

2023-2024 #197 (Final)

Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-12-203, **amend** (1) and (4); **repeal** (2), (3), (5), and (6) (a); and **add** (1.5) and (1.7), as follows:

1-12-203. Vacancies in general assembly. (1) (a) 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, OR 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) 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 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 be filled by the vacancy committee designated on the petition for nomination pursuant to section 1-4-802 (1)(e).~~ ~~The vacancy shall be filled until the next general election after the vacancy occurs when the vacancy shall be filled by election~~ THE GOVERNOR SHALL SET A DAY TO HOLD A LEGISLATIVE ELECTION TO APPOINT A PERSON TO FILL ANY SUCH VACANCY AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AFTER THE VACANCY OCCURS, SUBJECT TO SECTION 2 OF ARTICLE V OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION. THE ELECTION SHALL BE HELD IN THE DISTRICT FOR THE VACANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEAT AND NO PRECINCT OR PRECINCTS MAY BE EXCLUDED.

(b) LIMITED TO THE EVENT THAT THE GOVERNOR REASONABLY DETERMINES THAT EITHER THERE IS NOT MEANINGFUL TIME TO CONDUCT AN ELECTION PRIOR TO A REGULARLY SCHEDULED GENERAL ELECTION OR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEAT WILL REMAIN VACANT ONLY WHEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS NOT IN SESSION, THE GOVERNOR MAY DECIDE NOT TO CALL A LEGISLATIVE ELECTION TO FILL THE VACANCY, AND THE VACANCY SHALL BE FILLED AT THE NEXT, REGULARLY SCHEDULED GENERAL ELECTION.

(1.5) (a) ANY LEGISLATIVE ELECTION TO APPOINT A PERSON TO FILL A VACANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEAT SHALL BE CONDUCTED USING A RANKED VOTING METHOD.

(b) THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHALL PROMULGATE RULES, SUBJECT TO SECTION 2 OF ARTICLE V OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION, FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTION TO FILL THE VACANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEAT TO PETITION ONTO THE LEGISLATIVE VACANCY ELECTION BALLOT, INCLUDING RULES ADDRESSING PETITION ACCESSIBILITY AND TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE CONSISTENT WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, 42 U.S.C. SEC. 12101 ET SEQ., AS AMENDED, AND PARTS 6 AND 8 OF ARTICLE 34 OF TITLE 24, AND THE COLORADO UNIFORM MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS ACT, ARTICLE 8.3 OF THIS TITLE 1. NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION (1.5)(b) SHALL LIMIT THE AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PASS LAWS REGARDING SUFFRAGE AND ELECTIONS AS PROVIDED IN ARTICLE VII OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION.

(1.7) UNLESS OTHERWISE PROVIDED, ANY LEGISLATIVE ELECTION TO APPOINT A PERSON TO FILL A VACANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEAT SHALL BE CONDUCTED, INCLUDING FOR PURPOSES OF NOTICE, PUBLISHING, AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, ACCORDING TO THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 1 THROUGH ARTICLE 13 OF THIS TITLE 1.

~~(2) No vacancy committee may select a person to fill a vacancy at a meeting held pursuant to this section unless a written notice announcing the time and location of the vacancy committee meeting was mailed to each of the committee members at least ten days prior to the meeting by the chairperson of the central committee that selected the members. Mailing of the notice is effective when the notice is properly addressed and deposited in the United States mail, with first-class postage prepaid.~~

~~(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. 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.~~

~~(b) No sooner than two days after receiving the certification from the vacancy committee, the secretary of state shall certify the name of the person selected or appointed to the appropriate house of the general assembly. The oath of office shall be administered to the person within thirty days of the receipt of such certification by the appropriate house or on the convening date of the general assembly, whichever occurs first; except that the president of the senate or the speaker of the house of representatives, as appropriate, shall extend the time to take the oath upon a finding that extenuating circumstances prevented the person from taking the oath within the initial thirty-day period. In the event the person does not take the oath of office in accordance with this paragraph (b), the office shall be deemed vacant and shall be filled by the appropriate vacancy committee pursuant to the provisions of this section. The person, after having qualified and taken the oath of office, shall immediately assume the duties of office and shall serve until the next convening of the general assembly following the election certification and qualification of a successor. Nothing in this subsection (3) shall be construed to reduce the number of consecutive terms that a person appointed to fill a vacancy in the general assembly may serve in accordance with section 3 of article V of the state constitution.~~

(4) For purposes of this section, a vacancy caused by the resignation of a member of the general assembly occurs on the effective date of the member's letter of resignation to the chief clerk of the house of representatives or the secretary of the senate. If the letter of resignation gives an

~~effective date of resignation that is later than the date the letter of resignation is submitted, the vacancy committee may meet no more than twenty days prior to the effective date of the resignation for the purposes of nominating a person to fill the vacancy. The certification of the nominee of the vacancy committee to the secretary of state may not be made prior to the effective date of the resignation; further, should the member of the general assembly withdraw the letter of resignation prior to the effective date, the person nominated by the vacancy committee may not be certified to the secretary of state.~~

~~(5) If the vacancy is caused by the death of a member elect of the general assembly who has been elected to office but who has not yet been sworn in, the vacancy committee shall meet no more than thirty days after the death of the general assembly member elect to fill the vacancy. The certification of the nomination of the vacancy committee to the secretary of state may be made prior to the convening of the general assembly but shall not take effect until the effective date of the vacancy, which is the first day the general assembly convenes.~~

~~(6) (a) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, a member of a vacancy committee filling a vacancy pursuant to this section may participate in a vacancy committee meeting remotely, including casting the member's vote by e-mail, mail, telephone, or through an internet based application if allowed by the party's rules.~~

SECTION 2. Effective date.

This initiative shall apply to elections held on or after the earlier of the official declaration of the vote hereon by proclamation of the governor or thirty days after the vote has been canvassed, pursuant to section 1 (4) of article V of the state constitution.