

2016 Virginia State Board of Elections Work Plan

Statutory Charge

VA Code 24.2-103

A. The State Board, through the Department of Elections, shall supervise and coordinate the work of the county and city electoral boards and of the registrars to obtain uniformity in their practices and proceedings and legality and purity in all elections. It shall make rules and regulations and issue instructions and provide information consistent with the election laws to the electoral boards and registrars to promote the proper administration of election laws.

Vision

To make it easier for all eligible Virginians to participate in the electoral process.

2015 Initiatives

- Voting Equipment
 - WINVote Decertification (4/14/2015)
 - Hart Intercivic Verity 1.1 Voting Equipment Certification (4/17/2015)
- Absentee Ballot e-sig (5/13/2015)
- EPB Certification Requirements (5/13/2015)
- Hand count standards (10/6/2015)
- Recount standards (11/16/2015)
- SB 11 Workgroup (12/16/2015)
- Election Data Visualizations (in progress)
- Election day debriefs (in progress)

- Express advocacy definition (in progress)
- GR/EB Workgroup (in progress)
- Voter Registration Application and Voter Registration Substantial Compliance Regulation (pending <http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/viewaction.cfm?actionid=4367>)
- Clarification of Board Delegations (pending <http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/viewaction.cfm?actionid=4328>)

2016 Work Plan Suggestions

Comment	Category	Priority
<p>Thanks for asking for feedback from the field. One of the concerns I have is that our office is the main source of voter information for our community as opposed to a SBE news feed. I especially enjoyed the Richmond Times Dispatch article in this past Sundays (1/10/16) paper on page B2. Articles such as this needs to be dissimilated throughout the Virginia region. The voters would be receiving clear and concise information which would eliminate a lot of local questions and confusion. In addition to my local paper, I purchase the out of town RTD for my newspaper information.</p> <p>My question is this. Is there a way to establish a statewide news feed that would get SBE information or press releases to most local newspapers? I am sure most localities would be receptive to providing e-mail addresses to their papers if asked and appreciate the information.</p>	Communication	
<p>Thanks for the opportunity to comment about your work program. The frustration I feel on our Board is that we almost never talk about changing the system for the long run. The Electoral Board and the General Registrar run fair and sound elections, and that is obviously important. But we rarely talk about how the election rules might be better. We lack the staff, the expertise, and the authority.</p> <p>I would hope the State Board can raise <i>some</i> of the large questions, such as would no fault in-person voting be a good thing for Virginia? Would balloting by mail be a good thing for Virginia? Etc. These things may be politically impossible now; there may even be a cost in discussing them. But raising important issues might affect policy sometime in the future. If these questions are not in the work program of the agency with a lot of expertise, I don't know who will raise them.</p>	Strategic Planning	
Logic and Accuracy Guidelines	Voting Equipment	
Express Advocacy Definition	Campaign Finance	
<p>Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback.</p> <p>The top three items on my mind are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding for ELECT 2. Uniformity and how to achieve it 3. Strengthen the relationship between GRs, ELECT and SBE; we're a team <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's clear that ELECT is understaffed and hemorrhaging staff. This is a problem for all Virginians interested in fair, equitable and transparent elections including the elimination of long lines at the 	Funding Sharing Practices Relationships	

