



Testimony

House Privileges and Elections Sub-Committee on Election Administration

February 5, 2024

[HB56/HB1439](#)

Voter registration by political party affiliation; partially closed primary elections.

One of the best parts of voting in Virginia is that voters do NOT register by political party, which allows us all to vote in either primary. Open primaries invite independents, who are a majority of all voters, to participate. Yes, spoiler voters might affect an outcome but that is not common and affects both parties. Also, the bill suggests that the political parties can write rules controlling who votes in a state-run primary, which is a disturbing prospect in a democracy.

[HB375](#)

Presidential electors; National Popular Vote Compact.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports the National Popular Vote Compact. This compact would establish an agreement among states to guarantee that the presidency would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes across the 50 states and District of Columbia. The president and vice president should have always been directly elected by the people.

The Electoral College is undemocratic and riddled with issues. The candidate who placed second in the popular vote was elected in 2016, 2000, 1888, 1876, and 1824.

Article II, Section 1 of the constitution provides that the states have plenary authority to designate their electoral college votes as they see fit (providing, of course, that in doing so they do not violate other constitutional

commands, such as those guaranteed by the Equal Protection Clause). The states therefore can pledge to commit all their electoral college votes to the winner of the popular vote.

[HB465](#)

Election administration; recommended number of deputy general registrars.

The League of Women Voters urges you not to report HB 465. The Senate Rules Committee failed to report the companion bill, SB 147. Local registrars and electoral boards know their staffing needs, their populations, and other variable considerations specific to their localities. They are best situated to determine the appropriate number of deputy registrars. The League does, however, favor the establishment of a work group of key stakeholders to develop staffing standards for elections offices.

[HB490](#)

Electors for President and Vice President; revises method of allocating electoral votes.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia urges you to reject this bill. It is bad enough that the president and vice president of the United States are not elected by popular vote. It is wholly undemocratic for one political party to put a heavy thumb on the scale, as this bill would do by giving the candidates for those offices to get two extra votes from the party of the governor.

[HB694](#)

Absentee voting; counting ballots prior to the close of polls.

The League of Women Voters supports HB 694 because the bill would ensure more timely election results. When the Central Absentee Precincts in each locality cannot begin to run the results tapes until the close of polls, it can take many hours to get the results. Timely results will encourage confidence in our elections.

[HB1534](#)

Voter or voter's registration; challenges to candidate qualifications or eligibility.

The League of Women Voters supports HB 1534. The bill would dispense with a relic of Virginia's past. We have a modern voter registration system with professionals making the determination of who is eligible to vote. Challenges are still possible before a court, as appropriate. The bill also would prevent challenges to a candidate in the middle of an election when all the facts have been available since well before voters began casting their ballots. Such challenges may be specious and are disruptive of the electoral process, not to mention unfair to candidates.