WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE 2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4389

By Delegate C. Pritt

[Introduced January 10, 2024 ; Referred

to the Committee on the Judiciary]

A BILL to amend and reenact §3-1-9 and §3-1-11 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to amend and reenact §3-5-2 and §3-5-21 of said code; and to amend and reenact §3-8-2c of said code, all relating to political parties; providing that state executive committee create rules for state, district, and county executive committees; removing ability of courts to review political party rules; providing that political parties may select delegates to the national convention consistent with the national rules of their political party; providing that presidential electors be chosen by state convention or state executive committee; and removing limitation on contributions or expenditures over \$1 million for state or county executive committee headquarters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS. §3-1-9. Political party committees; how composed; organization.

(a) Every fourth year at the primary election, the voters of each political party in each state senatorial district shall elect four members consisting of two male members and two female members of the state executive committee of the party. In state senatorial districts containing two or more counties, not more than two elected committee members shall be residents of the same county: *Provided*, That at each election the votes shall be tallied from highest to lowest without regard to gender or county of residence. The two candidates with the highest votes shall be elected first and the other candidates shall be qualified based on vote tallies, gender, and county of residence. Upon completion of the canvass, the clerk of the county commission from each county shall send the results of the election of members of each state executive committee and certificates of announcement, if any, to the Secretary of State. Upon certification of the election results, the Secretary of State shall make known to each state executive committee the members elected to such committee and the vacancies, if any. The committee, when convened and organized as herein provided, shall appoint three additional members of the committee from the state at large which shall constitute the entire voting membership of the state executive committee:

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Provided, however, That if it chooses to do so, the committee may, by motion or resolution and in accordance with party rules, expand the voting membership of the committee. When senatorial districts are realigned following a decennial census, members of the state executive committee previously elected or appointed shall continue in office until the expiration of their terms. Appointments made to fill vacancies on the committee until the next election of executive committee members shall be selected from the previously established districts. At the first election of executive committee members following the realignment of senatorial districts, members shall be elected from the newly established districts.

(b) At the primary election, the voters of each political party in each county shall elect one male and one female member of the party's executive committee of the congressional district, of the state senatorial district and of the delegate district in which the county is situated, if the county is situated in a multicounty state senatorial or delegate district. Upon completion of the canvass, the clerk of the county commission from each county shall send the results of the election of members of each congressional district, state senatorial district and delegate district executive committee of each party to the Secretary of State. Upon certification of the election results, the Secretary of State shall make known to each state executive committee the members elected to each congressional district, state senatorial district and delegate district executive committee and the vacancies, if any. Upon receipt, the state executive committee shall make known any vacancies to the applicable county executive committee for the purpose of filling said vacancies as provided in subsection (f) of this section. When districts are realigned following a decennial census, members of an executive committee previously elected in a county to represent that county in a congressional or multicounty senatorial or delegate district executive committee shall continue to represent that county in the appropriate newly constituted multicounty district until the expiration of their terms: Provided, That the county executive committee of the political party shall determine which previously elected members will represent the county if the number of multicounty state senatorial or delegate districts in the county is decreased; and shall appoint

members to complete the remainder of the term if the number of districts is increased.

- (c) At the same time the voters of the county in each magisterial district or executive committee district, as the case may be, shall elect one male and one female member of the party's county executive committee except that in counties having three executive committee districts, there shall be elected two male and two female members of the party's executive committee from each magisterial or executive committee district. Upon completion of the canvass, the clerk of the county commission from each county shall send the results of the election of members of the county executive committee of each party along with the certificates of announcement to the Secretary of State. Upon certification of the election results, the Secretary of State shall make known to each state executive committee the members elected to the county committee and the vacancies, if any. Upon receipt, the state executive committee shall make known any vacancies to the applicable county executive committee for the purpose of filling said vacancies as provided in subsection (f) of this section.
- (d) For the purpose of complying with the provisions of this section, the county commission shall create the executive committee districts. The districts shall not be fewer than the number of magisterial districts in the county, nor shall they exceed in number the following: Forty for counties having a population of 100,000 persons or more; 30 for counties having a population of 50,000 to 100,000; 20 for counties having a population of 20,000 to 50,000; and the districts in counties having a population of less than 20,000 persons shall be coextensive with the magisterial districts.
- (e) The executive committee districts shall be as nearly equal in population as practicable and shall each be composed of compact, contiguous territory. The county commissions shall change the territorial boundaries of the districts as required by the increase or decrease in the population of the districts as determined by a decennial census. The changes must be made within two years following the census.
- (f) All members of executive committees, selected for each political division as herein provided, shall reside within the county or district from which chosen. The term of office of all

