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HOUSE BILL NO. 742**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**(Proposed by the House Committee on Privileges and Elections
on February 9, 2024)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate O'Quinn)

*A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-106, 2.2-2905, and 24.2-102 of the Code of Virginia, relating to State Board of Elections; Commissioner of Elections.***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That §§ 2.2-106, 2.2-2905, and 24.2-102 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 2.2-106. Appointment of agency heads; disclosure of resumes; severance.**

A. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Governor shall appoint the administrative head of each agency of the executive branch of state government except the:

1. Executive Director of the Virginia Port Authority;
2. Director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia;
3. Executive Director of the Department of Wildlife Resources;
4. Executive Director of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation;
5. Executive Director of the Motor Vehicle Dealer Board;
6. Librarian of Virginia;
7. Administrator of the Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council;
8. Executive Director of the Virginia Housing Development Authority; ~~and~~
9. Executive Director of the Board of Accountancy; *and*
10. *Commissioner of Elections of the Department of Elections.*

However, the manner of selection of those heads of agencies chosen as set forth in the Constitution of Virginia shall continue without change. Each administrative head and Secretary appointed by the Governor pursuant to this section shall (i) be subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, (ii) have the professional qualifications prescribed by law, and (iii) serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

B. As part of the confirmation process for each administrative head and Secretary, the Secretary of the Commonwealth shall provide copies of the resumes and statements of economic interests filed pursuant to § 2.2-3117 to the chairs of the House of Delegates and Senate Committees on Privileges and Elections. For appointments made before January 1, copies shall be provided to the chairs within 30 days of the appointment or by January 7 whichever time is earlier; and for appointments made after January 1 through the regular session of that year, copies shall be provided to the chairs within seven days of the appointment. Each appointee shall be available for interviews by the Committees on Privileges and Elections or other applicable standing committee. For the purposes of this section and § 2.2-107, there shall be a joint subcommittee of the House of Delegates and Senate Committees on Privileges and Elections consisting of five members of the House Committee and three members of the Senate Committee appointed by the respective chairs of the committees to review the resumes and statements of economic interests of gubernatorial appointees. The members of the House of Delegates shall be appointed in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates. No appointment confirmed by the General Assembly shall be subject to challenge by reason of a failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection pertaining to the confirmation process.

C. For the purpose of this section, "agency" includes all administrative units established by law or by executive order that are not (i) arms of the legislative or judicial branches of government; (ii) institutions of higher education as classified under §§ 22.1-346, 23.1-1100, 23.1-3210, and 23.1-3216; (iii) regional planning districts, regional transportation authorities or districts, or regional sanitation districts; and (iv) assigned by law to other departments or agencies, not including assignments to secretaries under Article 7 (§ 2.2-215 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of this title.

D. The resumes and applications for appointment submitted by persons who are appointed by the Governor pursuant to this section shall be available to the public upon request.

E. Severance benefits provided to any departing agency head, whether or not appointed by the Governor, shall be publicly announced by the appointing authority prior to such departure.

§ 2.2-2905. Certain officers and employees exempt from chapter.

The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to:

1. Officers and employees for whom the Constitution specifically directs the manner of selection;
2. Officers and employees of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals;
3. Officers appointed by the Governor, whether confirmation by the General Assembly or by either house thereof is required or not;
4. Officers elected by popular vote or by the General Assembly or either house thereof;

