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HOUSE BILL NO. 542

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 11, 2022

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-1837, 24.2-110, 24.2-111, 24.2-112, 24.2-114, 24.2-119 through 24.2-122, 24.2-230, 24.2-412, 24.2-620, 24.2-621, 24.2-632, 24.2-701.1, 24.2-707.1, and 47.1-19 of the Code of Virginia, relating to elections administration; reclassification of assistant registrars.

Patron—Batten

Committee Referral Pending

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 2.2-1837, 24.2-110, 24.2-111, 24.2-112, 24.2-114, 24.2-119 through 24.2-122, 24.2-230, 24.2-412, 24.2-620, 24.2-621, 24.2-632, 24.2-701.1, 24.2-707.1, and 47.1-19 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2.2-1837. Risk management plan for public liability.

A. Subject to the approval of the Governor, the Division shall establish a risk management plan, which may be purchased insurance, self-insurance or a combination of self-insurance and purchased insurance to provide:

1. Protection against liability imposed by law for damages resulting from any claim:

a. Made against any state department, agency, institution, board, commission, officer, agent, or employee for acts or omissions of any nature while acting in an authorized governmental or proprietary capacity and in the course and scope of employment or authorization;

b. Made against participants, other than professional counsel, in student disciplinary proceedings at public institutions of higher education for nonmalicious acts or omissions of any nature in the course and scope of participation in the proceedings; or

c. Resulting from an authorized indemnification agreement entered into by a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth in accordance with this subsection.

A public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth may execute an indemnification agreement if the Governor (i) considers in advance of execution (a) the institution's analysis of the relevant public benefit and risk of liability, (b) the Division's charge to be assessed against the institution for providing insurance or self-insurance coverage for the claims resulting from the indemnification agreement, and (c) the Office of the Attorney General's comments and (ii) determines that execution is necessary to further the public's best interests.

The indemnification agreement shall limit the institution's total liability to a stated dollar amount and shall notify the contractor that the full faith and credit of the Commonwealth are not pledged or committed to payment of the institution's obligation under the agreement. However, no such institution shall be authorized to enter into an indemnification agreement in accordance with this subsection to indemnify any person or entity against damages arising from a sponsored project conducted by such institution. For the purposes of this section, a "sponsored project" is a research, instruction, or service project conducted at a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth pursuant to a grant, cooperative agreement, or other contract;

2. Protection against tort liability and incidental medical payments arising out of the ownership, maintenance or use of buildings, grounds or properties owned or leased by the Commonwealth or used by state employees or other authorized persons in the course of their employment;

3. For the payment of attorney fees and expenses incurred in defending such persons and entities concerning any claim that (i) arises from their governmental employment or authorization, that (ii) arises from their participation in such student disciplinary proceedings, or (iii) is described in any such indemnification agreement, where the Division is informed by the Attorney General's office that it will not provide a defense due to a conflict or other appropriate reason; and

4. For the payment of attorney fees and expenses awarded to any individual or entity against the Commonwealth, or any department, agency, institution, board, commission, officer, agent, or employee of the Commonwealth for acts or omissions of any nature while acting in an authorized governmental or proprietary capacity, or in reliance upon any constitutional provision, or law of the Commonwealth. It is the obligation of the Division to provide for such indemnification regardless of whether there is a request for or an award of damages associated with the award of such fees and expenses.

a. As a condition of coverage for the payment of attorney fees and expenses, the department, agency, institution, board, commission, officer, agent, or employee of the Commonwealth shall (i) promptly notify the Division of the commencement of any claim, suit, action or other proceeding prior to its

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59 settlement, (ii) provide the Division with full nonprivileged information on the matter as requested, and
60 (iii) permit the Division to participate in the investigation of such claim, suit, action or other proceeding.
61 Failure to promptly notify the Division or to reasonably cooperate may, at the Division's discretion,
62 result in no payment or a reduced payment being made.

63 b. The Division shall set the premium and administrative costs to be paid to it for providing payment
64 of attorney fees and expenses awarded pursuant to this section. The premiums and administrative costs
65 set by the Division shall be payable in the amounts, at the time and in the manner that the Division in
66 its sole discretion requires. Premiums and administrative costs shall be set to best ensure the financial
67 stability of the plan.

