



Testimony in Support of HB 1490

Virginia Senate Privileges and Elections Committee

February 27, 2024

Fair Elections Center is a national, nonpartisan voting rights and election reform organization which works to remove barriers to registration and voting for traditionally underrepresented constituencies. Formed in 2017 to continue the work of the Fair Elections Legal Network (FELN), the Center works to improve election administration through legislative, legal and administrative reform, to protect access to the ballot through litigation, and to provide election law expertise, voter information and technical assistance to voter mobilization organizations.

HB 1490 would give local governments more flexibility to establish additional voter satellite offices while protecting existing in-person voting access set out by the Virginia Code. The bill also provides that reductions in dates or hours cannot be enacted within 60 days of a general election.

Flexibility to add additional voter satellite sites would better allow officials to serve their voters. Fair Elections Center supports the ability of local officials as reflected in HB 1490 to be able to offer in-person voting options that maximize access by the communities they serve, along with guardrails provided in the bill to protect availability of in-person voting before Election Day.

HB 1490 improves responsiveness. HB 1490 will also allow communities to advocate for their needs on a localized basis, improving responsiveness.

HB 1490 improves voter education: By requiring any reductions in dates or hours of satellite office voting to be enacted more than 60 days before an election, the bill prevents last minute changes from making it harder to vote, and makes it easier for community groups and registrars to educate voters on their options so they can make a plan to vote that works for voters and their families.

In sum, Fair Elections Center supports this bill to help localities help their citizens, while maintaining a baseline for all voters in the Commonwealth.

For further information, please contact:

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