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Indicates New Matter

COMMITTEE REPORT

March 24, 2021

**S. 236**

Introduced by Senator Young

S. Printed 3/24/21--S.

Read the first time January 12, 2021.

**THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

To whom was referred a Bill (S. 236) to amend Section 7-7-1000, Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, relating to pooling precincts in municipal elections, so as to provide that any precinct, etc., respectfully

**REPORT:**

That they have duly and carefully considered the same and recommend that the same do pass with amendment:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, starting on page 1, line 31, and ending on page 2, line 13, by striking SECTION 1 in its entirety and inserting therein the following:

/ SECTION 1. Section 7-7-1000 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 7‑7‑1000. (A) For purposes of municipal general elections only, a municipality may pool one or more precincts with other precincts and have one voting place for all of these pooled precincts upon the following conditions:

(1) Any precinct which contains five hundred or more registered voters within the municipality must have its own voting place.

(2) The total number of registered voters within the municipality in each group of pooled precincts cannot exceed onethousand five hundred.

(3) The voting place of any precinct pooled with others cannot be more than three miles from the nearest part of any pooled precinct.

(4) The notice requirements of Section 7‑7‑15 must be complied with and in addition to this requirement, the location of voting places for all precincts including those pooled must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality on the day of the election. If the newspaper is not published daily, then on the date of publication nearest and prior to the date of election.

(5) Whenever precincts are pooled in a municipal general election, the voter registration lists, poll lists, and ballots for each precinct represented must be used by the managers of election. Results of the election must also be reported and certified by individual precinct.

(B) For purposes of municipal primary elections only, a municipality may pool one or more precincts with other precincts and have one voting place for all of these pooled precincts upon the following conditions:

(1) Any precinct which contains three thousand or more registered voters within the municipality must have its own voting place.

(2) The total number of registered voters within the municipality in each group of pooled precincts cannot exceed three thousand.

(3) The voting place of any precinct pooled with others cannot be more than three miles from the nearest part of any pooled precinct.

(4) The notice requirements of Section 7‑7‑15 must be complied with and in addition to this requirement, the location of voting places for all precincts including those pooled must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality on the day of the election. If the newspaper is not published daily, then on the date of publication nearest and prior to the date of election.

(5) Whenever precincts are pooled in a municipal primary election, the voter registration lists, poll lists, and ballots for each precinct represented must be used by the managers of election. Results of the election must also be reported and certified by individual precinct.” /

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

LUKE A. RANKIN for Committee.

**STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT**

**Explanation of Fiscal Impact**

**Local Expenditure & Revenue**

This bill allows for more pooled precincts in municipal elections by increasing the number of registered voters required for a voting precinct to have its own polling location from 500 to 3,000 registered voters. It also requires that the voting place of any precinct pooled within a municipality cannot exceed 3,000 registered voters, an increase from 1,500. Pooled polling places cannot be more than 5 miles from the nearest part of any pooled precinct. The location of voting places for all precincts, including those pooled, must be published in the municipality on the day of the election; if the news is not published daily, then it must be published on the date of publication nearest and prior to the date of election. Election results must also be reported and certified by the individual precinct.

RFA contacted thirty-seven county governments and the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) regarding the impact of this bill. MASC indicates that no expenditure increases are expected as a result of this bill. Because no responses were received from the counties surveyed, our office is not able to determine the expenditure or revenue impact of this bill on local governments.

Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director

Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 7-7-1000, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO POOLING PRECINCTS IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT ANY PRECINCT CONTAINING THREE THOUSAND OR MORE VOTERS, AN INCREASE FROM FIVE HUNDRED OR MORE VOTERS, HAVE ITS OWN POLLING PLACE; THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN THE MUNICIPAL POOLED PRECINCTS CANNOT EXCEED THREE THOUSAND, AN INCREASE FROM ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED; AND THAT POOLED MUNICIPAL POLLING PLACES CANNOT BE MORE THAN FIVE MILES, AN INCREASE FROM THREE MILES, FROM THE NEAREST PART OF ANY POOLED PRECINCT.

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

SECTION 1. Section 7-7-1000 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 7‑7‑1000. For purposes of municipal elections only, a municipality may pool one or more precincts with other precincts and have one voting place for all of these pooled precincts upon the following conditions:

(1) Any precinct which contains ~~five hundred~~ three thousand or more registered voters within the municipality must have its own voting place.

(2) The total number of registered voters within the municipality in each group of pooled precincts cannot exceed ~~one~~ three thousand ~~five hundred~~.

(3) The voting place of any precinct pooled with others cannot be more than ~~three~~ five miles from the nearest part of any pooled precinct.

(4) The notice requirements of Section 7‑7‑15 must be complied with and in addition to this requirement, the location of voting places for all precincts including those pooled must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality on the day of the election. If the newspaper is not published daily, then on the date of publication nearest and prior to the date of election.

(5) Whenever precincts are pooled in a municipal election, the voter registration lists, poll lists, and ballots for each precinct represented must be used by the managers of election. Results of the election must also be reported and certified by individual precinct.”

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

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