- 60 5. Members of boards and commissions however selected;
- 61 6. Judges, referees, receivers, arbiters, masters and commissioners in chancery, commissioners of
- 62 accounts, and any other persons appointed by any court to exercise judicial functions, and jurors and notaries
- 63 public;
- 64 7. Officers and employees of the General Assembly and persons employed to conduct temporary or
- 65 special inquiries, investigations, or examinations on its behalf;
- 66 8. The presidents and teaching and research staffs of state educational institutions;
- 67 9. Commissioned officers and enlisted personnel of the National Guard;
- 68 10. Student employees at institutions of higher education and patient or inmate help in other state
- 69 institutions;
- 70 11. Upon general or special authorization of the Governor, laborers, temporary employees, and employees
- 71 compensated on an hourly or daily basis;
- 72 12. County, city, town, and district officers, deputies, assistants, and employees;
- 73 13. The employees of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission;
- 74 14. The officers and employees of the Virginia Retirement System;
- 75 15. Employees whose positions are identified by the State Council of Higher Education and the boards of
- 76 the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Science Museum of Virginia, the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation,
- 77 the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia, the Virginia Museum of Natural History, the New College Institute,
- 78 the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, and The Library of Virginia, and approved by the Director of
- 79 the Department of Human Resource Management as requiring specialized and professional training;
- 80 16. Employees of the Virginia Lottery;
- 81 17. Employees of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired's rehabilitative manufacturing and
- 82 service industries who have a human resources classification of industry worker;
- 83 18. Employees of the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority;
- 84 19. Employees of the University of Virginia Medical Center. Any changes in compensation plans for such
- 85 employees shall be subject to the review and approval of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia.
- 86 The University of Virginia shall ensure that its procedures for hiring University of Virginia Medical Center
- 87 personnel are based on merit and fitness. Such employees shall remain subject to the provisions of the State
- 88 Grievance Procedure (§ 2.2-3000 et seq.);
- 89 20. In executive branch agencies, *except for the Department of Elections*, the employee who has accepted
- 90 serving in the capacity of chief deputy, or equivalent, and the employee who has accepted serving in the
- 91 capacity of a confidential assistant for policy or administration. An employee serving in either one of these
- 92 two positions shall be deemed to serve on an employment-at-will basis. An agency may not exceed two
- 93 employees who serve in this exempt capacity;
- 94 21. Employees of Virginia Correctional Enterprises. Such employees shall remain subject to the
- 95 provisions of the State Grievance Procedure (§ 2.2-3000 et seq.);
- 96 22. Officers and employees of the Virginia Port Authority;
- 97 23. Employees of the Virginia College Savings Plan;
- 98 24. Directors of state facilities operated by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental
- 99 Services employed or reemployed by the Commissioner after July 1, 1999, under a contract pursuant to §
- 100 37.2-707. Such employees shall remain subject to the provisions of the State Grievance Procedure (§ 2.2-
- 101 3000 et seq.);
- 102 25. Employees of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth. Such employees shall be treated as state
- 103 employees for purposes of participation in the Virginia Retirement System, health insurance, and all other
- 104 employee benefits offered by the Commonwealth to its classified employees;
- 105 26. Employees of the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission;
- 106 27. Any chief of a campus police department that has been designated by the governing body of a public
- 107 institution of higher education as exempt, pursuant to § 23.1-809;
- 108 28. The Chief Executive Officer, agents, officers, and employees of the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage
- 109 Control Authority; and
- 110 29. Officers and employees of the Fort Monroe Authority.
- 111 **§ 24.2-102. Appointment; terms; Commissioner of Elections; prohibited activities.**
- 112 A. The State Board of Elections is continued and shall consist of five members appointed by the Governor
- 113 from the qualified voters of the Commonwealth, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. In the
- 114 appointment of the Board, representation shall be given to each of the political parties having the highest and
- 115 next highest number of votes in the Commonwealth for Governor at the last preceding gubernatorial election.
- 116 Three Board members shall be of the political party that cast the highest number of votes for Governor at that
- 117 election. When the Governor was not elected as the candidate of a political party, representation shall be
- 118 given to each of the political parties having the highest and next highest number of members of the General
- 119 Assembly at the time of the appointment and three Board members shall be of the political party having the
- 120 highest number of members in the General Assembly. Each political party entitled to an appointment may

121 make and file recommendations with the Governor for the appointment. Its recommendations shall contain
 122 the names of at least three qualified voters of the Commonwealth. Appointments shall be made with due
 123 consideration of geographical representation, and no two Board members shall reside in the same
 124 congressional district.

