

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 An Act to amend and reenact § 24.2-673.1 of the Code of Virginia and to repeal the fourth enactment of  
3 Chapter 1054 of the Acts of Assembly of 2020, relating to elections; conduct of election; ranked choice  
4 voting; locally elected offices; report.

5 [S 176]  
6 Approved

7 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**  
8 **1. That § 24.2-673.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

9 **§ 24.2-673.1. (Expires July 1, 2031) Ranked choice voting.**

10 A. For purposes of this section:

11 "Ranked choice voting" means a method of casting and tabulating votes in which (i) voters rank  
12 candidates in order of preference, (ii) tabulation proceeds in rounds such that in each of round either a  
13 candidate or candidates are elected or the last-place candidate is defeated, (iii) votes for voters' next-ranked  
14 candidates are transferred from elected or defeated candidates, and (iv) tabulation ends when the number of  
15 candidates elected equals the number of offices to be filled. "Ranked choice voting" is known as "instant  
16 runoff voting" when electing a single office and "single transferable vote" when electing multiple offices.

17 "Ranking" means the ordinal number assigned on a ballot by a voter to a candidate to express the voter's  
18 preference for that candidate. ~~Ranking number one~~ The first ranking is the highest ranking, the second  
19 ranking ~~number two~~ is the next-highest ranking, and so on, consecutively, up to the number of candidates  
20 indicated by the voter on the ballot.

21 B. Elections of members of a ~~county board of supervisors or a city council~~ local governing body may be  
22 conducted by ranked choice voting pursuant to this section. The decision to conduct an election by ranked  
23 choice voting shall be made, in consultation with the local electoral board and general registrar, by a majority  
24 vote of the ~~board of supervisors or city council~~ local governing body that the office being elected serves. Any  
25 decision to conduct an election by ranked choice voting made by a local governing body shall be transmitted  
26 to the State Board, which shall provide an assessment of technical feasibility within 10 days of receipt of the  
27 decision. If the State Board assesses that implementation of the local governing body's decision is not  
28 technically feasible, the State Board's assessment shall include an explanation of those steps necessary to  
29 proceed with implementation.

30 If a majority of the members of a town council vote to conduct an election for town council by ranked  
31 choice voting, the board of supervisors of the county in which the town is located may require the town to  
32 reimburse the county for costs associated with conducting the election by ranked choice voting that would not  
33 have been incurred by the county absent the town council's decision to conduct the election by ranked choice  
34 voting.

35 C. The State Board shall provide standards for vote tabulating software for use with existing voting  
36 systems in elections conducted by ranked choice voting. Any person manufacturing, owning, or offering for  
37 sale any vote tabulation software designed to be used with existing voting systems may apply to the State  
38 Board, in the manner prescribed by the State Board, to have examined a production version of such software.  
39 A local governing body that makes the decision to conduct elections by ranked choice voting shall provide for  
40 the use of vote tabulating software approved by the State Board in any such elections.

41 D. The State Board ~~may~~ shall promulgate regulations for the proper and efficient administration of  
42 elections determined by ranked choice voting, including (i) procedures for tabulating and reporting votes in  
43 rounds, (ii) procedures for determining winners in elections for offices to which only one candidate is being  
44 elected and to which more than one candidate is being elected, and (iii) standards for ballots pursuant to  
45 § 24.2-613, notwithstanding the provisions of subsection E of that section.

46 ~~D. E.~~ E. In any election conducted by ranked choice voting, final tabulation of votes shall be conducted at  
47 the meeting of the electoral board held pursuant to § 24.2-671.

48 F. If, in the process of tabulating final results for an election conducted by ranked choice voting, any  
49 machine readable ballot is damaged or defective so that it cannot properly be counted by the electronic  
50 voting systems, a true duplicate copy shall be made of the damaged ballot by a team of election officials  
51 representing both parties. The duplicate ballot shall be substituted for the damaged ballot. Every duplicate  
52 ballot shall be clearly labeled as such and shall bear an identifier that shall be recorded on the damaged  
53 ballot.

54 G. The Department shall make public the total number and percentage of votes each candidate received  
55 in each round of the official tabulation, including votes for candidates who have withdrawn pursuant to  
56 § 24.2-612.2, and ballot-level ranking data on an election-by-election basis to the extent feasible and

57 *consistent with the need to maintain voter privacy.*

58 *H. The State Board may administer or prescribe standards for a voter outreach and public information*  
59 *program for use by any locality conducting ranked choice voting pursuant to this section. The State Board*  
60 *shall produce generalized voter education materials on ranked choice voting that shall be published on its*  
61 *website and shall assist any locality that has made the decision to conduct elections by ranked choice voting*  
62 *in developing voter education materials specific to that locality upon request.*

63 *I. A local electoral board may request a risk-limiting audit, pursuant to subsection D of § 24.2-671.2, of*  
64 *an election conducted by ranked choice voting. An election conducted by ranked choice voting shall not be*  
65 *included in any random drawing required by subsection C of § 24.2-671.2.*

66 *J. For the purposes of conducting a recount pursuant to Article 1 (§ 24.2-800 et seq.) of Chapter 8, the*  
67 *State Board shall have the authority to create and modify recount procedures to the extent necessary to*  
68 *accommodate a recount of an election conducted by ranked choice voting. Any such risk-limiting audit shall*  
69 *be limited to an audit of first rankings reported by voting systems.*

70 **2. That the Department of Elections (the Department) shall review the testing and approval framework**  
71 **for voting equipment in the Commonwealth. In conducting its review, the Department shall (i) review**  
72 **the types of voting equipment covered by state law; (ii) review emerging forms of technology, such as**  
73 **risk-limiting audit tools and tabulation software, including such technology that can be purchased and**  
74 **operated separate from existing voting systems; (iii) review the roles and responsibilities of state and**  
75 **local election officials in the testing and approval of voting equipment; (iv) review any existing testing**  
76 **and approval frameworks for emerging forms of voting equipment; (v) develop recommendations for**  
77 **objective methods of evaluating the performance of emerging forms of voting equipment to determine**  
78 **if they are appropriately executing the elections tasks for which they are intended; and (vi) make other**  
79 **recommendations as necessary and review other issues as warranted. The Department shall submit to**  
80 **the Division of Legislative Automated Systems and the State Board of Elections an executive summary**  
81 **and report of its review no later than the first day of the 2027 Regular Session of the General**  
82 **Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted for publication as a report document**  
83 **as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of**  
84 **legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the websites of the General Assembly and the**  
85 **Board of Elections.**

86 **3. That the fourth enactment of Chapter 1054 of the Acts of Assembly of 2020 is repealed.**