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Indicates New Matter

AMENDED--NOT PRINTED IN THE HOUSE

Amt. No. 1A (Doc. Path council\agm\18976sd11)

April 6, 2011

**H. 3003**

Introduced by Reps. Clemmons, Harrell, Lucas, Bingham, Harrison, Cooper, Owens, Sandifer, Allison, Ballentine, Bannister, Barfield, Bowen, Cole, Crawford, Daning, Delleney, Forrester, Frye, Gambrell, Hamilton, Hardwick, Hiott, Horne, Huggins, Limehouse, Loftis, Long, Lowe, Merrill, V.S. Moss, Norman, Parker, G.M. Smith, G.R. Smith, Sottile, Stringer, Toole, Umphlett, Viers, White, Crosby, Thayer, Simrill, Ryan, McCoy, Murphy, Atwater, Henderson, Quinn, Tallon, Patrick, J.R. Smith, Hixon, Taylor, Young, Bedingfield, Corbin, Pitts, Chumley, Spires, Pope, Bikas, Pinson, D.C. Moss, Erickson, Willis, Brady, Herbkersman, Nanney, Brannon and Whitmire

S. Printed 2/23/11--S.

Read the first time January 27, 2011.

**A** **BILL**

RELATING TO REFORM OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTION LAWS BY ENACTING THE “SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTION REFORM ACT”; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑13‑710 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, SO AS TO REQUIRE PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION TO VOTE, PERMITTING FOR PROVISIONAL BALLOTS IF THE IDENTIFICATION CANNOT BE PRODUCED, AND TO PROVIDE AN EXCEPTION FOR A RELIGIOUS OBJECTION TO BEING PHOTOGRAPHED; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑5‑125, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT AN ELECTOR MAY OBTAIN A DUPLICATE REGISTRATION NOTIFICATION; TO AMEND SECTION 56‑1‑3350, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO PROVIDE FREE IDENTIFICATION CARDS UPON REQUEST FOR PERSONS AGED SEVENTEEN YEARS OR OLDER; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑13‑25, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR AN EARLY VOTING PERIOD BEGINNING FIFTEEN DAYS BEFORE A STATEWIDE PRIMARY OR GENERAL ELECTION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE HOURS AND EARLY VOTING LOCATION; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑3‑20, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE STATE ELECTIONS COMMISSION TO MAINTAIN IN THE MASTER FILE A SEPARATE DESIGNATION FOR ABSENTEE AND EARLY VOTERS IN A GENERAL ELECTION; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑15‑320, SO AS TO REFERENCE THE EARLY VOTING PERIOD PURSUANT TO SECTION 7‑13‑25 AND TO PROVIDE FOR CASTING OF AN ABSENTEE BALLOT BY PAPER OR BY A VOTING MACHINE AND ABSENTEE BALLOT CENTERS; TO AMEND SECTION 7‑1‑25, SO AS TO LIST FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR DOMICILE; TO ADD SECTION 7‑5‑675, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE ELECTION COMMISSION WILL IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM TO ISSUE VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS WITH A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE VOTER; TO PROVIDE FOR A VOTER EDUCATION PROGRAM CONCERNING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS BILL; AND TO AMEND SECTIONS 7‑15‑330, 7‑15‑385, AND 7‑5‑230, ALL RELATING TO ELECTION LAWS, SO AS TO MAKE TECHNICAL CHANGES.

Amend Title To Conform

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 7, Chapter 5, Title 7 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 7‑5‑675. The State Elections Commission shall implement a system in order to issue voter registration cards with a photograph of the elector. This voter registration card may be used for voting purposes only.”

SECTION 2. Section 7‑13‑710 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 459 of 1996, is further amended to read:

“Section 7‑13‑710. (A) When ~~any~~ a person presents himself to vote, he shall produce ~~his~~ a valid and current:

(1) South Carolina driver’s license; or

(2) other form of identification containing a photograph issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles~~, if he is not licensed to drive, or the written notification of registration provided for by Sections 7‑5‑125 and 7‑5‑180 if the notification has been signed by the elector.~~; or

(3) passport; or

(4) military identification containing a photograph issued by the federal government; or

(5) South Carolina voter registration card containing a photograph of the voter pursuant to Section 7‑5‑675.

