

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1023
By: Denny
Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law provides for the placement and appearance of propositions on the ballot. The law, however, does not place any limits on the length of these propositions. Recently, some propositions have become so lengthy that voters have been unable to clearly understand the measure presented for a vote. One recent proposition filled half of an 11x17 page of a paper ballot and a full screen on a Direct Record Electronic voting machine. In addition to confusing voters by their size, these lengthy propositions create problems with ballot layout on some newer electronic voting systems. CSHB 1023 limits the length of ballot propositions, including proposed constitutional amendments.

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

CSHB 1023 amends the Election Code by prohibiting a ballot proposition or proposed constitutional amendment from containing more than 75 words. The bill also prohibits ballot proposition headings from containing more than 15 words. The bill provides that these limits do not apply to translations of these measures into languages other than English. The bill provides that the word limits apply only to elections ordered on or after September 1, 2005.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute modifies the original by providing that the word limit on propositions and constitutional amendments does not apply to any foreign language translations, rather than only providing an exception to the word limit for Spanish translations.