

House Bill 386

By: Representative Williams of the 178th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To create a board of elections and registration for Pierce County and to provide for its powers
2 and duties; to provide for definitions; to provide for the composition of the board and the
3 selection and appointment of members; to provide for the qualification, terms, and removal
4 of members; to provide for oaths and privileges; to provide for meetings, procedures, and
5 vacancies; to relieve certain officers of powers and duties and to provide for the transfer of
6 functions to the newly created board; to provide for certain expenditures of public funds; to
7 provide for compensation of members of the board and personnel; to provide for offices and
8 equipment; to provide for the board's performance of certain functions and duties for certain
9 municipalities; to provide for related matters; to provide for submission under Section 5 of
10 the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended; to provide effective dates; to repeal
11 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

12 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

13 **SECTION 1.**

14 Pursuant to subsection (b) of Code Section 21-2-40 of the O.C.G.A., there is created the
15 Board of Elections and Registration of Pierce County, hereinafter referred to as "the board."
16 The board shall have the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the superintendent of
17 elections of Pierce County under Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the O.C.G.A., the "Georgia
18 Election Code," currently being exercised by the judge of the Probate Court of Pierce
19 County, and the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Board of Registrars of Pierce
20 County under Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the O.C.G.A., the "Georgia Election Code."

21 **SECTION 2.**

22 The terms "election," "elector," "political party," "primary," and "public office" shall have
23 the same meanings as set forth in Code Section 21-2-2 of the O.C.G.A. unless otherwise
24 clearly apparent from the text of this Act; the term "commissioners" means the Board of
25 Commissioners of Pierce County; and "county" means Pierce County.

26

SECTION 3.

27 (a) The board shall be composed of five members, each of whom shall be an elector and
28 resident of the county and who shall be appointed as provided in this section.

29 (b) Two members of the board shall be appointed by the political party which received the
30 highest number of votes within the county for its candidate for Governor in the general
31 election immediately preceding the appointment of such member. Two members of the
32 board shall be appointed by the political party which received the second highest number of
33 votes within the county for its candidate for Governor in the general election immediately
34 preceding the appointment of such member. Each of these respective members appointed
35 by political parties shall be nominated by the party chairperson and ratified by the county
36 executive committee of the respective political party at least 30 days before the beginning
37 of the term of office or within 30 days after the creation of a vacancy in the office. In the
38 event that a political party entitled to appoint a member of the board does not have a county
39 executive committee, such appointment shall be made by the state executive committee of
40 such political party.

41 (c) The fifth member shall be selected by the four members of the board appointed by the
42 political parties. In the event that the four members appointed by the political parties cannot
43 agree on a fifth member within 30 days after taking office, such members shall submit to the
44 chief judge of the Superior Court of Pierce County a list of not more than four names of
45 persons eligible for such position, and the chief judge shall select the fifth member from such
46 list based upon the information and qualifications of each candidate submitted by the four
47 members appointed by the political parties.

48 (d) All appointments to the board shall be promptly certified to the clerk of the Superior
49 Court of Pierce County.

50 (e) In making the initial appointments to the board, the four members appointed by the
51 political parties shall be selected by political parties not later than June 1, 2009. Each
52 political party shall designate one of its appointees to serve a term beginning on July 1, 2009,
53 and ending on June 30, 2011, and until their successors are duly appointed and qualified.
54 Successors to such members shall thereafter be appointed to serve terms of office of four
55 years beginning July 1, 2011, and until their successors are duly appointed and qualified.
56 The other appointees of each political party shall serve terms beginning on July 1, 2009, and
57 ending on June 30, 2013, and until their successors are duly appointed and qualified.
58 Successors to such members shall thereafter be appointed to serve terms of office of four
59 years beginning July 1, 2013, and until their successors are duly appointed and qualified.

60 (f) The fifth member shall be selected by the four members appointed by the parties no later
61 than 30 days after such four members take office, and such fifth member shall serve from the
62 date of his or her appointment until June 30, 2011, and until his or her successor is duly

63 appointed and qualified. Successors shall be appointed in the same manner as the initial
64 appointment for a term of office of four years and until a successor is duly appointed and
65 qualified.

66 (g) At its first meeting in each odd-numbered year, the board shall elect from its members
67 a chairperson.

68 **SECTION 4.**

69 (a) No person who holds elective public office shall be eligible to serve as a member of the
70 board during the term of such elective office, and the position of any member of the board
71 shall be deemed vacant upon such member's qualifying as a candidate for elective public
72 office.

73 (b) Members of the board shall be residents of Pierce County and shall have been registered
74 voters in Pierce County for a period of at least one year prior to the date of their appointment
75 to the board.

