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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 50

Offered January 14, 2026

Establishing a joint committee of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections and the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections to study the costs and benefits of 45 days of early voting. Report.

Patron—Garrett

Committee Referral Pending

WHEREAS, early voting is a voting option that allows a qualified voter to cast a ballot in person during a designated period 45 days prior to Election Day; and

WHEREAS, only five states, including Virginia, allow voters to cast their votes in person 45 days or more prior to the election; and

WHEREAS, the average start date for early in-person voting is 27 days prior to the election; and

WHEREAS, early in-person voting imposes considerable costs on localities; and

WHEREAS, a prolonged period of early voting may be undesirable if the benefits in terms of turnout and access can be accomplished in a shorter time frame at less cost to taxpayers and at less risk to voters who may be confronted by late-breaking campaign events that might impact their decision; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint committee of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections and the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections be established to study the costs and benefits of 45 days of early voting. The joint committee shall have a total membership of 11 members, consisting of six members of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the House Committee on Privileges and Elections and five members of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections. The joint committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint committee shall survey several localities within the Commonwealth with different demographics, both urban and rural, to evaluate the fiscal impact on the locality and the ability of the locality to meet the burden imposed by the need to increase staffing and maintain adequate facilities for early voting and to examine trends in voter turnout. The joint committee shall gather data sufficient to allow it to determine if a shorter period of in-person voting could accomplish most of the benefits of early in-person voting while reducing the burden on localities.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the of the chairman of the joint committee. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint committee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Elections. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint committee for this study, upon request.

The joint committee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2026 interim. An amount of \$20,680 is allocated for survey materials and meetings. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint committee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint committee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members of the joint committee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint committee.

The joint committee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2026, and the chairman shall submit an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2027 Regular Session of the General Assembly to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems. The executive summary shall state whether the joint committee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2026 interim.

INTRODUCED

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