CHAPTER 180

ELECTIONS

HOUSE BILL 25-1315

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Sirota and Pugliese, Duran, Boesenecker, Bradfield, Brown, Lindsay, McCormick, Paschal, Smith, Stewart R., Titone, McCluskie, Caldwell;

also SENATOR(S) Weissman and Kirkmeyer, Daugherty, Bridges, Cutter, Danielson, Exum, Hinrichsen, Kipp, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Wallace, Coleman.

AN ACT

CONCERNING VACANCIES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-1-104, **add** (22.6) as follows:

1-1-104. Definitions. As used in this code, unless the context otherwise requires:

(22.6) "Major political party vacancy election" means an election that is conducted as part of an odd-year coordinated election to fill a vacancy in the general assembly in accordance with section 1-12-203 (1.5).

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-3-103, **amend** (1)(a), (12), and (13); and **add** (14) and (15) as follows:

1-3-103. Party committees. (1) (a) At its own precinct caucus, each political party shall elect two committeepersons for each election precinct as provided in section 1-3-102. Each committeeperson shall hold the position for a term of two years after the date of the election, and each shall serve until a successor is duly elected or appointed and commences the term of office. In case of a vacancy in the office of precinct committeeperson, the vacancy may be filled by the members of the county central committee vacancy committee. If the county central committee vacancy occurring, the vacancy may be filled by the recommendation of the county chair, subject to ratification by the county central committee. If the county chair does not

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

fill the vacancy within sixty days of the vacancy occurring, the vacancy may be filled by recommendation of the state chair, subject to ratification by the county central committee. The person selected must be a resident of the precinct in which the vacancy occurred. When a vacancy in the office of precinct committeeperson is filled in accordance with this section, the newly appointed precinct committeeperson shall not participate in the vacancy committee process described in section 1-12-203 to fill a vacancy in the general assembly until, at the earliest, ninety-one days after the newly appointed precinct committeeperson was appointed.

- (12) If a JURISDICTION'S central committee of a jurisdiction THAT IS NOT A STATE SENATORIAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE OR STATE REPRESENTATIVE CENTRAL COMMITTEE fails to select a vacancy committee, the central committee of the jurisdiction serves as the vacancy committee.
- (13) In selecting the members of a vacancy committee authorized to fill vacancies in office pursuant to this section, the JURISDICTION'S central committee of a jurisdiction THAT IS NOT A STATE SENATORIAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE OR STATE REPRESENTATIVE CENTRAL COMMITTEE shall select, at a minimum, the members of the jurisdiction's central committee.
- (14) If a state senatorial central committee or state representative central committee fails to select a vacancy committee, the vacancy committee is comprised of the state senatorial central committee or state representative central committee and any county commissioners who are members of the political party and reside within the state senatorial or state representative district.
- (15) In selecting the members of a vacancy committee authorized to fill vacancies in office pursuant to this section, the state senatorial central committee or state representative central committee shall select, at a minimum, the members of the state senatorial central committee or state representative central committee and any county commissioners who are members of the political party and reside within the state senatorial or state representative district.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-5-505.5, **add** (1)(e) as follows:

1-5-505.5. State reimbursement to counties for elections with state certified ballot content. (1) (e) For a major political party vacancy election, as described in section 1-12-203 (1.5), held as part of an odd-year coordinated election for which the state has not otherwise certified any statewide ballot content, the state shall reimburse each county in which the state has certified a major political party vacancy election for forty-five percent of the costs that the county incurs in conducting the coordinated election, as provided in subsection (1)(a) of this section.

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-12-203, **amend** (1) and (3)(a); and **add** (1.5) and (1.7) as follows:

1-12-203. Vacancies in general assembly. (1) In the event of a vacancy in the

general assembly caused by the death or resignation of a member who has been sworn into office, caused by the death or resignation of a member who has been elected to a seat but who has not yet been sworn into office, or caused by a person not taking the oath of office as provided in paragraph (b) of subsection (3) SUBSECTION (3)(b) of this section, the vacancy shall be filled by the appropriate vacancy committee, if any, as provided in section 1-3-103 (1)(d), of the same political party and of the same representative or senatorial district represented by the former member whose seat is vacant. If the member was affiliated with a minor political party, then the vacancy shall MUST be filled by the vacancy committee designated in the constitution or bylaws of the minor political party. If the member was unaffiliated with a political party, then the vacancy shall MUST be filled by the vacancy committee designated on the petition for nomination pursuant to section 1-4-802 (1)(e); EXCEPT THAT, IF THE MEMBER HAS NO VACANCY COMMITTEE, THE VACANCY MUST BE FILLED BY THE GOVERNOR. EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (1.5) OF THIS SECTION, the vacancy shall must be filled until the next general election after the vacancy occurs, when the vacancy shall MUST be filled by election.

