

The Senate Committee on Ethics offered the following substitute to HB 42:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elections and primaries generally, so as to authorize election superintendents to correct mistakes and omissions on ballots for a primary or election; to provide for the dates for certain special elections to fill vacancies in county, municipal, and school board offices; to provide for the timing of runoffs from certain special elections under certain circumstances; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elections and primaries generally, is amended by revising Code Section 21-2-293, relating to correction of mistakes and omissions on ballot, as follows:

"21-2-293.

(a) If the election superintendent discovers that a mistake or omission has occurred in the printing of official ballots or in the programming of the display of the official ballot on DRE voting equipment for any primary or election, the superintendent is authorized on his or her own motion to take such steps as necessary to correct such mistake or omission if the superintendent determines that such correction is feasible and practicable under the circumstances; provided that the superintendent gives at least 24 hours notice to the Secretary of State and any affected candidates of the mistake or omission prior to making such correction.

(b) When it is shown by affidavit that a mistake or omission has occurred in the printing of official ballots or in the programming of the display of the official ballot on DRE voting equipment for any primary or election, the superior court of the proper county may, upon the application of any elector of the county or municipality, require the superintendent to correct the mistake or omission or to show cause why he or she should not do so."

SECTION 2.

Said chapter is further amended by revising paragraph (6) of subsection (a) and subsection (c) of Code Section 21-2-501, relating to number of votes required for election, as follows:

"(6) In the case of a runoff from a special primary or special election for an office other than a federal office not held in conjunction with a general primary or general election, the runoff shall be held on the twenty-eighth day after the day of holding the preceding special primary or special election; provided, however, that, if such runoff is from a special primary or special election held in conjunction with a special primary or special election for a federal office and there is a runoff being conducted for such federal office, the runoff from the special primary or special election conducted for such other office may be held in conjunction with the runoff for the federal office."

"(c) In instances in which no municipal candidate receives a majority of the votes cast and the municipal charter or ordinances do not provide for nomination or election by a plurality vote, a run-off primary or election shall be held between the candidates receiving the two highest numbers of votes. Such runoff shall be held on the twenty-eighth day after the day of holding the first primary or election, unless such run-off date is postponed by court order; provided, however, that, in the case of a runoff from a municipal special election that is held in conjunction with a special election for a federal office and not in conjunction with a general primary or general election, the municipality may conduct such runoff from such municipal special election on the date of the special election runoff for the federal office. Only the electors entitled to vote in the first primary or election shall be entitled to vote in any run-off primary or election resulting therefrom; provided, however, that no elector shall vote in a run-off primary in violation of Code Section 21-2-216. The run-off primary or election shall be a continuation of the first primary or election, and only those votes cast for the candidates receiving the two highest numbers of votes in the first primary or election shall be counted. No write-in votes may be cast in such a primary, run-off primary, or run-off election. If any candidate eligible to be in a runoff withdraws, dies, or is found to be ineligible, the remaining candidates receiving the two highest numbers of votes shall be the candidates in such runoff. The municipal candidate receiving the highest number of the votes cast in such run-off primary or run-off election to fill the nomination or public office sought shall be declared the winner. The municipality shall give written notice to the Secretary of State of such runoff as soon as such municipality certifies the preceding primary, special primary, election, or special election."

SECTION 3.

Said chapter is further amended by revising paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of Code Section 21-2-540, relating to conduct of special elections generally, as follows:

"(c)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a special primary or special election to fill a vacancy in a county or municipal office shall be held only on one of the following dates which is at least 29 days after the date of the call for the special election:

(A) In odd-numbered years, any such special election shall only be held on:

- (i) The third Tuesday in March;
- (ii) The third Tuesday in June;
- (iii) The third Tuesday in September; or
- (iv) The Tuesday after the first Monday in November; and

(B) In even-numbered years, any such special election shall only be held on:

- (i) The third Tuesday in March; provided, however, that in the event that a special election is to be held under this provision in a year in which a presidential preference primary is to be held, then any such special election shall be held on the date of and in conjunction with the presidential preference primary;
- (ii) The date of the general primary; or
- (iii) The Tuesday after the first Monday in November;

provided, however, that, in the event that a special election to fill a federal or state office on a date other than the dates provided in this paragraph has been scheduled and it is possible to hold a special election to fill a vacancy in a county, municipal, or school board office in conjunction with such special election to fill a federal or state office, the special election to fill such county, municipal, or school board office may be held on the date of and in conjunction with such special election to fill such federal or state office provided all other provisions of law regarding such elections are met."

SECTION 4.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 5.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.