68 B. Any risk management plan established pursuant to this section shall provide for the establishment
69 of a trust fund or contribution to the State Insurance Reserve Trust Fund for the payment of claims
70 covered under the plan. The funds shall be invested as provided in § 2.2-1806 and interest shall be
71 added to the fund as earned. The trust fund shall also provide for payment of administrative costs,
72 contractual costs, and other expenses related to the administration of such plan.

73 C. The risk management plan for public liability shall be submitted to the Governor for approval
74 prior to implementation.

75 D. The risk management plan established pursuant to this section shall provide protection against
76 professional liability imposed by law as provided in § 24.2-121, resulting from any claim made against a
77 local electoral board, any of its members, any general registrar, or any employee of or paid ~~assistant~~
78 ~~deputy~~ to a registrar for acts or omissions of any nature while acting in an authorized governmental or
79 proprietary capacity and in the course and scope of employment or authorization, regardless of whether
80 or not the civil action requests monetary damages, subject to the limitations of the risk management
81 plan.

82 E. The risk management plan established pursuant to this section shall provide protection against any
83 claim made against any soil and water conservation district, director, officer, agent or employee thereof,
84 (i) arising out of the ownership, maintenance or use of buildings, grounds or properties owned, leased or
85 maintained by any such district or used by district employees or other authorized persons in the course
86 of their employment or (ii) arising out of acts or omissions of any nature while acting in an authorized
87 governmental or proprietary capacity and in the course and scope of employment or authorization.

88 F. The risk management plan established pursuant to this section shall provide protection against
89 professional liability imposed by law for damages resulting from any claim made against a local school
90 board selection commission or local school board selection commission members for acts or omissions
91 of any nature while acting in an authorized governmental or proprietary capacity and in the course and
92 scope of authorization, subject to the limitations of the risk management plan.

93 G. The risk management plan established pursuant to this section shall provide coverage for any
94 matter that involves or could involve an action or proceeding against a judge, the nature of which is
95 designed to determine whether discipline or other sanction of the judge for malfeasance or misfeasance
96 is appropriate or to otherwise determine the fitness of the judge to hold office or to continue his
97 employment. No coverage or indemnification shall be made pursuant to this subsection when the
98 Supreme Court of Virginia finds that the judge should be censured or removed from office pursuant to
99 Section 10 of Article VI of the Constitution of Virginia or statutes enacted pursuant thereto.

100 H. The risk management plan established pursuant to this section shall provide protection against
101 claims made against chaplains by persons incarcerated in a state correctional facility, a juvenile
102 correctional center, or a facility operated pursuant to the Corrections Private Management Act
103 (§ 53.1-261 et seq.) arising out of services provided by the chaplains to such incarcerated persons,
104 regardless of whether such services were provided on a volunteer basis or for compensation. For the
105 purposes of this subsection, chaplains shall include only those persons, who, at the time any claim may
106 arise, were acting pursuant to, and in compliance with, an agreement between the chaplain or an
107 organization to which the chaplain belongs, and the Department of Corrections, the Department of
108 Juvenile Justice, or an operator of a facility operated pursuant to the Corrections Private Management
109 Act.

110 **§ 24.2-110. Appointment, qualifications, and term of general registrar; vacancies; certain**
111 **prohibitions.**

112 Each electoral board shall meet in the month of May or June in 2007, and every four years
113 thereafter, and shall appoint a general registrar, who shall be a qualified voter of the county or city for
114 which he is appointed unless such county or city has a population of 50,000 or less. In the case of a
115 city that is wholly contained within one county, the city electoral board may appoint a qualified voter of
116 that county to serve as city general registrar. General registrars shall serve four-year terms beginning
117 July 1, 2007, and each fourth year thereafter, and continue in office until a successor is appointed and
118 qualifies.

119 The electoral board shall fill any vacancy in the office of general registrar for the unexpired term.
120 The electoral board shall declare vacant and fill the office of the general registrar if the appointee fails

to qualify and deliver a copy of his oath to the secretary of the electoral board within 30 days after he has been notified of his appointment.

No general registrar shall hold any other office, by election or appointment, while serving as general registrar; however, with the consent of the electoral board, he may undertake other duties which do not conflict with his duties as general registrar. General registrars shall not serve as officers of election. The election or appointment of a general registrar to any other office shall vacate the office of the general registrar.

