
WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 3
ARTICLE 1A

WV Legislature

§3-1A-1. Election commission continued; composition; chairperson; per diem; traveling expense.

The "State Election Commission," heretofore created, is continued and is composed of the Secretary of State, and four persons appointed by the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The commission shall from this membership elect a chairman for a term of two years. Each member of the commission shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses actually paid the per diem and expense reimbursement established for the Legislature in section seven, article two-a, chapter four of this code in the performance of his or her duties as a member of the commission.

§3-1A-2. Qualifications of members of commission.

No member of the commission appointed by the Governor shall be a candidate for or hold any public office other than that of membership on the commission; nor shall such appointed member be a member of any committee of a political party. Any person who, directly or indirectly, (1) designs, owns, manufactures, distributes or sells any voting machine, or (2) owns any patent rights or contract rights thereto, or (3) has any interest in any joint venture, partnership, firm, corporation or association designing, owning, manufacturing, distributing or selling any voting machine, or owning any patent rights or contract rights thereto, shall be disqualified from serving as a member of the commission. At least one member appointed by the Governor shall be selected with special reference to his expert knowledge as a student of the problems of public elections. Not more than two members appointed by the Governor shall be members of the same political party. In case a member appointed by the Governor becomes a candidate for or is appointed to any other public office or political committee, his office as member of the commission shall be deemed immediately vacated.

§3-1A-3. Terms of office of commission members; filling vacancies.

The terms of office of the members of the commission shall be six years. Members in office shall continue as members until their respective terms expire on June 4, 1969 and 1972. On the expiration of these terms and every three years thereafter appointments shall be made for six-year terms. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired term.

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§3-1A-4. Office and meetings of commission.

(a) The office and place of meeting of the commission is the office of the Secretary of State in the State Capitol. The commission may also conduct meetings via video, telephone or Internet conferencing.

(b) The commission shall hold such meetings as may be called by the chairman, the Governor or the Secretary of State.

§3-1A-5. Powers and duties of commission; legislative rules.

(a) The commission has the power and duty to approve or disapprove applications for approval of any voting machine as provided in section seven, article four of this chapter.

(b) The commission also shall serve as a body advisory to the Secretary of State, and, as such, shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To recommend policies and practices pertaining to the registration of voters and the conduct of elections generally;

(2) To review the work of the office of Secretary of State pertaining to the duties of that office with respect to elections, and for this purpose to have access at reasonable times to pertinent records, books, papers and documents;

(3) To consider and study the election practices of other jurisdictions, with a view to determining the techniques used in eliminating fraud in elections and in simplifying election procedures;

(4) To advise or make recommendations to the Governor relative to election practices and policy in the state;

(5) To advise the Secretary of State on carrying out the duties to which he or she is assigned pursuant to the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Public Campaign Financing Program, established in article twelve of this chapter;

(6) To carry out the duties assigned to the commission by the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Public Campaign Financing Program, established in article twelve of this chapter; and

(7) To keep minutes of the transactions of each meeting of the commission, which shall be public records and filed with the Secretary of State.

(c) It is the commission's further duty to prepare and distribute in its name, within available appropriations and upon the recommendation of the Secretary of State, nonpartisan educational material to inform voters of the importance of voting, to encourage voters to vote, to inform voters of election laws and procedures, and to inform voters of the effect of any public question, Constitutional amendment or bond issue that is to be voted upon by all the voters of the state and that has been authorized to be placed upon the ballot by the Legislature, and manuals to assist county commissions, ballot commissioners, circuit and county clerks and other election officials in the proper performance of their duties in the conduct of elections.

(d) The commission shall propose for promulgation emergency and legislative rules, in accordance with article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, as may be necessary to standardize and make effective the administration of article eight of this chapter, and may

propose for promulgation other rules, in accordance with article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, relating to the conduct and administration of elections as the commission determines to be advisable.

(e) Meetings of the commission conducted for the purpose of confirming the eligibility of individual candidates to receive public campaign financing under the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Public Campaign Financing Fund are expressly exempted from the public notice and public meeting requirements of article nine-a, chapter six of this code.

§3-1A-6. Powers and duties of Secretary of State; exercise of powers by appointees.

(a) The Secretary of State shall be the chief election official of the state. Except for those rules required by the provisions of section five of this article to be promulgated by the commission, the Secretary of State shall have the authority, after consultation with the state Election Commission, of which he or she is a member, to make, amend and rescind such orders and to promulgate legislative rules, in accordance with the provisions of chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, as may be necessary to standardize and make effective the provisions of this chapter. All election officials, county commissions, clerks of county commissions, clerks of circuit courts, boards of ballot commissioners, election commissioners and poll clerks shall abide by any orders that may be issued and any legislative rules that may be promulgated by the Secretary of State and the commission.

(b) The Secretary of State also shall have authority to require collection and report of statistical information and to require other reports by county commissions, clerks of county commissions and clerks of circuit courts.