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members of executive committees elected at the primary election in the year 2010 will begin on July 1, following the primary election and continue for four years thereafter, except as provided in subsection (g) of this section. Vacancies in the state executive committee shall be filled by the members of the committee for the unexpired term. Vacancies in the party's executive committee of a congressional district, state senatorial district, delegate district or county shall be filled by the party's executive committee of the county in which the vacancy exists for the unexpired term.

(g) As soon as possible after the certification of the election of the new executive committees, as herein provided, the newly elected executive committee shall convene an organizational meeting within their respective political divisions, on the call of the chair of the corresponding outgoing executive committee or by any member of the new executive committee in the event there is no corresponding outgoing executive committee. During the first meeting the new executive committee shall select a chair, a treasurer and a secretary and other officers as they may desire. Each of the officers shall, for their respective committees, perform the duties that usually appertain to his or her office. The organizational meeting may be conducted prior to July 1, but must occur after the certification of the election of the new executive committees. If the organizational meeting is conducted prior to July 1, the new committee shall serve out the remainder of the outgoing committee's term and is authorized to conduct official business. A current listing of all executive committees' members shall be filed with the Secretary of State by the end of July of each year. Vacancies in any executive committee shall be filled by the appropriate executive committee as provided in subsection (f) of this section no later than 60 days after the vacancy occurs. The chair of each executive committee shall submit an updated committee list to the Secretary of State within 10 days of a change occurring. Executive committee membership lists shall include at least the member's name, full address, employer, telephone number and term information. An appointment to fill a vacancy does not take effect if the executive committee does not submit the updated list to the Secretary of State within the allotted time period. If the executive committee fails to submit the updated list within the allotted time period, it must

make another appointment pursuant to the provisions of this section and resubmit the updated list in a timely manner. If a vacancy on an executive committee is not filled within the 60-day period prescribed by this section, the chair of the appropriate executive committee, as provided in subsection (f) of this section, shall name someone to fill the vacancy. If the chair of a county executive committee fails to fill a vacancy in a congressional district, state senatorial district or delegate district executive committee, and the failure to fill such vacancy prohibits said committee from conducting official business, the chair of the party's state executive committee shall fill such vacancy.

- (h) Any meeting of any political party executive committee shall be held only after public notice and notice to each member is given according to party rules and shall be open to all members affiliated with the party. Meetings shall be conducted according to party rule and minutes shall be maintained and shall be open to inspection by members affiliated with the party.
- (i) The state executive committee of each party may adopt rules and procedures to govern the election and composition of state, district, and county executives' committees, which may conflict with the provisions of this section: *Provided*, That the Chair of the State Executive Committee notify the Secretary of State, in writing, of alternative plans to elect and compose the executive committees of their respective parties not later than November 1 during each odd-numbered year. Should the Chair of the State Executive Committee fail to notify the Secretary of State of the rules and procedures which will govern the election of executive committees for that political party, the provisions of this section shall remain in force for that political party.

§3-1-11. Powers of state executive committee; central or subcommittees; party emblems.

The state executive committee of each party may shall make such rules for the government of such party. not inconsistent with law, as may be deemed expedient; and it may also revoke, alter, or amend, in any manner not inconsistent with law, any present or future rules of such party All No acts of such state, district, or county or other executive committees may shall be reviewable by the courts.

Any party executive committee may create and appoint subcommittees, campaign, or central committees, and delegate to them such powers and authority in the executive and administrative work of the committee as they shall deem advisable; but no power or authority shall be delegated to such subcommittee, campaign committee, or central committee, in contravention of any law of the state

The state executive committee shall adopt a party emblem or device for the party to distinguish and identify the party ticket, and shall certify the same to the ballot commissioners, and it shall be printed on the party ticket. The device or emblem of no two parties shall be similar or of such a nature as to mislead or confuse the voter. If two or more parties seek the same device, or similar devices, preference shall be given to the party polling the largest number of votes for the candidate for Governor at the last election for such office.