No general registrar shall be eligible to offer for or hold an office to be filled by election in whole or in part by the qualified voters of his jurisdiction at any election held during the time he serves as general registrar or for the six months thereafter.

The electoral board shall not appoint to the office of general registrar any person who is the spouse of an electoral board member or any person, or the spouse of any person, who is the parent, grandparent, sibling, child, or grandchild of an electoral board member.

No general registrar shall serve as the chairman of a political party or other officer of a state, local or district level political party committee. No general registrar shall serve as a paid or volunteer worker in the campaign of a candidate for nomination or election to an office filled by election in whole or in part by the qualified voters of his jurisdiction. The restrictions of this paragraph shall apply to paid ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars but shall not apply to unpaid ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars.

§ 24.2-111. Compensation and expenses of general registrars.

The General Assembly shall establish a compensation plan in the general appropriation act for the general registrars. The governing body for the county or city of each general registrar shall pay compensation in accordance with the plan and be reimbursed annually as authorized in the act. The governing body shall be required to provide benefits to the general and ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars and staff as provided to other employees of the locality, and shall be authorized to supplement the salary of the general registrar to the extent provided in the act.

Each locality shall pay the reasonable expenses of the general registrar, including reimbursement for mileage at the rate payable to members of the General Assembly. In case of a dispute, the State Board shall approve or disapprove the reimbursement. Reasonable expenses include, but are not limited to, costs for (i) an adequately trained registrar's staff, including training in the use of computers and other technology to the extent provided to other local employees with similar job responsibilities, and reasonable costs for the general registrar to receive and maintain certification as required by the State Board pursuant to subsection C of § 24.2-103; (ii) adequate training for officers of election; (iii) conducting elections as required by this title; and (iv) voter education.

§ 24.2-112. Deputy registrars; employees.

The electoral board of each county and city shall determine the number of ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars to serve in the office of the general registrar, including any to serve full-time.

In Russell County, there shall be at least one full-time ~~assistant~~ deputy registrar who shall serve in the office of the general registrar.

In any county or city whose population is over 15,500, there shall be at least one ~~assistant~~ deputy registrar who shall serve at least one day each week in the office of the general registrar.

Any county or city whose population is 15,500 or less shall have at least one substitute registrar who is able to take over the duties of the general registrar in an emergency and who shall assist the general registrar when he requests.

The electoral board shall set the term for the ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars; however, their terms shall not extend beyond the term set by law of the incumbent general registrar. The general registrar shall establish the duties of ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars, appoint ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars, and have authority to remove any ~~assistant~~ deputy registrar who fails to discharge the duties of his office.

All ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars shall have the same limitations and qualifications and fulfill the same requirements as the general registrar except that (i) ~~an assistant a deputy~~ registrar may be an officer of election and (ii) ~~an assistant a deputy~~ registrar shall be a qualified voter of the Commonwealth but is not required to be a qualified voter of the county or city in which he serves as ~~deputy~~ registrar. Candidates who are residents in the county or city for which they seek appointment may be given preference in hiring. Localities may mutually agree to share ~~an assistant a deputy~~ registrar among two or more localities. ~~Assistant Deputy~~ registrars who agree to serve without pay shall be supervised and trained by the general registrar.

All other employees shall be employed by the general registrar. The general registrar may hire additional temporary employees on a part-time basis as needed.

The compensation of any ~~assistant~~ deputy registrar, other than those who agree to serve without pay, or any other employee of the general registrar shall be fixed and paid by the local governing body and shall be the equivalent of or exceed the minimum hourly wage established by federal law in 29 U.S.C. § 206 (a)(1), as amended.

182 The general registrar shall not appoint to the office of paid ~~assistant~~ *deputy* registrar his spouse or
183 any person, or the spouse of any person, who is his parent, grandparent, sibling, child, or grandchild.

184 **§ 24.2-114. Duties and powers of general registrar.**

185 In addition to the other duties required by this title, the general registrar, and the ~~assistant~~ *deputy*
186 registrars acting under his supervision, shall:

187 1. Maintain the office of the general registrar and establish and maintain additional public places for
188 voter registration in accordance with the provisions of § 24.2-412.

