

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 402
By: Madden
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, voters must present a voter registration certificate at the polling place on election day before they may cast their ballot. This can be a lengthy and labor intensive process. House Bill 402 explores alternatives designed to speed the voter identification process for increased voter convenience by instituting a pilot program to confirm the effectiveness of a voter registration card with a magnetic stripe.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

House Bill 402 amends the Election Code by requiring the Secretary of State to implement a pilot program to evaluate the use of an electronic registration system (pilot program) to be limited to a single county that volunteers to participate that has a population of approximately 500,000 people. The bill requires the pilot program to allow for the use of a card with a magnetic stripe issued to the voter (card) to confirm the voter's registration at the polling place and to be used in one or more countywide elections, as determined appropriate by the secretary of state and the county.

The bill requires the secretary of state, at the conclusion of the pilot program but not later than December 31, 2006, to file a report with selected entities on the pilot program and the use of the card. The bill provides that the report may contain recommendations on the future use of the card and suggestions for permanent statutory authority regarding the use of the card. The bill provides that provisions relating to the pilot program expire January 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or if the Act does not receive the necessary votes, September 1, 2003.