

§ 153A-405. Referendum; General Assembly action.

(a) If authorized to do so by the concurrent resolutions that established it, a commission may call a referendum on its proposed plan of governmental consolidation. If authorized or directed in the concurrent resolutions, the ballot question may include the assumption of debt secured by a pledge of faith and credit language and may also include the assumption of the right to issue authorized but unissued faith and credit debt language as provided in subsection (b) of this section. The referendum shall be held in accordance with G.S. 163-287.

(b) The proposition submitted to the voters shall be substantially in one or more of the following forms and may include part or all of the bracketed language as appropriate and other such modifications as may be needed to reflect the issued debt secured by a pledge of faith and credit of any of the consolidating units or the portion of the authorized but unissued debt secured by a pledge of faith and credit of any of the consolidating units the right to issue which is proposed to be assumed by the consolidated city-county:

(1) "Shall the County of _____ and the County of _____ be consolidated [and the consolidated unit assume the debt of each secured by a pledge of faith and credit, [the right to issue authorized but unissued debt to be secured by a pledge of faith and credit [(including any such debt as may be authorized for said counties on the date of this referendum)]] and any of said authorized but unissued debt as may be hereafter issued,] and be authorized to levy taxes in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and the interest on said debt secured by a pledge of faith and credit]?"

[] YES [] NO"

(2) "Shall the City of _____ and the City of _____ be consolidated [and the consolidated unit assume the debt of each secured by a pledge of faith and credit, [the right to issue authorized but unissued debt to be secured by a pledge of faith and credit [(including any such debt as may be authorized for said cities on the date of this referendum)]] and any of said authorized but unissued debt as may be hereafter issued,] and be authorized to levy taxes in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and the interest on said debt secured by a pledge of faith and credit]?"

[] YES [] NO"

(3) "Shall the City of _____ and the County of _____ be consolidated [and the consolidated unit assume the debt of each secured by a pledge of faith and credit, [the right to issue authorized but unissued debt to be secured by a pledge of faith and credit [(including any such debt as may be authorized for said city or county on the date of this referendum)]] and any of said authorized but unissued debt as may be hereafter issued,] and be authorized to levy taxes in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and the interest on said debt secured by a pledge of faith and credit]?"

[] YES [] NO"

(c) The proposition submitted to the voters shall be substantially in one of the following forms:

(1) "Shall the County of _____ and the County of _____ be consolidated?"

[] YES [] NO"

(2) "Shall the City of _____ and the City of _____ be consolidated?"

[] YES [] NO"

(3) "Shall the City of _____ and the County of _____ be consolidated?"

[] YES [] NO"

(d) If the proposition is to consolidate two or more counties or to consolidate two or more cities, to be approved it must receive the votes of a majority of those voting in each of the

counties or cities, as the case may be. If the proposition is to consolidate one or more cities with a county, to be approved it must receive the votes of a majority of those voting in the referendum. In addition, no governmental consolidation may become effective until enacted into law by the General Assembly.

(e) Subsection (b) of this section applies to any county that has (i) a population over 120,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census and (ii) an area of less than 200 square miles. Subsection (c) of this section applies to all other counties. If any subsection or provision of this section is declared unconstitutional or invalid by the courts, it does not affect the validity of the section as a whole or any part other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid, provided that if the classifications in subsections (b) and (c) of this section are held unconstitutional or invalid then subsection (c) of this section is repealed and subsection (b) of this section shall be applicable uniformly to all counties. (1973, c. 822, s. 1; 1995, c. 461, s. 5; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 742, s. 38; 2013-381, s. 10.24; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1.)