189 2. Participate in programs to educate the general public concerning registration and encourage
190 registration by the general public. No registrar shall actively solicit, in a selective manner, any
191 application for registration or for a ballot or offer anything of value for any such application.

192 3. Perform his duties within the county or city he was appointed to serve, except that a registrar may
193 (i) go into a county or city in the Commonwealth contiguous to his county or city to register voters of
194 his county or city when conducting registration jointly with the registrar of the contiguous county or city
195 or (ii) notwithstanding any other provision of law, participate in multijurisdictional staffing for voter
196 registration offices, approved by the State Board, that are located at facilities of the Department of
197 Motor Vehicles.

198 4. Provide the appropriate forms for applications to register and to obtain the information necessary
199 to complete the applications pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of Virginia and general law.

200 5. Indicate on the registration records for each accepted mail voter registration application form
201 returned by mail pursuant to Article 3.1 (§ 24.2-416.1 et seq.) of Chapter 4 that the registrant has
202 registered by mail. The general registrar shall fulfill this duty in accordance with the instructions of the
203 State Board so that those persons who registered by mail are identified on the registration records, lists
204 of registered voters furnished pursuant to § 24.2-405, lists of persons who voted furnished pursuant to
205 § 24.2-406, and pollbooks used for the conduct of elections.

206 6. Accept a registration application or request for transfer or change of address submitted by or for a
207 resident of any other county or city in the Commonwealth. Registrars shall process registration
208 applications and requests for transfer or change of address from residents of other counties and cities in
209 accordance with written instructions from the State Board and shall forward the completed application or
210 request to the registrar of the applicant's residence. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 24.2-416, the
211 registrar of the applicant's residence shall recognize as timely any application or request for transfer or
212 change of address submitted to any person authorized to receive voter registration applications pursuant
213 to Chapter 4 (§ 24.2-400 et seq.), prior to or on the final day of registration. The registrar of the
214 applicant's residence shall determine the qualification of the applicant, including whether the applicant
215 has ever been convicted of a felony, and if so, under what circumstances the applicant's right to vote has
216 been restored, and promptly notify the applicant at the address shown on the application or request of
217 the acceptance or denial of his registration or transfer. However, notification shall not be required when
218 the registrar does not have an address for the applicant.

219 7. Preserve order at and in the vicinity of the place of registration. For this purpose, the registrar
220 shall be vested with the powers of a conservator of the peace while engaged in the duties imposed by
221 law. He may exclude from the place of registration persons whose presence disturbs the registration
222 process. He may appoint special officers, not exceeding three in number, for a place of registration and
223 may summon persons in the vicinity to assist whenever, in his judgment, it is necessary to preserve
224 order. The general registrar and any ~~assistant~~ *deputy* registrar shall be authorized to administer oaths for
225 purposes of this title.

226 8. Maintain the official registration records for his county or city in the system approved by, and in
227 accordance with the instructions of, the State Board; preserve the written applications of all persons who
228 are registered; and preserve for a period of four years the written applications of all persons who are
229 denied registration or whose registration is cancelled.

230 9. If a person is denied registration, notify such person in writing of the denial and the reason for
231 denial within five days of the denial in accordance with § 24.2-422.

232 10. Verify the accuracy of the pollbooks provided for each election by the State Board, make the
233 pollbooks available to the precincts, and according to the instructions of the State Board provide a copy
234 of the data from the pollbooks to the State Board after each election for voting credit purposes.

235 11. Retain the pollbooks in his principal office for two years from the date of the election.

236 12. Maintain accurate and current registration records and comply with the requirements of this title
237 for the transfer, inactivation, and cancellation of voter registrations.

238 13. Whenever election districts, precincts, or polling places are altered, provide for entry into the
239 voter registration system of the proper district and precinct designations for each registered voter whose
240 districts or precinct have changed and notify each affected voter of changes affecting his districts or
241 polling place by mail.

242 14. Whenever any part of his county or city becomes part of another jurisdiction by annexation,
243 merger, or other means, transfer to the appropriate general registrar the registration records of the

affected registered voters. The general registrar for their new county or city shall notify them by mail of the transfer and their new election districts and polling places.

