

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1597
By: Madden
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to current administrative rules, Texas provides the opportunity for military personnel serving abroad to vote in the general federal election by using the federal write-in absentee ballot. Recently, the United States Department of Defense filed suit to prompt the states to expand the applicability of the federal write-in absentee ballot process beyond the general election to any contest at the polls where federal races are involved. House Bill 1597 amends provisions relating to the use of federal write-in absentee ballots by military and overseas personnel.

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 1597 amends the Election Code by requiring the secretary of state to prescribe procedures to allow a voter who qualifies to vote by a federal write-in absentee ballot to vote through use of a federal write-in absentee ballot in any general, special, primary, or runoff election for federal office.

The bill clarifies that provisions relating to voting by military personnel also relate to voting by other persons overseas.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003.