ARTICLE 5. PRIMARY ELECTIONS AND NOMINATING PROCEDURES.

§3-5-2. Delegates to national conventions; alternate delegates.

- Each political party shall elect, select, allocate, and bind delegates and alternate delegates to the national convention of their respective political party in a manner not inconsistent with the national rules of their political party.
- (a) At the primary election to be held in the year one thousand nine hundred ninety-two, and in each fourth year thereafter, there shall be elected by the voters of each political party of the state, in accordance with a plan adopted by the state party, persons to be delegates to the national convention of the party to be held next after the date of such primary.
- (b) The plan adopted by each political party of the state shall state the method, subject to compliance with their national party rules and not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter, for the election of persons in each congressional district of the state as delegates to the national convention of the party, for the election or selection of persons in each congressional district of the state as alternate delegates to the national convention of the party and for the selection of all remaining delegates and alternate delegates allocated to the party in their national convention.

Not less than one hundred twenty days before the primary election to be held in the year one thousand nine hundred ninety-two, and in every fourth year thereafter, the governing body of each political party of the state shall certify the plan adopted by the party under signature of the state party chairman and file the plan with the Secretary of State. Any questions regarding whether such plan was rightfully adopted by the party shall be resolved by the party based upon party rules.

- (c) The plan adopted by each political party of the state shall, to the extent permissible under their national party rules, provide for the following:
- (1) The voters of each political party shall elect in each congressional district the number of persons as delegates to the national convention of the party to which the district is entitled.
- (2) If the rules of the national political party do not require the apportionment of delegates on the basis of their commitment for president, the persons receiving the highest number of votes as delegates in any congressional district to the number to which the district is entitled, shall be elected delegates. After the election of delegates in each congressional district to the number to which the district is entitled, the persons receiving the next highest votes in each congressional district and having qualified, as may be provided in the plan adopted by the party, shall be elected as alternate delegates to the number of alternate delegates to which the district is entitled.
- (3) If the rules of the national political party require that the percentage of votes cast for the various presidential candidates determine the apportionment of committed candidates to be elected as delegates or alternates, regardless of whether such committed candidates received the highest number of votes, then the plan adopted by the political party of the state shall prescribe the number of delegates and alternates to be elected under such apportionment, the method by which the apportionment shall be made, and the method by which the Secretary of State shall determine which delegates and alternates are elected. A committed candidate for delegate to national convention is one whose preference for particular presidential candidate appears on the ballot.
- (4) In the event the number of persons elected in the primary election in a congressional district is less than the number to which the district is entitled as delegates and alternate delegates

to the national convention of the political party, the governing body of the political party of the state shall appoint persons from the congressional district to serve as delegates or alternate delegates to the national convention of the party unless the rules of the party otherwise provide.

- (5) The number of persons which each of the congressional districts in the state are entitled to elect as delegates to the national convention of the political party shall be apportioned among the congressional districts in the same proportion to the total number of delegates to the party's national convention elected in all congressional districts in the state as the population of the congressional district bears to the total population of the state based upon the census of population taken by the bureau of the census of the United States Department of Commerce in the year one thousand nine hundred ninety, and in every tenth year thereafter.
- (d) The official primary ballot at the primary election to be held in the year one thousand nine hundred ninety-two, and in every fourth year thereafter shall, following the names of all candidates for delegates to the national convention of the party, contain the words "For election in accordance with the plan adopted by the party and filed with the Secretary of State."
- (e) Unless and until a political party of the state has adopted and certified a plan for the election of delegates to the national convention of the party and filed the plan with the Secretary of State, there shall be elected by the voters of the political party of the state at the primary election to be held in the year one thousand nine hundred ninety-two, and in each fourth year thereafter, the number of persons to which the party is entitled as delegates-at-large, and by the voters of each political party in each congressional district in the state the number of delegates to which the district is entitled. The persons receiving the highest number of votes in the state as delegates-at-large, to the number to which the state is entitled, shall be elected delegates. The persons receiving the highest number of votes as delegates in any congressional district, to the number to which the district is entitled, shall be elected delegates. Each delegate so elected shall then appoint an individual to serve as alternate delegate, and shall by registered letter notify the Secretary of State of such appointment within forty days after the primary election

§3-5-21. Party conventions to nominate presidential electors; candidates; organization; duties.