15. When he registers any person who was previously registered in another state, notify the appropriate authority in that state of the person's registration in Virginia by providing electronically, through the Department of Elections, the information contained in that person's registration application.

16. Whenever any person is believed to be registered or voting in more than one state or territory of the United States at the same time, inquire about, or provide information from the voter's registration and voting records to any appropriate voter registration or other authority of another state or territory who inquires about, that person's registration and voting history.

17. At the request of the county or city chairman of any political party nominating a candidate for the General Assembly, constitutional office, or local office by a method other than a primary, review any petition required by the party in its nomination process to determine whether those signing the petition are registered voters with active status.

18. Carry out such other duties as prescribed by the electoral board in his capacity as the director of elections for the locality in which he serves.

19. Receive and maintain certification through the certification program conducted by the State Board for general registrars pursuant to subsection C of § 24.2-103. Each general registrar shall be required to receive certification through the certification program within 12 months of his initial appointment or any subsequent reappointment, unless a waiver has been granted by the State Board pursuant to subsection C of § 24.2-103.

§ 24.2-119. Restrictions on persons holding other offices serving as member of electoral board, registrar, or officer of election.

No person, nor the deputy of any person, who is employed by or holds any office or post of profit or emolument, or who holds any elective office of profit or trust, under the governments of the United States, the Commonwealth, or any county, city, or town, shall be appointed a member of the electoral board or general registrar. No person, nor the deputy or the employee of any person, who holds any elective office of profit or trust under the government of the United States, the Commonwealth, or any county, city, or town of the Commonwealth, shall be appointed ~~an assistant~~ a deputy registrar or officer of election.

§ 24.2-119.1. Prohibition on discrimination in employment; penalty.

Any person who serves as a member of a local electoral board, ~~an assistant~~ a deputy general registrar, or an officer of election shall neither be discharged from employment nor have any adverse personnel action taken against him, nor shall he be required to use sick leave or vacation time, as a result of his absence from employment due to his service at a polling place on election day or at a meeting of the electoral board following the election to ascertain the results of such election pursuant to § 24.2-671, provided that he gave reasonable notice to his employer of such service. No such person who serves for four or more hours, including travel time, on his day of service shall be required to start any work shift that begins on or after 5:00 p.m. on the day of his service or begins before 3:00 a.m. on the day following the day of his service. Any employer violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

§ 24.2-120. Oath of office.

The oath of office for the members of the electoral board, registrars, and officers of election shall be the oath stated in Article II, Section 7, of the Constitution. Each member of the electoral board, registrar, and officer of election shall take and sign the oath before performing the duties of his office.

Each member of an electoral board and general registrar shall file the original signed oath in the clerk's office of the circuit court of his county or city. The general registrar shall file a copy with the secretary of his electoral board.

The oath of office for ~~assistant~~ deputy and substitute registrars, officers of election, and voting equipment custodians may be administered by a general registrar or a notary as well as by persons authorized to administer oaths under § 49-3.

The oath of office for officers of election may be administered by a member of the electoral board, the general registrar, ~~an assistant~~ a deputy or substitute registrar, as well as by notaries and persons authorized to administer oaths under § 49-3.

§ 24.2-121. Defense of the electoral board, its members, and the general registrar staff; appointment of counsel.

If any electoral board, any of its members, any general registrar, or any employee of or paid ~~assistant~~ deputy to a registrar is made defendant in any civil action arising out of the performance of his official duties, and does not have legal defense provided under applicable insurance coverage, the officer, employee, or ~~assistant~~ deputy may apply to the Virginia Division of Risk Management to assign counsel for his defense in the action. In such case, and regardless of whether or not the civil action seeks monetary damages, the Division shall obtain one or more attorneys to defend such action, which

attorney may be the Attorney General, the attorney for the Commonwealth of the particular locality served by the defendant, or one or more private attorneys as may be appropriate. In the case of any private attorney, the Division shall determine the appropriate rate of compensation. All private attorneys' fees and any expenses incurred in the defense of the action shall be paid from the treasury of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

§ 24.2-122. Status of members of electoral boards, registrars, and officers of election.

Members of electoral boards, registrars, and officers of election shall serve the Commonwealth and its localities in administering the election laws. They shall be deemed to be employees of the county or city in which they serve except as otherwise specifically provided by state law.

