

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2022 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 34

BY SENATORS RUCKER, SMITH, HAMILTON, AND

MARONEY

[Introduced January 12, 2022; referred
to the Committee on The Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §3-1-3 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to
 2 amend and reenact §3-2-2 of said code, all relating to residency requirements for people
 3 entitled to vote and people eligible to register to vote; requiring that a person be a legal
 4 resident of the state, county, or municipality in which he or she offers to vote; requiring
 5 that a person be a legal resident of the state or county in which he or she applies to register
 6 to vote; and defining the term “legal resident”.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS.

§3-1-3. Persons entitled to vote.

1 (a) Citizens of the State of West Virginia shall be entitled to vote at all elections held within
 2 the precincts of the counties and municipalities in which they respectively reside. But no person
 3 who has not been registered as a voter as required by law, or who is a minor, or who has been
 4 declared mentally incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction, or who is under conviction of
 5 treason, felony or bribery in an election, or who is not a ~~bona fide~~ legal resident of the state,
 6 county, or municipality in which he or she offers to vote, shall be permitted to vote at such election
 7 while such disability continues, unless otherwise specifically provided by federal or state code.
 8 Subject to the qualifications otherwise prescribed in this section, however, a minor shall be
 9 permitted to vote only in a primary election if he or she will have reached the age of 18 years on
 10 the date of the general election next to be held after such primary election.

11 (b) For the purpose of this section, “legal resident” means a person who is domiciled in
 12 the state, county, or municipality in which he or she offers to vote, which includes both physical
 13 residency (or presence) in the state, county, or municipality and an intent to remain in the state,
 14 county, or municipality. Facts that may demonstrate the domicile of a person in the state, county,
 15 or municipality include, but are not limited to, the physical character of the person’s residence(s);
 16 the person’s time spent in the state, county, or municipality; the person’s reasons for residency in
 17 the state, county, or municipality; whether the person intends on returning permanently to another

18 residence outside of the state, county, or municipality in the future; whether the person obtains a
 19 license to operate a vehicle in the state; whether the person registers a vehicle(s) or other property
 20 in the state or county; the address listed on the person's vehicle registration card; the address
 21 listed on the person's driver's license; the address where the person receives state or federal
 22 benefits; and whether the person pays property or income taxes in the state, county, or
 23 municipality.

ARTICLE 2. REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.

§3-2-2. Eligibility to register to vote.

1 (a) Any person who possesses the constitutional qualifications for voting may register to
 2 vote. To be qualified, a person ~~must~~ shall be a citizen of the United States and a legal resident of
 3 the State of West Virginia and of the county where he or she is applying to register, shall be at
 4 least 18 years of age, except that a person who is at least 17 years of age and who will be 18
 5 years of age by the time of the next ensuing general election may also be permitted to register,
 6 and shall not be otherwise legally disqualified: *Provided*, That a registered voter who has not
 7 reached 18 years of age may vote both partisan and nonpartisan ballots in a federal, state, county,
 8 municipal, or special primary election if he or she will be 18 years of age by the time of the
 9 corresponding general election.

10 (b) Any person who has been convicted of a felony, treason, or bribery in an election,
 11 under either state or federal law, is disqualified and is not eligible to register or to continue to be
 12 registered to vote while serving his or her sentence, including any period of incarceration,
 13 probation or parole related thereto. Any person who has been declared mentally incompetent by
 14 a court of competent jurisdiction is disqualified and shall not be eligible to register or to continue
 15 to be registered to vote for as long as that disability continues.

16 (c) For the purpose of this section, "legal resident" means a person who is domiciled in the
 17 state or county in which he or she is applying to register to vote, which includes both physical
 18 residency (or presence) in the state or county and an intent to remain in the state or county. Facts

19 that may demonstrate the domicile of a person in the state or county include, but are not limited
20 to, the physical character of the person's residence(s); the person's time spent in the state or
21 county; the person's reasons for residency in the state or county; whether the person intends on
22 returning permanently to another residence outside of the state or county in the future; whether
23 the person obtains a license to operate a vehicle in the state; whether the person registers a
24 vehicle(s) or other property in the state or county; the address listed on the person's vehicle
25 registration card; the address listed on the person's driver's license; the address where the person
26 receives state or federal benefits; and whether the person pays property or income taxes in the
27 state or county.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to amend the residency requirements for people entitled to vote and people eligible to register to vote by adding a definition for the phrase "legal resident".

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.