



House Privileges and Elections Committee, February 14, 2025

Bills before the full committee

SB775 Surovell Election offenses; dissemination of artificial audio or artificial visual media, etc., penalty.

ORAL TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters supports SB775. Political campaigns and communications have many ways of disguising their sponsorship, adversely affecting voters' ability to make informed decisions. Requiring that artificial audio or artificial visual media be clearly marked as doing so, with violators subject to penalties, is essential to a well-informed electorate. We recommend that the bill expand its provisions to include misrepresentations of election officials and government authorities, in addition to candidates, because such misrepresentations can equally mislead voters and harm elections.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY (ADD TO RECORD)

The League of Women Voters supports SB775. Political campaigns and communications have many ways of disguising their sponsorship, adversely affecting voters' ability to make informed decisions. Requiring that artificial audio or artificial visual media be clearly marked as doing so, with violators subject to penalties, is essential to a well-informed electorate. We recommend that the bill expand its provisions to include misrepresentations of election officials and government authorities, in addition to candidates, because such misrepresentations can equally mislead voters and harm elections.

SB945 DeSteph Campaign finance; appeal of penalties.

ORAL TESTIMONY

The League of Women Voters supports this bill. Current campaign finance law addressing penalties for abuse lacks an appeals process. Bills limiting the amounts, solicitations, disclosure, and use of campaign funds frequently fail due to perceived unfairness or

discrimination in how they will be implemented, particularly the provisions for handling alleged violations. An appeals process will offer reassurance for redress.

SB1002 Boysko Campaign finance; prohibited personal use of campaign funds, etc.

WRITTEN STATEMENT ONLY (ADD TO RECORD)

The League of Women Voters supports legislation restricting personal use of campaign funds; Virginia currently has no legal restrictions on how campaign funds may be used. The League believes that funds raised for a campaign should be used only for expenses directly related to running for office. We support the expanded provisions for what constitutes personal use, and the provision disallowing converting any funds to personal use, not just surpluses at the end of a campaign or term in office.

SB760 Favola Election Administration Subcommittee report

Elections; deadline for receipt of absentee ballots and certain other information, etc.

WRITTEN STATEMENT ONLY, ALREADY IN RECORD

The League supports SB760. As we all know, the US Post Office service is not as reliable as it was in the past, particularly for deliveries in the morning hours. This simple adjustment to require delivery of the ballots to the local elections offices, from noon to 5 p.m. on the Friday after the election, will help ensure that voters' ballots will be counted.

SB814 Rouse Election of certain governing bodies; conversion to single-member districts.

ORAL STATEMENT

By allowing a local jurisdiction to adopt an ordinance to convert one or more at-large seats of such body to single-member districts, this bill would provide the much-needed clarity to localities that are subject to court ordered establishment of single member districts.

SB1009 Salim

Elections; conduct of election, ranked choice voting, locally elected offices, report.

WRITTEN STATEMENT ONLY, ALREADY IN RECORD

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports SB1009, which includes the expansion of ranked choice voting to any race for a local office. We believe that ranked choice voting, or RCV, would make our elections more accessible, would promote nominees with broad support, and would ensure that every voter's voice is heard, particularly with the specific rules provided in this bill for conducting such elections.

SB1174 Suetterlein

Elections; prohibited activities, distribution of referendum materials.

WRITTEN STATEMENT ONLY, ALREADY IN RECORD

We support SB 1174, relating to referendum elections, for the same reasons that we support a prohibited zone for all election activities outside a polling location. Voters deserve this protection for all types of elections.