Presidential electors shall be nominated by a state convention or by the state executive committee of each political party in a manner governed and prescribed by the rules of that state executive committee.

Candidates for presidential electors shall be nominated by the delegated representatives of the political party assembled in a state convention to be held during the months of June, July or August next preceding any general election at which presidential electors are to be elected. The state executive committee of the political party, by resolution, shall designate the place and fix the date of the convention, shall prescribe the number of delegates thereto, and shall apportion the delegates among the several counties of the state in proportion to the vote cast in the state for the party's candidate for Governor at the last preceding general election at which a Governor was elected. The state executive committee shall also ascertain and designate all offices for which candidates are to be nominated at the convention.

At least sixty days prior to the date fixed for holding any state convention, the chairman of the party's state executive committee shall cause to be delivered to the party's county executive committee in each county of the state a copy of the resolutions fixing the time and place for holding the state convention and prescribing the number of delegates from each county to the convention. Within ten days after receipt of the copy of the resolutions, the party executive committee of each county shall meet and, by resolution, shall apportion the delegates to the state convention among the several magisterial districts of the county, on a basis of the vote received in the county by the candidate of the party for Governor at the last preceding general election at which a Governor was elected, but in such apportionment of county delegates each magisterial district shall be entitled to at least one delegate to the state convention. The party's county executive committee shall call a meeting of the members of the political party in mass convention in the county, which meeting shall be held at least thirty days prior to the date fixed for the state convention and at which meeting the

members of the political party in each magisterial district shall elect the number of delegates to which the district is entitled in the state convention.

The meeting place in the county shall be as central and convenient as can reasonably be selected, and all recognized members of the political party shall be entitled to participate in any mass convention and in the selection of delegates. Notice of the time and place of holding the county mass convention and of the person who shall act as temporary chairman thereof shall be given by publication as a Class II-O legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty nine of this code, and the publication area for the publication shall be the county. The first publication shall be made not more than fifteen days and the second publication shall be made not less than five days prior to the date fixed for holding the convention. The notice published shall specify the number of delegates which each magisterial district in the county is entitled to elect to the state convention.

Upon assembling, the mass convention of the county, shall choose a chairman and a secretary, who, within five days after the holding of the convention, shall certify to the chairman of the state executive committee of the political party and the chairman of the county committee of the political party, the names and addresses of the parties selected as delegates to the state convention.

If, after the election, a vacancy exists for a delegate from any magisterial district, the party's county executive committee, within ten days after the mass convention, shall appoint a member of the political party in the magisterial district to fill the vacancy, and shall certify the appointment to the chairman of the state executive committee of the political party.

All contests over the selection of delegates to conventions shall be heard and determined by the party executive committee of the county from which the delegates are chosen, and the county executive committee shall, upon written petition of any contest, meet for a hearing and make a determination within ten days after the holding of a county mass convention. The circuit court of the county and the Supreme Court of Appeals of the state shall have concurrent original

jurisdiction to review, by mandamus or other proper proceeding, the decision of a county executive committee in any contest.

The delegates chosen and certified by and from the several magisterial districts in the state and, in the event of any contest, those prevailing in the contest, shall make up the state convention. The number present of those entitled to participate in any convention shall cast the entire vote to which the county is entitled in the convention, and it shall require a majority vote to nominate any candidate for office.

All nominations made at state conventions shall be certified within fifteen days thereafter, by the chairman and the secretary of the convention, to the Secretary of State, who shall certify them to the clerk of the circuit court of each county concerned, and the names of the persons so nominated shall be printed upon the regular ballot to be voted at the ensuing general election, except that the names of the presidential elector candidates shall not be printed thereon.

The delegates to any state convention may formulate and promulgate the party platform or declaration of party principles as to them shall seem advisable ARTICLE 8. REGULATION AND CONTROL OF ELECTIONS. §3-8-2c. Party headquarters committee; detailed accounts and verified financial statements; funding for headquarters; limitations; reporting requirements.

