

**CHAPTER 122****(HB 424)**

AN ACT relating to elections.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

Section 1. KRS 117.275 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) At the count of the votes in any precinct, any candidate or slate of candidates and any representatives to witness and check the count of the votes therein, who are authorized to be appointed as is provided in subsection (7) of this section, shall be admitted and be permitted to be present and witness the count.
- (2) As soon as the polls are closed, and the last voter has voted, the judges shall immediately lock and seal the operating lever, mechanism or other device of the voting equipment so that the voting and counting mechanism will be prevented from operation, and they shall sign a certificate stating:
  - (a) That the voting equipment has been locked against voting and sealed;
  - (b) The number of voters, as shown on the public counters;
  - (c) The number registered on the protective or accumulative counter or device, if any; and
  - (d) The number or other designation of the voting equipment, which certificate shall be returned by the judges of election to the officials authorized by law to receive it. The judges shall compare the number of voters, as shown by the counter of the voting equipment, with the number of those who have voted as shown by the protective or accumulative counter or device, if any.
- (3) Where voting equipment is used which does not print the candidates' names, lever numbers, and total votes received on a general return sheet or record for that equipment, the procedure to be followed shall be: the judges, in the presence of the representatives mentioned in subsection (1) of this section, if any, and of all other persons who may be lawfully within the polling place, shall make visible the registering counters, and, for that purpose, shall unlock and open the doors, or other covering concealing the counters, giving full view of all the counter numbers. The judges shall, under the scrutiny of the representatives, and in the order of the offices as their titles are arranged on the machine, read and announce, in distinct tones, the results as shown by the counter numbers for each candidate or slate of candidates and for and against each question voted on. The counters shall not be read consecutively along the party rows or columns, but shall always be read along the office columns or rows, completing the canvass for each office or question before proceeding to the next. The vote as registered shall be entered by the judges, in ink, on quadruplicate return sheets, and also on a general return sheet and statement, all of which, after the canvass is completed, shall be signed by the election officers. The total votes cast for each candidate, and slate of candidates, and for and against each question, shall be entered on the general and quadruplicate return sheets and statement. The proclamation of the result of the votes cast shall be announced distinctly and audibly by one (1) of the judges, who shall read the name and the vote cast for each candidate, and slate of candidates, and the vote for and against each question submitted. During the proclamation, ample opportunity shall be given to any person lawfully present to compare the results so announced with the counter dials of the voting equipment, and any necessary

corrections shall be made by the judges, and the door or other cover of the voting equipment shall then be closed and locked.

- (4) If any officer shall decline to sign the return, he shall state his reason in writing, and a copy thereof, signed by him, shall be enclosed with the return. Each of the return sheets shall be enclosed in an envelope, which shall be securely sealed, and each of the officers shall write his name across the fold of the envelope. One (1) of the quadruplicate return sheets, along with the general return sheet and the write-in roll, if any write-in votes were cast in the precinct, shall be directed to the county board of elections of the county in which the election is being held, one (1) to the county clerk of the county in which the election is being held and one (1) to the local governing body of each of the two (2) dominant political parties, ***but a local governing body of a dominant political party may decline a copy of the precinct election return by filing a written declination with the county board of elections prior to the election, and upon this declination, a printed copy shall not be issued to the political party so declining. The declination on file shall be effective for that election and any subsequent elections until revoked by the local governing body of a dominant political party by filing a written revocation with the county board of elections.*** The envelope shall have endorsed thereon a certificate of the election officers, stating the number of the machine, the precinct where it has been used, the number on the seal, and the number on the protective or accumulative counter or device at the close of the polls. Following the tabulation of all votes cast in the election, including absentee votes and writein votes, the county board shall mail the tabulation sheets showing the results from each precinct to the State Board of Elections and the county clerk shall mail or deliver the precinct lists from each precinct to the State Board of Elections.
- (5) In primary elections at which each party's slates of candidates seeking the nomination of their parties for Governor and Lieutenant Governor are voted on, the Secretary of State, upon receiving the certified results of voting from each county's precincts for those offices, shall determine whether a runoff primary shall be necessary for either or both parties pursuant to KRS 118.245. The Secretary of State shall, within twenty-four (24) hours of making his determination, inform the affected slates of candidates, the county clerks, the county boards of elections, the State Board of Elections, the Registry of Election Finance, and the news media of his determination, and the date of the runoff primary, which shall be subject to change if an election contest or vote recount shall be requested.
- (6) As soon as possible after the completion of the count, the two (2) judges shall return to the county board of elections the keys to the voting machine received and receipted for by them, and the county clerk in which the precinct is located shall have the voting machine properly boxed or securely covered and removed to a proper and secure place of storage.
- (7) In primary elections, each candidate, slate of candidates, or group of candidates may designate to the county board of elections a representative to witness and check the vote count. In regular elections, the governing authority of each political party, each candidate for member of board of education, independent candidate, or independent ticket may designate a representative to the county board of elections to witness and check the vote count. The county board of elections shall authorize representatives of the news media to observe the taking of the tally of votes from the voting machine in each precinct in each primary, regular or special election.

- (8) If supplemental paper ballots have been approved, as provided in KRS 118.215, after the polls are closed, the precinct election officials shall stamp "Unused" on all supplemental paper ballots not used. The election officers shall string all used ballots' stubs upon a string provided for that purpose, and the stubs shall be placed in an envelope. The two (2) judges shall return to the county clerk's office the locked ballot box, all ballot stubs, spoiled ballots, and unused ballots at the same time as the tabulation of votes from the voting machine is delivered. The county clerk shall issue a receipt for the number of ballot stubs, unused ballots, spoiled ballots and the ballot box. The county board of elections, or its designee, shall count and tally the paper ballots manually or with the use of tabulating equipment which does not involve an additional voting system. The results of the vote tally shall be certified by the county board of elections to the county clerk and to the Secretary of State. The county board of elections shall authorize the candidates, slates of candidates, or their representatives, and representatives of the news media to be present during the counting of the paper ballots. Except as otherwise required in this chapter that certain records and papers relating to specified elections be retained for twenty-two (22) months, the county clerk shall retain the paper ballots for sixty (60) days, after which time they shall be destroyed in a manner to render them unreadable by the county board of elections if no contest or recount action has been filed.

**Approved March 16, 2000**