~~If the elector loses or defaces his registration notification, he may obtain a duplicate notification from his county board of registration upon request in person, or by telephone or mail.~~

(B) After presentation of the required identification described in subsection (A), ~~his~~ the elector’s name must be checked by one of the managers on the margin of the page opposite his name upon the registration books, or copy of the books, furnished by the board of registration. One of the managers also shall compare the photograph contained on the required identification with the person presenting himself to vote. The manager shall verify that the photograph is that of the person seeking to vote. The managers shall keep a poll list which must contain one column headed ‘Names of Voters’. Before ~~any~~ a ballot is delivered to a voter, the voter shall sign his name on the poll list, which must be furnished to the appropriate election officials by the State Election Commission. At the top of each page the voter’s oath appropriate to the election must be printed. The signing of the poll list or the marking of the poll list is considered to be an affirmation of the oath by the voter. One of the managers shall compare the signature on the poll list with the signature on the voter’s driver’s license, registration notification, or other identification and may require further identification of the voter and proof of his right to vote under this title as he considers necessary. If the voter is unable to write or if the voter is prevented from signing by physical handicap, he may sign his name to the poll list by mark with the assistance of one of the managers.

(C)(1) If the elector cannot produce the identification as required in subsection (A), he may cast a provisional ballot that is counted only if the elector brings a valid and current photo identification to the county board of registration and elections before certification of the election by the county board of canvassers.

(2) If the manager disputes that the photograph contained on the required identification is the person presenting himself to vote, the elector may cast a provisional ballot. A determination of that provisional ballot must be made in accordance with Section 7‑13‑830.

(D)(1)(a) If an elector does not produce a valid and current photograph identification due to a religious objection to being photographed, he may complete an affidavit under penalty of perjury at the polling place and affirm that the elector: (i) is the same individual who personally appeared at the polling place; (ii) cast the provisional ballot on election day; and (iii) has a religious objection to being photographed. Upon completion of the affidavit, the elector may cast a provisional ballot. The affidavit must be submitted with the provisional ballot envelope and be filed with the county board of registration and elections before certification of the election by the county board of canvassers.

(b) If an elector does not produce a valid and current photograph identification because the elector suffers from a reasonable impediment that prevents the elector from obtaining photograph identification, he may complete an affidavit under the penalty of perjury at the pollingplace and affirm that the elector: (i) is the same individual who personally appeared at the polling place; (ii) cast the provisional ballot on election day; and (iii) the elector suffers from a reasonable impediment that prevents him from obtaining photograph identification. The elector also shall list the impediment, unless otherwise prohibited by state or federal law. Upon completion of the affidavit, the elector may cast a provisional ballot. The affidavit must be submitted with the provisional ballot envelope and be filed with the county board of registration and elections before certification of the election by the county board of canvassers.

(2) If the county board of registration and elections determines that the voter was challenged only for the inability to provide proof of identification and the required affidavit is submitted, the county board of registration and elections shall find that the provisional ballot is valid unless the board has grounds to believe the affidavit is false.

(3) If the county board of registration and elections determines that the voter has been challenged for a cause other than the inability to provide proof of identification as required by subsection (A), the county board of registration and elections shall:

(a) note on the envelope containing the provisional ballot that the voter complied with the proof of identification requirement; and

(b) proceed to determine the validity of the remaining challenges before ruling on the validity of the provisional ballot.”

SECTION 3. Section 56‑1‑3350 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 277 of 2010, is further amended to read:

“Section 56‑1‑3350. (A) Upon application by a person ~~ten~~ five years of age or older who is a resident of South Carolina, the department shall issue a special identification card as long as:

(1) the application is made on a form approved and furnished by the department; and

(2) the applicant presents to the person issuing the identification card a birth certificate or other evidence acceptable to the department of his name and date of birth. For the purposes of meeting the requirements of this item (2), the Department of Motor Vehicles may receive and shall accept from the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the Department of Health and Environmental Control suitable information verifying the applicant’s name and date of birth.

(B)(1) The fee for the issuance of the special identification card is five dollars~~, and~~ for a person between the ages of five and sixteen years.

(2) An identification card must be free to a person aged seventeen years or older.

