

Postponement of May Elections

Issue Paper from the VML Legislative Committee

VML's longstanding policy regarding the timing of local elections is as follows:

VML opposes legislative attempt to require that municipal elections be held in November. Localities should continue to retain the ability to determine if their municipal elections are held in May or November.

To this end, VML opposes any movement of local elections to November. While we recognize the uncertain and unprecedented nature of the current times, the plan announced Wednesday raises a number of concerns about the current postponement plans.

- VML adamantly opposes discarding any ballots that have already been cast. Voters across Virginia submitted their choices for local leadership in good faith that their voices would be heard, with encouragement from the Administration and the Department of Elections to vote absentee under Reason 2A. Localities, under the same direction, have already spent thousands of dollars distributing and processing absentee ballots.
- By postponing ongoing elections until November, the Commonwealth is opening the field of candidacy for both currently contested and uncontested elections by extending deadlines and allowing for new write-in campaigns. VML insists that all original filing deadlines remain in place.
- The Governor's plan to keep current officials in office past term expirations of June 30th presents questions of adherence to the Code of Virginia. It also keeps in office officials who are not and have no plans to seek reelection, whether for political or personal reasons.
- Finally, the announcement that any voter eligible to vote in November may now vote in postponed local elections regardless of their eligibility as of May 5th produces alarming constitutional questions.

VML would strongly urge the Administration and General Assembly to consider moving the date of May elections to another Tuesday, taking into account the expiration of terms on June 30th.