(c) The Secretary of State shall also advise with election officials; furnish to the election officials a sufficient number of indexed copies of the current election laws of West Virginia and the administrative orders and rules issued or promulgated thereunder; investigate the administration of election laws, frauds and irregularities in any registration or election; report violations of election laws to the appropriate prosecuting officials; and prepare an annual report.

(d) The Secretary of State shall also have the power to administer oaths and affirmations, issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses, issue subpoena duces tecum to compel the production of books, papers, records, registration records and other evidence and fix the time and place for hearing any matters relating to the administration and enforcement of this chapter, or the rules promulgated by the state Election Commission or by the Secretary of State as the chief election official of the state. In case of disobedience to a subpoena or subpoena duces tecum, he or she may invoke the aid of any circuit court in requiring the attendance, evidence and testimony of witnesses and the production of papers, books, records, registration records and other evidence.

(e) (1) The Secretary of State shall also have the power, after consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, to implement emergency procedures and rules to ensure that all eligible voters have the opportunity to cast a valid ballot and to uphold the integrity of an election in the event of natural disaster as declared by the Governor of this state, terrorist attack, war or general emergency, if any of which occur during or immediately preceding an election.

(2) For purposes of this subsection, a "general emergency" means circumstances preventing the casting of ballots in one or more voting precincts. The chief judge of the circuit court of the county where the casting of ballots is being prevented must declare by order that a general emergency exists."

(f) All powers and duties vested in the Secretary of State pursuant to this article may be exercised by appointees of the Secretary of State at his or her discretion, but the Secretary of State shall be responsible for their acts.

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§3-1A-7. Candidate's financial disclosure statement.

Candidates for election to any state, county or municipal office, county school board, district school board, or to the position of county or district school board superintendent, shall file a financial disclosure statement with the Ethics Commission as may be required under subsection (a), section six, article two, chapter six-b of this code.

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§3-1A-8. Investigators for the Secretary of State.

(a) An employee of the Secretary of State, who has attended a course of instruction at the State Police Academy or its equivalent, has all the lawful powers delegated to members of the state police to enforce the provisions of this chapter and the criminal laws of the state in any county or municipality of this state. The Secretary of State may allow an investigator who has met the standards set forth in section four, article seven, chapter sixty-one of this code to carry a firearm and concealed weapon while performing their official duties: Provided, That as a precondition of being authorized to carry a firearm or concealed weapon in the course of their official duties, any such designated personnel must obtain and maintain firearms training and certification which is equivalent to that which is required of members of the state police. The designated persons must also possess a license to carry a concealed deadly weapon in the manner prescribed in article seven, chapter sixty-one of this code, or otherwise be exempted from the code's provisions.

(b) Before entering upon the discharge of his or her duties, an employee shall execute a bond with security in the sum of \$3,500, payable to the State of West Virginia, conditioned for the faithful performance of his or her duties. The bond shall be approved as to form by the Attorney General and filed with the Secretary of State and preserved in his or her office. The State Police and a county sheriff or deputy sheriff or a municipal police officer, upon request by the Secretary of State or his or her appointee, is authorized to assist the Secretary of State or his or her appointee in enforcing the provisions of this chapter and the criminal laws of the state.

§3-1A-9. Nonpublic funding sources for election administration and related expenses.

(a) No county commission, clerk of a county commission, municipal governing body, or other public official or body responsible for overseeing, administering, or regulating an election held within the State of West Virginia may directly receive or accept any gift, grant, contribution, or donation of money or anything of value for election administration and related expenses from any private individual, corporation, partnership, trust, or third party, and all such gifts, grants, contributions, or donations may only be accepted, received, expended, distributed, and utilized by the Secretary of State pursuant to the requirements of this section.

(b) There is created in the State Treasury a special revenue revolving fund account known as the Nonpublic Funding for Election Administration Fund which shall be an interest-bearing account. The fund shall consist of all monetary gifts, grants, contributions, and donations from private individuals, corporations, partnerships, trusts, or any third party for election administration and related expenses; and any accrued interest or other return on the monies in the fund. The balance remaining in the fund at the end of each fiscal year shall remain in the fund and not revert to the State General Revenue Fund.

(c) The monies in the Nonpublic Funding for Election Administration Fund shall be used only in the manner and for the purposes prescribed in this section. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, monies in the Nonpublic Funding for Election Administration Fund may not be designated or transferred for any purpose other than those set forth in this section.

(d) The monies in the Nonpublic Funding for Election Administration Fund shall be invested pursuant to §12-6-1 *et seq.* of this code.

(e) The Nonpublic Funding for Election Administration Fund shall be administered by the Secretary of State, with the approval of the State Election Commission, in accordance with legislative rules promulgated by the Secretary of State in accordance with §29A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code.

(f) All gifts, grants, contributions, or donations of tangible property or any non-monetary thing of value from private individuals, corporations, partnerships, trusts, or any third party for election administration and related expenses shall be accepted, distributed, and utilized by the Secretary of State, only with the approval of the State Election Commission, in accordance with legislative rules promulgated by the Secretary of State in accordance with §29A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code.