A county or city may retain officers of election as independent contractors.

~~Assistant~~ Deputy registrars who agree to serve without pay are not state or local employees for any purpose.

§ 24.2-230. Applicability of article; certain exceptions.

This article shall apply to all elected or appointed Commonwealth, constitutional, and local officers, except officers for whose removal the Constitution of Virginia specifically provides.

However, an appointed officer shall be removed from office only by the person or authority who appointed him unless he is sentenced for a crime as provided for in § 24.2-231 or is determined to be "mentally incompetent" as provided for in § 24.2-232. This exception shall not apply to an officer who is (i) appointed to fill a vacancy in an elective office or (ii) appointed to an office for a term established by law and the appointing person or authority is not given the unqualified power of removal.

This article shall be applicable to members of local electoral boards and general registrars, but shall not be applicable to ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars who may be removed from office by the general registrar pursuant to § 24.2-112 or to officers of election who may be removed from office by the local electoral board pursuant to § 24.2-109.

§ 24.2-412. Other locations and times for voter registration.

A. In addition to voter registration locations provided for in §§ 24.2-411, 24.2-411.2, and 24.2-411.3, opportunities for voter registration may be provided at other agency offices, business offices, establishments, and occasional sites open to the general public, and shall be provided as required by this section. Voter registration shall be conducted only in public places open to the general public and at preannounced hours. ~~Assistant~~ Deputy registrars should serve during such hours and at such places. The conduct of voter registration by the general registrar or ~~an assistant~~ a deputy registrar in public places at preannounced hours shall not be deemed solicitation of registration.

B. The general registrar is authorized to set within his jurisdiction ongoing locations and times for registration in local or state government agency offices or in businesses or other establishments open to the general public, subject to the approval of, and pursuant to an agreement with, the head of the government agency, the owner or manager of the business or establishment, or the designee of either. The agreement shall provide for the appointment of employees of the agency, business, or establishment to serve as ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars and shall be in writing and approved by the local electoral board prior to implementation.

Employees of the agency, business, or establishment who are appointed to serve as ~~assistant~~ deputy registrars may be nonresidents of the jurisdiction they are appointed to serve, provided that (i) they are qualified voters of the Commonwealth and (ii) they serve only at their place of employment within the jurisdiction they are appointed to serve.

C. The general registrar or electoral board may set additional occasional sites and times for registration within the jurisdiction. A multifamily residential building not usually open to the public may be used as an occasional registration site so long as the public has free access to the site during the time for registering voters. Voter registration conducted in a high school or at the location of a naturalization ceremony shall not be required to be open to the public.

§ 24.2-620. Dividing ballots into packages for each precinct; delivery of absentee ballots.

The electoral board or general registrar shall cause to be made, in the presence of at least one member of the board or a designee of the board, one or more packages of ballots for each precinct in the election district. Each package shall contain a number of ballots determined by the board or general registrar. Each of these packages shall be securely sealed in the presence of a member of the board or such designated person so that the ballots shall be invisible, and so that the packages cannot be readily opened without detection. On each of the packages shall be endorsed the name of the precinct for which it is intended and the number of ballots therein contained. Thereafter the packages designated for each precinct shall be delivered to the general registrar and remain in his exclusive possession until delivered by him, or by a board member, a designee of the board, or ~~an assistant~~ a deputy registrar, to the officers of election of each precinct as provided in § 24.2-621.

There shall be sufficient ballots for those offering to vote absentee delivered to the general registrar by the deadline stated in § 24.2-612. Any such ballots remaining unused at the close of the polls on election day shall be sent by the general registrar to the clerk of the circuit court of the county or city.

§ 24.2-621. Delivery of packages to officers; opening packages.

Before every election the secretary of the electoral board, or another board member, board employee, or the general or ~~an assistant~~ *a deputy* registrar designated by the board, shall deliver to an officer of election of each precinct the official ballots for that precinct and obtain a receipt for the package or packages and a certificate that the seals are unbroken. If the secretary or other such designated person is unable to deliver the official ballots, another member of the board shall deliver the ballots.

Before opening the polls, the officers of election shall open the sealed package and carefully count the ballots. If there is more than one package, additional packages shall be opened as needed and the ballots counted as provided in this section.