(C) The identification card expires five years from the date of issuance. ~~The renewal fee is also five dollars. Issuance and renewal fees are waived for indigent persons who are mentally ill, mentally retarded, homeless, or who are on public assistance as the sole source of income. As used in this section ‘indigent’ means a person who is qualified for legal assistance which is paid for with public funds. For purposes of this section, a homeless person is an individual who lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:~~

~~(a)~~ ~~a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, including congregated shelters and transitional housing;~~

~~(b)~~ ~~an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or~~

~~(c)~~ ~~a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.~~

~~The term does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an act of Congress. Annually, the director of a facility which provides care or shelter to homeless persons must certify this fact to the department. The department must maintain a list of facilities which are approved by the department, and only letters from the directors of these approved facilities are considered to comply with the provisions of this section. To have the issuance or renewal fee waived for an identification card, a homeless person must present a letter to the department from the director of a facility that provides care or shelter to homeless persons certifying that the person named in the letter is homeless. The letter may not be older than thirty days.~~

(D) Special identification cards issued to persons under the age of twenty‑one must be marked, stamped, or printed to readily indicate that the person to whom the card is issued is under the age of twenty‑one.

(E) The fees collected pursuant to this section must be credited to the Department of Transportation State Non‑Federal Aid Highway Fund ~~as provided in the following schedule based on the actual date of receipt by the Department of Motor Vehicles:~~

~~Fees and Penalties~~ ~~General Fund~~ ~~Department of~~

~~Collected After~~ ~~of the State~~ ~~Transportation~~

~~State Non‑Federal~~

~~Aid Highway Fund~~

~~June 30, 2005~~ ~~60 percent~~ ~~40 percent~~

~~June 30, 2006~~ ~~20 percent~~ ~~80 percent~~

~~June 30, 2007~~ ~~0 percent~~ ~~100 percent~~.”

SECTION 4. Chapter 63, Title 44 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 44‑63‑65. The State Registrar in the Department of Health and Environmental Control, solely for the purpose of complying with the requirements of Section 56‑1‑3350, may transmit to the Department of Motor Vehicles and the department shall accept suitable information concerning the name and date of birth of an applicant for a special identification card issued under Section 56‑1‑3350. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 44‑63-110, this information shall be provided by the State Registrar without charge.”

SECTION 5. The State Elections Commission shall establish an aggressive voter education program concerning the provisions contained in this legislation. The State Elections Commission shall educate the public as follows:

(1) Post information concerning changes contained in this legislation in a conspicuous location at each county board of registration and elections, each satellite office, the State Elections Commission office, and their respective websites.

(2) Train poll managers and poll workers at their mandatory training sessions to answer questions by electors concerning the changes in this legislation.

(3) Require documentation describing the changes in this legislation to be disseminated by poll managers and poll workers at each election held after September 30, 2011.

(4) Coordinate with each county board of registration and elections so that at least two seminars are conducted in each county before October 15, 2012.

(5) Coordinate with local and service organizations to provide for additional informational seminars at a local or statewide level.

(6) Place an advertisement describing the changes in this legislation in South Carolina newspapers of general circulation at the same time as advertisements for primary or general elections are placed.

(7) Coordinate with local media outlets to disseminate information concerning the changes in this legislation.

(8) In addition to the items contained in this section, the State Elections Commission may implement additional educational programs in its discretion.

(9) The State Election Commission shall implement necessary accommodations to allow voting in each county to comply with the Help America Vote Act.

SECTION 6. Article 7, Chapter 13, Title 7 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 7‑13‑862. Poll managers shall allow poll watchers to sit directly behind the poll managers responsible for voter identification and verification for the purpose of observing and hearing the voting process.”

SECTION 7. The General Assembly finds that all the provisions contained in this act related to one subject as required by Section 17, Article III of the Constitution of this State in that each provision relates directly to or in conjunction with other sections to the subject of election reform as stated in the title. The General Assembly further finds that a common purpose or relationship exists among the sections, representing a potential plurality but not disunity of topics, notwithstanding that reasonable minds might differ in identifying more than one topic contained in this act.

SECTION 8. SECTION 1 takes effect on July 1, 2012. However, the implementation of the procedures provided for in SECTION 1 is contingent upon the State Election Commission’s receipt of funds necessary to implement these provisions. Until the provisions of SECTION 1 are fully funded and executed, implementation of the provisions of SECTION 1 do not prohibit the State Election Commission from issuing voter registration cards by the methods allowed before the implementation of SECTION 1.

SECTION 9. Except as otherwise provided in this act, this act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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