125 After the initial staggering of terms, Board members shall serve terms of four years, which shall begin on
 126 February 1 of the year of the appointment. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired terms. No member shall
 127 be eligible for more than two successive four-year terms. A member appointed for an unexpired term may be
 128 appointed for the two succeeding four-year terms.

129 Each year the Governor shall designate one Board member to be the chair of the Board and one Board
 130 member to be the vice-chair. The chair and vice-chair shall be members of opposite political parties.

131 No member of the Board shall be eligible to offer for or hold an office to be filled in whole or in part by
 132 qualified voters in the Commonwealth. If a member resigns to offer for or hold such office, the vacancy shall
 133 be filled as provided in this section.

134 No member of the Board shall serve as the chairman of a state, local, or district level political party
 135 committee or as a paid or volunteer worker in the campaign of a candidate for nomination or election to an
 136 office filled by election in whole or in part by qualified voters in the Commonwealth.

137 B. The ~~Governor~~ Board shall appoint a Commissioner of Elections, subject to confirmation *and*
 138 *reconfirmation* by the General Assembly, to head the Department of Elections and to act as its principal
 139 administrative officer. *Such appointment shall require an affirmative vote of four of the five Board members.*
 140 The Commissioner shall be appointed to a term of four years, which shall begin on July 1 of the *second* year
 141 following a gubernatorial election. *If the Board fails to appoint a Commissioner or fails to communicate an*
 142 *appointment of a Commissioner to the General Assembly by June 30 of such year, the Commissioner serving*
 143 *on such date shall be deemed to be reappointed for a term of four years and shall be subject to*
 144 *reconfirmation by the General Assembly at the next regular session.* The Commissioner shall be a qualified
 145 voter of the Commonwealth.

146 The Commissioner shall receive the salary fixed by law. He may employ the personnel required to carry
 147 out the duties required by law and imposed by the Board.

148 The Commissioner shall not be eligible to offer for or hold an office to be filled in whole or in part by
 149 qualified voters in the Commonwealth. His candidacy for or election to such office shall vacate his position
 150 as Commissioner, and the ~~Governor~~ Board shall fill the vacancy *in the manner of the original appointment*
 151 *for the unexpired term. Vacancies occurring for any other reason shall also be filled by the Board in the*
 152 *manner of the original appointment for the unexpired term. The Director of Operations at the Department*
 153 *shall be vested with the powers of and shall perform those duties of the Commissioner as directed by the*
 154 *Board until an appointment is made to fill the vacancy.*

155 The ~~Governor~~ Board shall not appoint as Commissioner (i) any person who is the spouse of a member of
 156 the Board or of a person seeking election to an office or holding an elective office that is filled in whole or in
 157 part by qualified voters in the Commonwealth; (ii) any person, or the spouse of any person, who is the
 158 grandparent, parent, sibling, child, or grandchild of a member of the Board; or (iii) any person, or the spouse
 159 of any person, who is the grandparent, parent, sibling, child, or grandchild of a person seeking election to an
 160 office or holding an elective office that is filled in whole or in part by qualified voters in the Commonwealth.
 161 The Commissioner shall submit his resignation to the ~~Governor~~ Board on the date that any such person files
 162 as a candidate for election to an office that is filled in whole or in part by qualified voters in the
 163 Commonwealth.

164 The Commissioner shall not serve as the chairman of a state, local, or district level political party
 165 committee or as a paid or volunteer worker in the campaign of a candidate for nomination or election to an
 166 office filled by election in whole or in part by qualified voters in the Commonwealth.

167 *The Commissioner may be removed by the Board upon an affirmative vote of four of the five Board*
 168 *members.*

169 **2. That the provisions of this act shall become effective on January 1, 2025.**

170 **3. That the term of the person serving as the Commissioner of Elections prior to the effective date of**
 171 **this act shall be extended to expire on June 30, 2027, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.**
 172 **Any vacancy that occurs in the office of the Commissioner prior to such date shall be filled by the State**
 173 **Board of Elections as constituted at such time, for a term to expire on June 30, 2027.**