of Voter Registration and Elections a statement of candidacy no later than twelve o’clock noon on August first or, if August first falls on a Saturday or Sunday, no later than twelve o’clock noon on the following Monday. Section 7‑13‑352 of 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 name of the candidate, if he is otherwise qualified, must be placed upon the ballot by the authority charged by law with preparing the ballot if the petition is submitted, as required by this section, not later than twelve o’clock noon on August first prior to the date of the election, or if August first falls on Sunday, not later than twelve o’clock noon on the following Monday. At the time the petition is submitted, the authority charged with accepting it shall issue a receipt to the person submitting the petition which shall reflect the date it was submitted and the total number of signatures it contains. The Jasper County Board of Elections and Voter Registration shall check the petition at the request of the authority charged with printing the ballot and shall certify the results to that authority not later than twelve o’clock noon on September first prior to the date of the election, or if September first falls on Sunday, not later than twelve o’clock noon on the following Monday. Once submitted for verification, the petition may not be returned to the petitioner but must be retained by the authority to whom it was submitted and must become a part of the public records of the election for which it was submitted.~~”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