- (1.5) (a) Except as provided in Section 1-12-208, and notwithstanding Section 1-4-1010, if a vacancy in the General assembly occurs on or after July 31 of an odd-numbered year and before July 31 of the next even-numbered year and the former member whose seat is vacant was affiliated with a major political party, the vacancy must be filled by a vacancy committee pursuant to subsection (1) or (5) of this section until the next general election after the vacancy occurs, when the vacancy must be filled by election.
- (b) Except as provided in Section 1-12-208, and notwithstanding Section 1-4-1010, if a vacancy in the General assembly occurs on or after July 31 of an even-numbered year and before July 31 of the Next odd-numbered year and the former member whose seat is vacant was affiliated with a major political party, the vacancy must be filled by a vacancy committee pursuant to subsection (1) or (5) of this section until the Next odd-numbered year coordinated election, when the vacancy must be filled by a major political party vacancy election; except that, if the vacant seat is scheduled to be on the ballot at the Next General election in an even-numbered year and the vacancy occurs on or after July 31 of that even-numbered year but before ninety days remain in the vacant term, the remainder of the vacant term must be filled by a vacancy committee pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. The candidate elected in the major political party vacancy election shall serve until the next general election, when the vacancy must be filled by election.
- (c) The only candidates who may run in a major political party vacancy election described in subsection (1.5)(b) of this section are candidates who, as of no later than the first business day of the January immediately preceding the major political party vacancy election, or as otherwise provided by the applicable party's rule, are members of the same political party and, as of no later than one year prior to the major political party vacancy election, are residents of the same representative or senatorial district as the former member whose seat

IS VACANT. THE ONLY VOTERS WHO MAY VOTE IN THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY VACANCY ELECTION ARE VOTERS WHO:

- (I) Are, as of the twenty-second day before the major political party vacancy election, affiliated with the same political party as the former member whose seat is vacant or unaffiliated; and
- (II) RESIDE IN THE SAME REPRESENTATIVE OR SENATORIAL DISTRICT REPRESENTED BY THE FORMER MEMBER WHOSE SEAT IS VACANT.
- (d) A candidate must be placed on the ballot for a major political party vacancy election described in subsection (1.5)(b) of this section if the candidate:
- (I) Files a nominating statement on a form created by the candidate's political party that is signed by thirty percent of the applicable vacancy committee members with the secretary of state and the candidate's political party before 5 p.m. on the seventieth day preceding the major political party vacancy election; or
- (II) Submits to the secretary of state, no later than thirty days after THEIR PETITION FORMAT HAS BEEN APPROVED OR EIGHTY-FIVE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY VACANCY ELECTION, WHICHEVER IS SOONER, A NOTARIZED CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT OF INTENT AND A PETITION SIGNED BY AT LEAST TWO HUNDRED ELECTORS, EACH OF WHOM HAS BEEN AFFILIATED WITH THE SAME POLITICAL PARTY AS THE CANDIDATE FOR AT LEAST TWENTY-TWO DAYS PRIOR TO SIGNING, AND EACH OF WHOM IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN THE DISTRICT FOR WHICH THE CANDIDATE IS TO BE ELECTED. PART 9 OF ARTICLE 4 OF THIS TITLE 1 APPLIES TO PETITIONS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION; EXCEPT THAT THE PROVISIONS OF PART 9 OF ARTICLE 4 OF THIS TITLE 1 THAT CONFLICT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OR TIMELINE DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION DO NOT APPLY TO PETITIONS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION. PETITIONS MUST NOT BE CIRCULATED AND SIGNATURES MUST NOT BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO THE FIRST BUSINESS DAY AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE VACANCY. A PETITION MUST NOT BE CIRCULATED UNTIL IT HAS BEEN APPROVED AS MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 1-4-904 AS TO FORM. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHALL APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE A PETITION AS TO FORM NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND BUSINESS DAY FOLLOWING SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSED PETITION.
- (e) If a vacancy committee member signs a nominating statement in accordance with subsection (1.5)(d)(I) of this section after having signed another nominating statement filed for the same office in the same major political party vacancy election, the vacancy committee member's signature only counts towards the thirty percent of applicable vacancy committee member signatures required pursuant to subsection (1.5)(d)(I) of this section on the first nominating statement submitted that contains the signature.
- (f) If an eligible elector signs a petition in accordance with subsection (1.5)(d)(II) of this section after having signed another petition submitted for the same office in the same major political party vacancy election,