§ 24.2-632. Voting equipment custodians.

A. For the purpose of programming and preparing voting and counting equipment, including the programming of any electronic activation devices or data storage media used to program or operate the equipment, and maintaining, testing, calibrating, and delivering it, the electoral board and general registrar shall employ one or more persons, to be known as custodians of voting equipment. The custodians shall be fully competent, thoroughly instructed, and sworn to perform their duties honestly and faithfully, and for such purpose shall be appointed and instructed at least 30 days before each election. With the approval of the State Board, the electoral board or general registrar may contract with the voting equipment vendor or another contractor for the purpose of programming, preparing and maintaining the voting equipment. The voting equipment custodians shall instruct and supervise the vendor or contractor technicians and oversee the programming, testing, calibrating and delivering of the equipment. The vendor or contractor technicians shall be sworn to perform their duties honestly and faithfully and be informed of and subject to the misdemeanor and felony penalties provided in §§ 24.2-1009 and 24.2-1010.

The final testing of the equipment prior to each election shall be done in the presence of an electoral board member, a representative of the electoral board, or the general registrar. The electoral board or general registrar may authorize a representative to be present at the final testing only if it is impracticable for a board member or general registrar to attend, and such representative shall in no case be the custodian or a vendor or contractor technician who was responsible for programming the ballot software, electronic activation devices, or electronic data storage media.

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A, the local electoral board or general registrar may assign a board member or ~~an assistant~~ *a deputy* registrar to serve as a custodian without pay for such service. The board member or ~~assistant~~ *deputy* registrar serving as custodian shall be fully competent, thoroughly instructed, and sworn to perform his duties honestly and faithfully, and for such purpose shall be appointed and instructed at least 30 days before each election. Whenever the presence of an electoral board member or general registrar and custodian is required by the provisions of this title, the same person shall not serve in both capacities.

§ 24.2-701.1. Absentee voting in person.

A. Absentee voting in person shall be available on the forty-fifth day prior to any election and shall continue until 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately preceding the election. In the case of a special election, excluding for federal offices, if time is insufficient between the issuance of the writ calling for the special election and the date of the special election, absentee voting in person shall be available as soon as possible after the issuance of the writ.

Any registered voter offering to vote absentee in person shall provide his name and his residence address in the county or city in which he is offering to vote. After verifying that the voter is a registered voter of that county or city, the general registrar shall enroll the voter's name and address on the absentee voter applicant list maintained pursuant to § 24.2-706.

Except as provided in subsection F, a registered voter voting by absentee ballot in person shall provide one of the forms of identification specified in subsection B of § 24.2-643. If he does not show one of the forms of identification specified in subsection B of § 24.2-643, he shall be allowed to vote after signing a statement, subject to felony penalties for false statements pursuant to § 24.2-1016, that he is the named registered voter he claims to be. A voter who requires assistance in voting by reason of a physical disability or an inability to read or write, and who requests assistance pursuant to § 24.2-649, may be assisted in preparation of this statement in accordance with that section. The provisions of § 24.2-649 regarding voters who are unable to sign shall be followed when assisting a voter in completing this statement. A voter who does not show one of the forms of identification specified in this subsection or does not sign this statement shall be offered a provisional ballot under the provisions of § 24.2-653. The State Board shall provide instructions to the general registrar for the handling and counting of such provisional ballots pursuant to § 24.2-653.01 and this section.

B. Absentee voting in person shall be available during regular business hours. The electoral board of each county and city shall provide for absentee voting in person in the office of the general registrar or a voter satellite office established pursuant to § 24.2-701.2. For purposes of this chapter, such offices

428 shall be open to the public a minimum of eight hours between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on
429 the first and second Saturday immediately preceding all elections. The electoral board or general
430 registrar may provide for absentee voting in person in such offices on Sundays. Any applicant who is in
431 line to cast his ballot when the office of the general registrar or voter satellite office closes shall be
432 permitted to cast his absentee ballot that day.

433 C. The general registrar may provide for the casting of absentee ballots in person pursuant to this
434 section on voting systems. The Department shall prescribe the procedures for use of voting systems. The
435 procedures shall provide for absentee voting in person on voting systems that have been certified and
436 are currently approved by the State Board. The procedures shall be applicable and uniformly applied by
437 the Department to all localities using comparable voting systems.

