

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 785

BY SENATORS TRUMP AND CLINE

[Introduced February 14, 2020; referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §3-3-2a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to establishing a uniform electioneering prohibition area by modifying the early voting
 3 electioneering prohibition area at satellite precincts or other properly designated
 4 community voting locations to prohibit displays or materials to influence the voting for or
 5 against any candidate or public question within 100 feet from the entrance of such early
 6 voting locations.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 3. VOTING BY ABSENTEES.

§3-3-2a. Early voting areas; prohibition against display of campaign material.

1 (a) The county commission shall designate the courthouse or annex to the courthouse as
 2 the primary location for early voting and in addition, the commission may designate other locations
 3 as provided in subsection (b).

4 (b) The county commission may, with the approval of the county clerk or other official
 5 charged with the administration of elections, designate community voting locations for early
 6 voting, other than the county courthouse or courthouse annex by a majority of the members of
 7 the county commission voting to adopt the same at a public meeting called for that purpose.

8 (1) The county commission shall publish a notice of its intent to designate community
 9 voting location at least 30 days prior to the designation. Notice shall be by publication as a Class
 10 II-0 legal advertisement in compliance with provisions of §59-3-1 *et seq.* of this code. The
 11 publication area is the county in which the community voting locations are designated;

12 (2) Community voting locations shall comply with requirements of this article for early in-
 13 person voting, criteria prescribed by the Secretary of State and the following criteria:

- 14 (A) Can be scheduled for use during the early voting period;
- 15 (B) Has the physical facilities necessary to accommodate early voting requirements;
- 16 (C) Has adequate space for voting equipment, poll workers, and voters; and
- 17 (D) Has adequate security, public accessibility, and parking.

18 (3) The county executive committees of the two major political parties may nominate sites
19 to be used as community voting locations during the early voting period;

20 (4) Upon the designation of a community voting location, the county clerk shall, not less
21 than 30 days prior to an election, give notice of the dates, times, and place of community voting
22 locations by publication as a Class II-0 legal advertisement in compliance with provisions of §59-
23 3-1 *et seq.* of this code;

24 (5) Voting shall be conducted at each designated community voting site for a period of not
25 less than five consecutive days during early in-person voting authorized by section three of this
26 article, but need not be conducted at each location for the entire period of early in-person voting;

27 (6) The county commission, with the approval of the county clerk, may authorize
28 community voting locations on a rotating basis, wherein a community voting location may be
29 utilized for less than the full period of early in-person voting; and

30 (7) If more than one community voting location is designated, each location shall be
31 utilized for an equal number of voting days and permit voting for the same number of hours per
32 day.

33 (c) The Secretary of State shall propose legislative and emergency rules in accordance
34 with the provisions of §29A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code as may be necessary to implement the
35 provisions of this section. The rules shall include establishment of criteria to assure neutrality and
36 security in the selection of community voting locations.

37 (d) Throughout the period of early in-person voting, the official designated to supervise
38 and conduct absentee voting shall make the following provisions for voting:

39 (1) The official shall provide a sufficient number of voting booths or devices appropriate to
40 the voting system at which voters may prepare their ballots. The booths or devices are to be in
41 an area separate from but within clear view of the public entrance area of the official's office or
42 other area designated by the county commission for absentee voting and are to be arranged to
43 ensure the voter complete privacy in casting the ballot.

44 (2) The official shall make the voting area secure from interference with the voter and shall
45 ensure that voted and unvoted ballots are at all times secure from tampering. No person, other
46 than a person lawfully assisting the voter according to the provisions of this chapter, may be
47 permitted to come within five feet of the voting booth while the voter is voting. No person, other
48 than the officials or employees of the official designated to supervise and conduct absentee voting
49 or members of the board of ballot commissioners assigned to conduct absentee voting, may enter
50 the area or room set aside for voting.

51 (3) The official designated to supervise and conduct absentee voting shall request the
52 county commission designate another area within the county courthouse, any annex of the
53 courthouse or any other designated as early in-person voting locations within the county, as a
54 portion of the official's office, for the purpose of absentee in-person voting in the following
55 circumstances:

56 (A) If the voting area is not accessible to voters with physical disabilities;

57 (B) If the voting area is not within clear view of the public entrance of the office of the
58 official designated to supervise and conduct absentee voting; or

59 (C) If there is no suitable area for absentee in-person voting within the office.

60 Any designated area is subject to the same requirements as the regular absentee voting
61 area.

62 (4) The official designated to supervise and conduct absentee voting shall have at least
63 two representatives to assist with absentee voting: *Provided*, That the two representatives may
64 not be registered with the same political party affiliation or two persons registered with no political
65 party affiliation. The representatives may be full-time employees, temporary employees hired for
66 the period of absentee voting in person, or volunteers.

67 (5) No person may do any electioneering nor may any person display or distribute in any
68 manner, or authorize the display or distribution of, any literature, posters, or material of any kind
69 which tends to influence the voting for or against any candidate or any public question on the

70 property of the county courthouse, any annex facilities, or within 100 feet of the outside entrance
71 of any other designated early voting locations within the county, during the entire period of regular
72 in-person absentee voting. The official designated to supervise and conduct absentee voting is
73 authorized to remove the material and to direct the sheriff of the county to enforce the prohibition.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a uniform electioneering prohibition area.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.