THE ELECTOR'S SIGNATURE ONLY COUNTS TOWARDS THE TWO HUNDRED ELECTOR SIGNATURES REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1.5)(d)(II) of this section on the first petition submitted that contains the signature.

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- (g) The party chairperson of the vacancy committee of the district in which the candidate is running shall verify that a nominating statement filed pursuant to this section satisfies subsections (1.5)(d)(I) and (1.5)(e) of this section. The secretary of state shall verify that a petition submitted pursuant to this section satisfies subsections (1.5)(d)(II) and (1.5)(f) of this section.
- (h) The only candidates who are placed on the ballot for a major political party vacancy election are those described in subsections (1.5)(d)(I) and (1.5)(d)(I) of this section.
- (i) A major political party vacancy election must be certified by the secretary of state in the same manner as an odd-year November election is certified pursuant to section 1-5-203 (1). The secretary of state shall certify placement of the candidates on the ballot as drawn by lot.
- (j) The major political party vacancy election must be conducted as part of the odd-year November coordinated election.
- (k) A candidate in a major political party vacancy election may select watchers in the same manner as a candidate in a nonpartisan election as provided in section 1-7-107. The members of the canvass board for a major political party vacancy election must be appointed and certified in the manner provided in section 1-10-101. Election judges for major political party vacancy elections must be appointed in the same manner as election judges for partisan elections in accordance with section 1-6-111.
- (1) IF, AT A MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY VACANCY ELECTION, AFTER ALL RECOUNTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, ANY TWO OR MORE CANDIDATES TIE FOR THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF VOTES FOR THE SAME OFFICE, THE TIE MUST BE RESOLVED IN A MANNER AGREED UPON BY THE TYING CANDIDATES. IN CASE THE CANDIDATES FAIL TO AGREE ON THE METHOD OF RESOLUTION WITHIN FIVE DAYS AFTER THE CANVASS IS COMPLETE, THE TIE MUST BE RESOLVED BY LOT TO BE CAST AS THE SECRETARY OF STATE MAY DETERMINE.
- (1.7) A political party may choose to continue to fill a vacancy in the general assembly by vacancy committee according to subsection (1) of this section rather than by a major political party vacancy election established by subsection (1.5) of this section if at least three-fourths of the total voting membership of the party's state central committee affirmatively votes to do so. Such vote of the party's state central committee must occur no later than October 1 of the year preceding the year in which a major political party vacancy election would be held. For purposes of this vote, members of the party's state central committee shall not vote by proxy.
 - (3) (a) The vacancy committee, by a majority vote of its members present and

voting at a meeting called for that purpose and open to the public, shall select a person who possesses the constitutional qualifications for a member of the general assembly and who is affiliated with the same political party or minor political party, if any, shown in the statewide voter registration system as the former member whose seat is vacant. No vacancy committee meeting shall be held until a quorum is present consisting of not less than one-half of the voting membership of the vacancy committee. No member of the vacancy committee may vote by proxy. ALL VACANCY COMMITTEE MEETINGS MUST BE ACCESSIBLE IN REAL TIME BY LIVE STREAMING VIDEO OR AUDIO THAT IS RECORDED AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC. The committee shall certify the selection to the secretary of state within thirty days from the date the vacancy occurs; except that, in the case of a vacancy filled pursuant to section 1-4-1006, the committee shall certify the selection within thirty days after the date of the general election affected by the vacancy. If the vacancy committee fails to certify a selection within thirty days in accordance with this subsection (3), the governor, within five days, shall fill the vacancy by appointing a person having the qualifications set forth in this subsection (3). The name of the person selected or appointed must be certified to the secretary of state.

SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-45-103, **amend** (2) and (8); and **add** (19) as follows:

- **1-45-103. Definitions.** As used in this article 45, unless the context otherwise requires:
- (2) "Candidate" shall have has the same meaning as set forth in section 2 (2) of article XXVIII of the state constitution; except that "Candidate" also includes a candidate for a major political party vacancy election conducted pursuant to section 1-12-203 (1.5) and a vacancy contender who has publicly announced an intention to be selected by a vacancy committee to fill a vacancy in the general assembly and thereafter has received a contribution or made an expenditure in support of the candidacy. A vacancy contender remains a candidate for purposes of this article 45 so long as the vacancy contender maintains a registered candidate committee. A vacancy contender who maintains a candidate committee after a vacancy committee has filled the applicable vacancy in the general assembly, but who has not publicly announced an intention to seek election to the general assembly in the next or any subsequent election cycle, is a candidate for purposes of this article 45.
- (8) "Election cycle" shall have HAS the same meaning as set forth in section 2 (6) of article XXVIII of the state constitution; EXCEPT THAT:
- (a) For a vacancy committee selection process used to fill a vacancy in the general assembly pursuant to section 1-12-203, "election cycle" means the period beginning on the effective date of the vacancy in the general assembly and ending thirty days following the date upon which the vacancy committee selects an individual to fill the vacancy; and
- (b) For major political party vacancy elections held pursuant to section 1-12-203 (1.5), "election cycle" means the period beginning on the date upon which a vacancy committee selects a member to fill the

Vacancy in the general assembly pursuant to 1-12-203, and ending thirty days following the major political party vacancy election.

- (19) "VACANCY CONTENDER" MEANS ANY PERSON WHO SEEKS TO BE SELECTED BY A VACANCY COMMITTEE TO FILL A VACANCY IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PURSUANT TO SECTION 1-12-203.
 - **SECTION 6.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-45-103.7, add (4.8) as follows:
- 1-45-103.7. Contribution limits county offices school district director treatment of independent expenditure committees contributions from limited liability companies voter instructions on spending limits definitions. (4.8) (a) A candidate committee established in the name of a vacancy contender may accept from any one person the aggregate contribution limit specified in section 3 (1) of article XXVIII of the state constitution applicable to the office the vacancy contender is seeking at any point during the election cycle for the vacancy committee selection process used to fill a vacancy in the general assembly pursuant to section 1-12-203.
- (b) A candidate committee established in the name of a candidate who is running for a major political party vacancy election may accept from any one person the aggregate contribution limit specified in section $3\,(1)$ of article XXVIII of the state constitution applicable to the office the candidate is seeking at any point during the election cycle for the major political party vacancy election held pursuant to section $1-12-203\,(1.5)$.
- **SECTION 7.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-45-108, **amend** (2)(a)(I) introductory portion, (2)(a)(I)(C), (2)(a)(I)(D), and (2)(a)(I)(E); and **add** (2)(a)(VI) as follows:
- **1-45-108.** Disclosure definitions repeal. (2) (a) (I) Except as provided in subsections (2)(a)(V), (2)(a)(VI), (2.1), (2.5), (2.7), and (6) of this section, such reports that are required to be filed with the secretary of state must be filed:
- (C) On the first day of each month beginning the sixth full month before the major election; except that no monthly report shall be required on the first day of the month in which the major election OR MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY VACANCY ELECTION CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 1-12-203 (1.5) is held;
- (D) On the first Monday in September and on each Monday every two weeks thereafter before the major election OR MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY VACANCY ELECTION CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 1-12-203 (1.5);
- (E) Thirty-five days after the A major election in election years OR AFTER A MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY VACANCY ELECTION; and
- (VI) Such reports that are required to be filed with the secretary of state for contributions received and expenditures made related to vacancy contenders must be filed on the Monday of each week during the

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ELECTION CYCLE FOR THE VACANCY COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS USED TO FILL A VACANCY IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PURSUANT TO SECTION 1-12-203.

SECTION 8. Appropriation. For the 2025-26 state fiscal year, \$320,240 is appropriated to the department of state for use by the information technology division. This appropriation is from the department of state cash fund created in section 24-21-104 (3)(b), C.R.S. To implement this act, the department may use this appropriation for personal services.

SECTION 9. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: May 12, 2025