438 D. At least two officers of election shall be present during all hours that absentee voting in person is
439 available and shall represent the two major political parties, except in the case of a party primary, when
440 they may represent the party conducting the primary. However, such requirement shall not apply when
441 (i) voting systems that are being used pursuant to subsection C are located in the office of the general
442 registrar or voter satellite office and (ii) the general registrar or ~~an assistant~~ *a deputy* registrar is present.

443 E. The Department shall include absentee ballots voted in person in its instructions for the
444 preparation, maintenance, and reporting of ballots, pollbooks, records, and returns.

445 F. This subsection shall apply in the case of any individual who is required by subparagraph (b) of
446 52 U.S.C. § 21083 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to show identification the first time he votes
447 in a federal election in the state. At such election, such individual shall present (i) a current and valid
448 photo identification or (ii) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck,
449 or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. Such individual who
450 desires to vote in person but who does not show one of the forms of identification specified in this
451 subsection shall be offered a provisional ballot under the provisions of § 24.2-653. The identification
452 requirements of subsection B of § 24.2-643 and subsection A of § 24.2-653 shall not apply to such
453 voter at such election. The Department of Elections shall provide instructions to the electoral boards for
454 the handling and counting of such provisional ballots pursuant to § 24.2-653.01 and this section.

455 **§ 24.2-707.1. Drop-off locations for return of absentee ballots.**

456 A. The general registrar of each county or city shall establish at the office of the general registrar
457 and each voter satellite office in operation for an election a drop-off location for the purpose of allowing
458 the deposit of completed absentee ballots for such election. On the day of the election, there shall also
459 be a drop-off location at each polling place in operation for the election. The general registrar may
460 establish additional drop-off locations within the county or city as he deems necessary. All drop-off
461 locations shall be accessible; be on public property, unless located at a polling place; and otherwise
462 comply with any criteria for drop-off locations set by the Department.

463 B. The Department shall set standards for the establishment and operation of drop-off locations,
464 including necessary security requirements. The Department shall submit such standards annually by
465 October 1 to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Committees on Privileges and Elections, the Senate
466 Committee on Finance and Appropriations, and the House Committee on Appropriations.

467 C. Not later than 55 days prior to any election, the general registrar shall post notice of the sites of
468 the drop-off locations in the locality in the office of the general registrar and on the official website of
469 the county or city. Such notice shall remain in the office of the general registrar and on the official
470 website of the county or city for the duration of the period during which absentee ballots may be
471 returned.

472 D. Absentee ballots shall be collected from drop-off locations in accordance with the instructions
473 provided by the Department. Such instructions shall include chain of custody requirements and
474 recordkeeping requirements. Absentee ballots shall be collected at least daily by (i) two officers of
475 election or electoral board members representing the two major political parties where practicable or (ii)
476 two employees from the office of the general registrar, unless the drop-off location is in the office of the
477 general registrar, in which case the general registrar or ~~an assistant~~ *a deputy* general registrar may
478 collect the absentee ballots.

479 **§ 47.1-19. Fees.**

480 A. A notary may, for taking and certifying the acknowledgment of any writing, or administering and
481 certifying an oath, or certifying affidavits and depositions of witnesses, or certifying that a copy of a
482 document is a true copy thereof, charge a fee up to \$5.

483 B. A notary may, for taking and certifying the acknowledgement of any electronic document, or
484 administering and certifying an oath or affirmation, or certifying electronic affidavits and depositions of
485 witnesses, or certifying that a copy of an electronic document is a true copy thereof, charge a fee not to
486 exceed \$25.

487 C. Any person appointed as a member of an electoral board or a general registrar shall be prohibited
488 from collecting any fee as a notary during the time of such appointment. Any person appointed as ~~an~~
489 ~~assistant~~ *a deputy* registrar or officer of election shall be prohibited from collecting any fee as a notary

490 for services relating to the administration of elections or the election laws.

491 D. It shall be unlawful for any notary to charge more than the fee established herein for any notarial
492 act; however, a notary may recover, with the agreement of the person to be charged, any actual and
493 reasonable expense of traveling to a place where a notarial act is to be performed if it is not the usual
494 place in which the notary performs his office.

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