- (a) Notwithstanding the definitions contained in §3-8-1a of this code, for purposes of this section:
- (1) "Contribution" means a gift, subscription, loan, assessment, payment for services, dues, advance, donation, pledge, contract, agreement, forbearance or promise of money or other tangible thing of value, whether conditional or legally enforceable, or, a transfer of money or other tangible thing of value to a person, made for the purpose of funding the rental, purchase, construction or financing of the lease, purchase or construction of a party headquarters, and for the utilities, maintenance, furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the party headquarters. An offer or tender of a contribution is not a contribution if expressly and unconditionally rejected or returned. A

contribution does not include volunteer personal services provided without compensation: *Provided*, That a nonmonetary contribution is to be considered at fair market value for reporting requirements and contribution limitations.

- (2) "Party headquarters" means a physical structure or structures that is the physical location of the office of a state executive committee of a political party.
- (3) "Party headquarters committee" includes any person, organization or group of persons soliciting or receiving contributions for the purpose of funding the lease, purchase, construction or financing of the lease, purchase, or construction of a party headquarters, including utilities, maintenance, furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the party headquarters, or for a county executive committee's headquarters.
- (4) "County executive committee" means the executive committee of a political party, as defined by §3-1-8 of this code, which is situate in, and responsible for, the conduct of that party's business in one of the constituent counties of the state.
- (b) A political party, or a county executive committee of a political party, may establish a party headquarters committee to solicit and receive contributions for the exclusive purpose of the purchase, construction or lease of an office building or financing of the lease, purchase, or construction of a party headquarters, including utilities, maintenance, furniture, fixtures, and equipment, to be used as a state political party's headquarters, or, as a county executive committee's headquarters.
 - (c) Contributions received pursuant to this section may not be expended for:
 - (1) The purchase, construction or lease of satellite offices or other facilities;
- (2) Utilities, maintenance, furniture, fixtures, equipment, or signage for satellite offices or other facilities; or
- 33 (3) Political purposes.
 - (d) A party headquarters committee may not accept contributions in excess of \$10,000, in the aggregate, from any person for the purposes of this section.

(e) A party headquarters committee may not receive contributions or make expenditures for the purpose of funding the rental, purchase, construction, or financing of a state executive committee headquarters, or a county executive committee's headquarters, which are in excess of \$1 million

- (f) (e)(1) A party headquarters committee, financial agent, or any person or officer acting on behalf of the committee, that is subject to the provisions of this section, shall file a verified financial statement with the Secretary of State, on a form prescribed by the secretary, within 90 days of any contribution or expenditure in excess of \$250.
 - (2) Each financial statement shall contain, but is not limited to, the following information:
- (A) The name, residence, and mailing address and telephone number of the party headquarters committee, financial agent, or any person or officer acting on behalf of the committee, who is filing the financial statement.
- (B) The balance of cash, and any other sum of money, on hand at the beginning and the end of the period covered by the financial statement.
- (C) The name of any person making a contribution, the amount of the contribution, and the residence and mailing address of the contributor.
- (D) The total amount of contributions received during the period covered by the financial statement.
- (E) The name, residence, and mailing address of any individual or the name and mailing address of each lending institution making a loan, the amount of any loan received, the date and terms of the loan, including the interest and repayment schedule, and a copy of the loan agreement.
- (F) The name, residence, and mailing address of any individual, or the name and mailing address of each partnership, firm, association, committee, organization, or group having previously made or cosigned a loan for which payment is made or a balance is outstanding at the end of the period, together with the amount of repayment on the loan made during the period and

the balance at the end of the period.

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- (G) The total outstanding balance of all loans at the end of the period.
- (H) The name, residence, and mailing address of any person to whom each expenditure was made, or liability incurred, together with the amount and purpose of each expenditure or liability incurred, and the date of each transaction.
 - (I) The total amount of expenditures made during the period covered by the financial statement.
- (3) The Secretary of State shall file and retain the statements as public records for not less than six years.
 - (g) (f) Contributions received by a party headquarters committee may be contributed to any educational, cultural, or charitable organization.
 - (h) (g) The Secretary of State shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance with §29A-3-1 *et seg.* of this code to effectuate the provisions of this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide that state executive committee create rules for state, district, and county executive committees; to remove ability of courts to review political party rules; to provide that political parties may select delegates to the national convention consistent with the national rules of their political party; to provide that presidential electors be chosen by state convention or state executive committee; and to remove limitation on contributions or expenditures over \$1 million for state or county executive committee headquarters.

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