

House Bill 27

By: Representative Belton of the 112th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 elections and primaries generally, so as to provide a method for certain small municipalities
3 to shorten the advance voting period for municipal elections and runoffs; to provide for
4 staffing at such advance voting locations; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
5 laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elections and
9 primaries generally, is amended by revising paragraph (1) of subsection (d) of Code
10 Section 21-2-385, relating to procedure for voting by absentee ballot and advance voting, as
11 follows:

12 "(d)(1) ~~There~~ Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, there shall be a period of
13 advance voting that shall commence:

14 (A) On the fourth Monday immediately prior to each primary or election;

15 (B) On the fourth Monday immediately prior to a runoff from a general primary;

16 (C) On the fourth Monday immediately prior to a runoff from a general election in
17 which there are candidates for a federal office on the ballot in the runoff; and

18 (D) As soon as possible prior to a runoff from any other general election in which there
19 are only state or county candidates on the ballot in the runoff

20 and shall end on the Friday immediately prior to each primary, election, or runoff.

21 Voting shall be conducted during normal business hours on weekdays during such period
22 and shall be conducted on the second Saturday prior to a primary or election during the
23 hours of 9:00 A.M. through 4:00 P.M.; provided, however, that in primaries, ~~and~~
24 elections, and runoffs in which there are no federal or state candidates on the ballot, no
25 Saturday voting hours shall be required; and provided, further, that, if such second
26 Saturday is a public and legal holiday pursuant to Code Section 1-4-1, if such second

27 Saturday follows a public and legal holiday occurring on the Thursday or Friday
 28 immediately preceding such second Saturday, or if such second Saturday immediately
 29 precedes a public and legal holiday occurring on the following Sunday or Monday, such
 30 advance voting shall not be held on such second Saturday but shall be held on the third
 31 Saturday prior to such primary, ~~or~~ election, or runoff. Except as otherwise provided in
 32 this paragraph, counties and municipalities may extend the hours for voting beyond
 33 regular business hours and may provide for additional voting locations pursuant to Code
 34 Section 21-2-382 to suit the needs of the electors of the jurisdiction at their option. In the
 35 case of municipalities which have a population of 2,500 or less according to the United
 36 States decennial census of 2010 or any future such census, the governing authority may
 37 by ordinance submit to the electors of the municipality a referendum on whether to
 38 shorten the period of time for advance voting in municipal elections and runoffs for such
 39 municipality. If the electors of the municipality approve such shortening of the advance
 40 voting period, then the advance voting period for such municipality shall begin on the
 41 second Monday prior to an election or runoff and shall end on the following Friday so
 42 long as the municipality has a population of 2,500 or less according to the United States
 43 decennial census of 2010 or any future such census. Such shortened advance voting
 44 period shall not be applicable if the municipal election or runoff is held in conjunction
 45 with any county, state, or federal election or runoff. The municipality may reverse such
 46 decision to shorten the advance voting period for municipal elections or runoffs by the
 47 adoption of an appropriate ordinance and ratification of such ordinance in a referendum
 48 by the electors of the municipality. In municipalities which have a population of 2,500
 49 or less according to the United States decennial census of 2010 or any future such census,
 50 advance voting locations shall be staffed by a manager and an assistant manager, and
 51 such additional poll workers, if any, as the municipality may direct. The absentee ballot
 52 clerk may serve as a manager or assistant manager of an advance voting location."

53 **SECTION 2.**

54 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 21-2-414, relating
 55 to restrictions on campaign activities and public opinion polling within the vicinity of a
 56 polling place, cellular phone use prohibited, prohibition of candidates from entering certain
 57 polling places, and penalty, as follows:

58 "(b) ~~Rooms~~ For the purposes of this Code section, rooms under the control or supervision
 59 of the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk in which absentee ballots are being cast
 60 shall be considered polling places."

61

SECTION 3.

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