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H.541

An act relating to interference with voters and election officials

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 17 V.S.A. § 1972 is amended to read:

~~§ 1972. SHOWING BALLOT; INTERFERENCE WITH VOTER~~

~~(a) A voter who, except in cases of assistance as provided in this title, allows his or her the voter's ballot to be seen by another person with an apparent intention of letting it be known how ~~he or she~~ the voter is about to vote or makes a false statement to the presiding officer at an election as to ~~his or her the voter's~~ inability to mark ~~his or her the voter's~~ ballot or places a distinguishing mark on ~~his or her the voter's~~ ballot ~~or a person who interferes with a voter when inside the guard rail or who, within the building in which the voting is proceeding, endeavors to induce a voter to vote for a particular candidate,~~ shall be fined \$1,000.00.~~

~~(b) It shall be the duty of the election officers to see that the offender is duly prosecuted for a violation of this section.~~

Sec. 2. 17 V.S.A. § 1975 is added to read:

§ 1975. INTERFERENCE WITH VOTERS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS

(a) No person shall intentionally or recklessly intimidate, threaten, coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce:

(1) any other person for the purpose of:

1           (A) obstructing the right of the other person to vote or to vote as the  
2           other person may choose; or

3           (B) causing the other person to vote for, or not to vote for, any  
4           candidate for public office or public question at any election; or

5           (2) a public servant, an election official, or a public employee for the  
6           purpose of obstructing the administration of an election.

7           (b) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section shall be imprisoned  
8           not more than two years or fined not more than \$2,000.00, or both.

9           Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

10           This act shall take effect on passage.