

House Resolution 416

By: Representatives Hugley of the 136th, Alexander of the 66th, Dreyer of the 59th, and Howard of the 124th

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the House Study Committee on Georgia County Boards of Elections and
2 Registration; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the General Assembly may by local Act create a board of elections and
4 registration in any county of this state and empower such board with the powers and duties
5 of the election superintendent relating to the conduct of primaries and elections and with the
6 powers and duties of the board of registrars relating to the registration of voters and absentee
7 balloting procedures; and

8 WHEREAS, such board shall consist of not fewer than three members; and

9 WHEREAS, individual Georgians understand that the supervision of Georgia election laws
10 differ from county to county, as found in 2018 when the spokeswoman for the Georgia
11 Secretary of State's office stated: "Each county elections office decides how to process its
12 absentee ballots"; and

13 WHEREAS, if each county has the freedom to decide how to interpret election law, voters
14 should be assured that there is a uniform process as to how individuals are appointed to
15 county boards of elections and registration; and

16 WHEREAS, Georgia counties are not required to have boards of elections and registration;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, each county with a board of elections and registration has a different
19 composition, with the only mandate being that such board shall consist of not fewer than
20 three members; and

21 WHEREAS, the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration was established in
22 July, 1985, and is composed of five members who are each appointed for four-year terms,

23 two members by the Cobb legislative delegation, one by the Democratic Party, one by the
24 Republican Party, and one member by the chairperson of the Cobb County Board of
25 Commissioners; and

26 WHEREAS, the Fulton County Board of Elections and Registration is composed of five
27 members who each serve two-year terms of office with the chairperson being appointed by
28 the governing authority of Fulton County from the nomination of the Fulton County
29 legislative delegation, two members being appointed by the governing authority from the
30 nomination of the chairperson of the county executive committee of the Republican Party,
31 and two members being appointed by the governing authority from the nomination of the
32 chairperson of the county executive committee of the Democratic Party; and

33 WHEREAS, a study is needed to better understand whether the General Assembly needs to
34 create a uniform standard for the creation of county boards of election and registration; and

35 WHEREAS, a study is needed to better understand whether the General Assembly should
36 consider creating a uniform standard for county board of elections and registration
37 appointments, while examining other factors related to the uniform execution of election and
38 voter registration laws and the role of the county board of elections and registration in
39 ensuring trust in the Georgia electoral system.

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

41 (1) **Creation of House study committee.** There is created the House Study Committee
42 on Georgia County Boards of Elections and Registration.

43 (2) **Members and officers.**

44 (A) The committee shall be composed of five members.

45 (B) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint three members from the
46 House of Representatives, at least one of whom shall be a member of the minority
47 caucus, as members of the committee and shall designate one of such members as
48 chairperson. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall also appoint an
49 additional two citizens to serve as members of the committee.

50 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
51 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
52 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. In particular, the
53 committee shall study the appointments of members of boards of elections and
54 registration; registration of electors; appointments, training, and directing deputy
55 registrars to register qualified electors more adequately and sufficiently; applications for

56 absentee ballots; transmission of absentee ballots to applicants therefor; receiving and
57 counting absentee ballots; informing and advising the governing authorities of the
58 counties; and provisional ballots.

59 (4) **Meetings.** The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee. The committee
60 may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or
61 convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and
62 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

63 (5) **Allowances and funding.**

64 (A) The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided
65 for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

66 (B) The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member
67 of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds
68 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
69 appropriated to the House of Representatives.

70 (6) **Report.**

71 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
72 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file a report of the
73 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
74 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

75 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
76 proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file the report, subject to subparagraph (C)
77 of this paragraph.

78 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
79 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
80 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
81 the Clerk of the House of Representatives. Any member of the committee may file a
82 minority report that shall accompany the majority report.

83 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Clerk of the
84 House of Representatives copies of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu
85 thereof.

86 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2019.