76 (c) No member of the board shall be related by blood or marriage closer than first cousins
77 to any elected official in Pierce County nor shall any member of the board be an agent, an
78 appointed official, or employee of, or work directly for, any agency of state government,
79 Pierce County, or any municipality for which the board conducts municipal elections.

80 **SECTION 5.**

81 The appointing authorities shall certify the appointment of each member by filing an affidavit
82 with the clerk of the superior court no later than 15 days preceding the date upon which such
83 members are to take office, stating the name and residential address of the person appointed
84 and certifying such member has been duly appointed as provided in this Act. The clerk of
85 the superior court shall record each such certification on the minutes of the superior court and
86 shall certify the name of each such appointed member to the Secretary of State and provide
87 for the issuance of appropriate commissions to the members within the same time and in the
88 same manner as provided by law for registrars.

89 **SECTION 6.**

90 Each member of the board shall be eligible to serve two full terms of office, shall have the
91 right to resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the appointing
92 authority and to the clerk of the superior court, and shall be subject to removal from the
93 board by the appointing authority at any time, for cause, after notice and hearing.

94 **SECTION 7.**

95 In the event a vacancy occurs in the office of any appointed member before the expiration
96 of his or her term, by removal, death, resignation, or otherwise, the original appointing
97 authority shall appoint a successor to serve the remainder of the unexpired term as provided
98 for in Section 3 of this Act. The clerk of the superior court shall be notified of such interim
99 appointments and record and certify such appointments in the same manner as the regular
100 appointment of members.

101 **SECTION 8.**

102 Before entering upon the member's duties, each member shall take substantially the same
103 oath as required by law for registrars and shall have the same privileges from arrest.

104 **SECTION 9.**

105 (a) The board shall be authorized to organize itself, determine its procedural rules and
106 regulations, adopt bylaws, specify the functions and duties of its employees, and otherwise
107 take such action as is appropriate to the management of the affairs committed to its
108 supervision; provided, however, that no such action shall conflict with state law. Action and
109 decision by the board shall be by a majority of the members of the board. The board shall
110 be responsible for the selection, appointment, and training of poll workers in primaries and
111 elections, and such workers shall be appointed, insofar as is practicable, from lists provided
112 to the board by the county executive committee of each political party.

113 (b) The board shall fix and establish, by appropriate resolution entered on its minutes,
114 directives governing the execution of matters within its jurisdiction. The board shall hold
115 regular meetings and shall meet not fewer than three times per year. Any specially called
116 meeting shall be called by the chairperson or any three members of the board. The board
117 shall maintain a written record of policy decisions amended to include additions or deletions.
118 Such written records shall be made available for the public to review.

119 **SECTION 10.**

120 The board shall have the authority to contract with any municipality located within Pierce
121 County for the holding by the board of any primary or election to be conducted within such
122 municipality.

123 **SECTION 11.**

124 (a) The board shall be authorized to appoint an election supervisor to generally supervise,
125 direct, and control the administration of the affairs of the board pursuant to law and duly
126 adopted resolutions of the board. The election supervisor shall not be a member of the board

127 and shall not be an elected public official or an officer of a political party or body. The
128 election supervisor may be a part-time employee.

129 (b) The board shall be authorized to employ additional clerical assistants as needed to carry
130 out the duties and functions of the board.

131 **SECTION 12.**

132 Compensation for the members of the board, election supervisor, clerical assistants, and other
133 employees shall be fixed by the Board of Commissioners of Pierce County. Such
134 compensation shall be paid wholly from county funds.

135 **SECTION 13.**

136 The Board of Commissioners of Pierce County shall provide the board with such proper and
137 suitable offices, equipment, materials, and supplies and with such clerical assistance and
138 other employees as the Board of Commissioners of Pierce County deems appropriate.

139 **SECTION 14.**

140 The Board of Commissioners of Pierce County shall through its legal counsel cause this Act
141 to be submitted for preclearance under Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965,
142 as amended, and such submission shall be made to the United States Department of Justice
143 or filed with the appropriate court no later than 45 days after the date on which this Act is
144 approved by the Governor or otherwise becomes law without such approval.

145 **SECTION 15.**

146 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
147 without such approval for purposes of making initial appointments to the board only. This
148 Act shall become fully effective on July 1, 2009. Upon this Act becoming fully effective,
149 the judge of the Probate Court of Pierce County and the Board of Registrars of Pierce County
150 shall be relieved of all powers and duties to which the board succeeds by the provisions of
151 this Act and shall deliver to the board all equipment, supplies, materials, books, papers,
152 records, and facilities pertaining to such powers and duties. On such date, the Board of
153 Registrars of Pierce County shall be abolished.

154 **SECTION 16.**

155 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.