Comment	Category	Priority
<p>polling place. The burden on the localities is already creating issues for voters including pollbook operations, voting machine failure new demands created by new technologies. While I personally believe that ELECT is doing the best they can, that doesn't mean that the level of support is adequate.</p> <p>2. I attended the board meeting on Friday, January 8. I listened to the GR from Richmond City and realized that there were inconsistencies in the way they are operating and the way that I and other localities are operating, particularly with regards to precinct layout and managing splits in the precinct. While we have a level of autonomy to make some decisions that favor our individual localities, it was clear to me that some of the problems she was having could be solved by doing it a different but acceptable way. Uniformity is a mammoth goal but possibly, we could share those problems from Election Day with the community in order to solve them. I also realize that we all have different levels of defensiveness but believe that the learning environment could be cultivated at ELECT and by SBE.</p> <p>3. In my 27 years' experience I have seen this relationship shift about as often as the personnel changes and appointed board members. Sometimes we all need to be reminded that we are a team and to frame our assistance and criticisms within that paradigm. It can be done without compromising our individual and collective integrity and excellence. I know it can be done.</p> <p>Again, thank you for this opportunity; I appreciate all that you and the board do for elections in Virginia.</p>		
Absentee ballot application and substantial compliance	Absentee	
e-signature requirements	Absentee	
DRE future	Voting Equipment	
Title 24.2 Recodification	Legislation	
Polling place resource allocations	Election Day	
<p>Thank you for the email you recently sent out regarding suggestions about how to ensure that Virginia elections function appropriately. While I might think of something else later (history indicates this inevitably happens), the main concern that I think is going unprepared-for in 2016 is a recount.</p> <p>Hopefully we will not have a recount after the November election. However, I believe we should plan for the recount phase of the election as much as we plan for the election itself. If these plans are not needed, no one will know, or care, about all the effort that we put into the recount. However, if these plans are needed, our preparation will be invaluable to ensuring that the recount proceeds as well as possible and that Virginia maintains its good reputation for election administration.</p>	Recounts	

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<p>To this end, I suggest a work group be put together to prepare for a recount: this group could include the Richmond Circuit Court (of which the chief judge would preside over the possible Recount Court), and representatives from VEBA, VRAV, ELECT, and the Clerks' Association. We need to have plans in place for locations in each locality to ensure room for the recount, observers, and in some cases, the media. We also need to prepare expectations with the Court about what is actually "do-able" in a statewide recount, such as how many teams will be needed in each locality to conduct a recount. This can vary by type of machine, as the newer digital scanners appear to be slower than the optical scanners. That was a discovery made during school board seat recount in York in December 2015.</p>		
<p>Ballot selfie / photography in polling place in light of</p>	Election Day	
<p>Explore feasibility of automatic voter registration.</p>	Voter Registration	
<p>The Board has many responsibilities, but very limited resources. We discussed that fact in many, if not all of the meetings of our EB/GR Study Group. I agree that education and training must be a top priority. I am personally concerned by the challenge the Board faces in making certain they are able to fulfill one of their primary responsibilities of supervising and coordinating the work of election officials. 100% uniformity in practices and proceedings may be an unreasonable goal, but it will be the voters who suffer if we do not at least conduct an assessment and attempt to reach some level of uniformity. It would be interesting to determine if a group of retired Electoral Board members and retired Registrars would be willing to organize a survey and conduct site visits. Reimbursement would be for travel expenses only. SBE staff did something similar to make certain all polling places were accessible to all voters. Of course we had staff and HAVA money to do it.</p> <p>GR/EB Work Study Group</p> <p>I believe it is critical that we expand the membership of our Study Group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The President of both VRAV and VEBA should be a part of the Group. This would provide a direct conduit of information from leaders of the Associations to the members. 2. Northern Virginia is currently sorely underrepresented. Fairfax County has 255 precincts, Loudoun 105, and Prince William 123. The needs and problems of these large jurisdictions are very unique when compared to a locality with 3 precincts. 3. Tidewater/Hampton Roads has no representation on the Study Group. Norfolk has 59 precincts, Virginia Beach 97, and Hampton 31 	Training	
<p>The electronic signature on paper AB requests needs to be revisited once and for all. (Notwithstanding pending legislation that would prohibit electronic signatures on paper applications.) I believe a fair review of the minutes of the meeting and the letter from the Deputy Commissioner will clearly lead to the conclusion that an online system was contemplated and NOT paper applications.</p>	Absentee	

Comment	Category	Priority
<p>A universal definition of a Sample Ballot is needed. There was an issue in Chesterfield during the last General Election that I can re-brief you on if need be, but it centered on a disagreement between the two parties as to what constituted a Sample Ballot.</p>	Election Day	
<p>As part of the long term plan, I would ask that deadlines on new policies and procedures be no less than 60 days prior to the general election (emergencies excepted). It is frustrating to have plans in place only to have them scuttled by some new, albeit well meaning, idea. With proper planning, I do not think such a deadline burdensome.</p>	Rulemaking	
<p>My feedback on your question is the work plan should emphasize education and training; and should focus resources on supporting the dedicated men and women in the field who are Directors of Elections and Electoral Board members. We will be pleased to partner with you in ways possible.</p>	Training	