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HOUSE BILL NO. 235

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Privileges and Elections
on _____)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Gardner)

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 24.2-307.1, relating to elections; districts, precincts, and polling places; super precincts; pilot program.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 24.2-307.1 as follows:

§ 24.2-307.1. Requirements for county and city super precincts; pilot program.

A. For purposes of this section:

"Super precinct" means the territory established by a county or city and approved by the State Board pursuant to the pilot program, to be served by one or more vote centers.

"Vote center" means the structure that contains a place provided for a super precinct at which the qualified voters who are residents of the super precinct may vote in an election.

B. The State Board may authorize a super precinct pilot program in any locality that requests participation in such pilot program in order to study the feasibility and efficacy of super precincts.

C. Any county or city may apply for participation in the pilot program by submitting a proposal to the State Board. The proposal shall be on a form and include such information as prescribed by the Commissioner, including (i) the number of super precincts to be established in the county or city and the boundaries of each such super precinct, (ii) the number of vote centers to be established in each super precinct and the location of each such vote center, (iii) the elections during which such super precincts and vote centers are to be used, and (iv) a description of the process for operating such vote centers on election day including how voters will be checked in, how ballots will be provided, how votes will be counted, and any additional voting systems that will be used to ensure the integrity of the election. Prior to submission to the State Board, the proposal shall be approved by a majority of the local governing body and by unanimous consent of the local electoral board.

D. Any proposal eligible for approval by the State Board shall meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Each super precinct shall be composed entirely from whole precincts established pursuant to § 24.2-307;

2. Each super precinct shall have no less than one vote center per 15,000 registered voters;

3. Registered voters may vote only at a vote center that serves the super precinct in which they reside; and

4. The proposal indicates adequate administrative and technological capacity to ensure that each eligible voter is given the opportunity to vote and that no person who has already voted is permitted to vote more than once.

E. The provisions of § 24.2-307 shall not apply to the vote centers or super precincts established for purposes of participation in the pilot program. The provisions of subsection A of § 24.2-310 shall not apply to the vote centers established for purposes of participation in the pilot program, but all provisions of this title governing polling places shall apply to such vote centers unless otherwise provided in this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the operation of precincts authorized under this chapter simultaneously with overlapping super precincts.

F. No proposal under the pilot program shall be authorized without the unanimous approval of the State Board. The governing body of any county or city whose proposal for participation in the super precinct pilot program has been unanimously approved by the State Board shall establish such super precincts and vote centers by ordinance.

G. The State Board shall promulgate standards and guidelines for the proper operation of super precincts and vote centers.

H. The State Board shall publish a report on the implementation and effectiveness of the pilot program by December 1 of any year in which one or more counties or cities participate in the pilot program.

2. That the provisions of this act shall expire on July 1, 2030.