

STATE BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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Summary of Revisions to the RULES FOR POLL WORKER TRAINING

The State Board of Election Commissioners met on June 19, 2013 and approved for public comment revisions to the “Rules for Poll Worker Training.” The public comment period ended on July 23, 2013.

Staff held a public hearing on July 17, 2013 to hear additional comments and the State Board of Election Commissioners met again on August 21, 2013 to approve revisions to the “Rules for Poll Worker Training” that set forth the procedures for coordinating statewide poll worker training. Below is a summary of the initial revisions that were approved by the Board on June 19, 2013 for the public comment period, followed by a list of persons commenting on the rule, a summary of the comments, the agency’s response to the comments, and the changes to the rules as a result of the public comments.

Initial changes include: 1) establishing an advanced training program for experienced certified poll worker trainers, allowing those trainers who have previously attended comprehensive training the option of attending a shorter advanced program consisting of legal updates and discussion of new issues; 2) addressing a legislative change from Act 1457 of 2013 requiring that all poll workers be trained prior to serving as poll workers during regularly scheduled elections; and 3) changes in language for clarity.

PERSONS COMMENTING ON THE RULE

Stu Soffer – State Election Commissioner (via email on Friday, June 21, 2013)

Ginna Watson - Garland County Election Commissioner (written comments submitted via hand delivery on July 17, 2013 and oral comments made during the public hearing held on July 17, 2013)

Washington County Election Commission (via email on July 23, 2013)

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

A recommendation was made to include a provision that poll worker trainers be able to provide effective training to a diverse audience.

A recommendation was made to distinguish between the definitions of “precinct” and “polling place” in §200 and to confirm that a county is eligible for reimbursement for up to a maximum of six eligible poll workers per precinct per polling site for state-funded elections.

One comment expressed concern about appointing a poll worker who turns out to be a felon, unknown to the county election commission at the time of appointment.

A recommendation was made for the state to pay for any training conducted to meet the requirement that one poll worker per poll attend training within twelve months of any regularly scheduled election. Specifically, the training in question is for annual school elections held in odd-numbered years.

AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The need for poll worker trainers to provide effective training to a diverse audience will be emphasized to election commissioners when they select trainers and will be covered during poll worker training; a rule change is not needed at this time.

The definition of "precinct" as amended in Act 1211 of 2013 will be added into §200. The law and the rule seem to be clear about reimbursement for poll workers – counties are eligible for reimbursement for up to six workers per precinct per poll for state-funded elections.

It is unlikely that a county election commission would be sanctioned for good faith efforts to not appoint felons. This qualification is found in A.C.A. §7-4-109(a)(1).

Legislation would be required to allow the state to pay for additional training to meet the requirement that one poll worker per poll attend training within twelve months of any regularly scheduled election. The current reimbursement for poll worker training is tied to the state-funded preferential primary election.

RULE CHANGES AS A RESULT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

§200: Add the definition of "precinct" as amended in Act 1211 of 2013.