



Testimony
House Privileges and Elections Committee

February 9, 2024

HB190

Campaign finance; prohibited contributions to candidates.

The League of Women Voters supports HB 194. The League believes that no one contributor should have undue influence on the outcome of an election and has long supported banning regulated utilities from contributing to campaigns. Data from the Virginia Public Access Project - VPAP - confirms that the last election was the most expensive on record for Virginia, and that the \$775,000 contributed by Dominion Energy, Virginia's public utility, topped the list of large donors. That figure does not include any amount given through its PAC, so could well be higher. A 2021 poll conducted by the Wason Center at Christopher Newport University showed that 56% of respondents favor banning corporate contributions altogether, which further supports restricting utilities' abilities to influence elections.

HB565

Voter registration; registration of Department of Motor Vehicles customers, automatic update.

The League supports HB 565 because it will help ensure that voters who are already registered to vote in Virginia are registered in the correct precinct. Many people forget to update their voter registration addresses but remember to update their addresses for their driver's licenses. While it is true that eligible citizens can opt out of automatic voter registration, once they are registered, this proposal would make it easier for them to keep their registration current and accurate. Not only would the bill help voters, but it would also assist in maintaining clean voter rolls.

[HB904](#)

Voter registration; list maintenance activities, cancellation procedures, required record matches.

Oral Statement

The League of Women Voters thanks Delegate Price for bringing HB 904, a bill that will improve Virginia's voter list maintenance activities and show the public many steps that are taken to ensure accuracy and security. This bill's provisions will go a long way toward preventing incorrect voter purges. Record matching will be more precise, helping to protect eligible citizens from disenfranchisement and prevent those who are no longer eligible from voting in Virginia. The bill codifies, in detail, security and list maintenance procedures that are already in place throughout the Commonwealth. The bill also strengthens record keeping requirements. The bill achieves better list maintenance and rebuilds confidence in elections.

Written Statement

The League of Women Voters supports HB 904, a bill that will improve Virginia's voter list maintenance activities and show the public many steps that are taken to ensure accuracy and security. This bill's provisions will go a long way toward preventing incorrect voter purges, which approximately 3,400 voters experienced last year. Qualified voters should not be disenfranchised for nonexistent felony convictions nor for technical violations after their rights have been restored. Virginia should not be subject to other states' errors either. Record matching will be more precise, helping to protect eligible citizens from disenfranchisement and prevent those who are no longer eligible from voting in Virginia. The bill also strengthens record keeping requirements so that a mistakenly disenfranchised voters can find out what happened.

The bill codifies in detail security and list maintenance procedures that are already in place throughout the Commonwealth. Every locality has a security plan in place, subject to annual reconsideration. The Department of Elections' IT team can assist any locality that needs help in reaching minimum standards. Change of address procedures are already in place, but the bill spells out the standards. This bill accomplishes two things, better list maintenance so that only qualified voters can vote and rebuild public confidence in elections.

[HB998](#)

Electoral board to meet to ascertain results; permitted period of adjournment.

This bill is similar to HB 1238 and might be incorporated into it (or vice versa). The testimony applies to either bill or both but CHECK THE BILL NUMBER. The League of Women Voters supports HB 998/HB 1238. Sorting mail ballots by precinct is burdensome. Registrars need time to verify same day registrants and count their provisional ballots. Compounding the workload is that no mail is delivered on Friday when it is a federal holiday, as it was in both 2022 and 2023. The largest localities barely finished in time last year. Tackling these tasks right after the election puts intense pressure on our election administrators right after an election, particularly a presidential election, when there will be many new voters and emotions will run high. Please remember that this extension of their verification deadline at the local level would not affect the timing of the final certification by the State Board of Elections. This bill makes sense.

[HB1238](#)

Local electoral boards; certification and abstract of results, extends deadline.

See testimony for HB998, above.

[HB1330](#)

Absentee voting; persons confined awaiting trial or for conviction of a misdemeanor.

The League of Women Voters strongly supports HB 1330. Although registered voters who are confined while awaiting trial and those convicted of misdemeanors are entitled to vote, sometimes they encounter uncooperative corrections officials. This bill would require officials in confinement facilities to allow voters in confinement to apply for and receive absentee ballots.