

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1268
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Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law sets forth requirements for a voter registration application. The existing application provides only one box for providing driver's license number, personal identification card number, or the last 4 digits of a social security number. It is difficult for voter registrars to electronically scan the application into their systems because these numbers are placed in the same box, and the computers do not know which number has been provided on the application. Likewise, a statement indicates that providing false information could result in a penalty, but this statement does not convey the weight of the penalty if convicted. There is also no way for the applicant to inform election officials of an interest in becoming a poll worker. Other states' registration applications include this information in their design. CSHB 1268 modifies provisions relating to information included on a voter registration application to improve the registration process and the recruitment of election workers.

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 1268 amends the Election Code by providing that the voter registration application must include separate statements for applicants to indicate that they have not been issued a driver's license or personal identification card or that they have not been issued a social security number, rather than including one statement covering the issuance of all of these numbers.

In addition to the information currently required, the bill provides that each voter registration application form must include a space or box for indicating whether the applicant is interested in working as an election judge and prohibits this information from being disclosed, providing that it is confidential. The bill also adds that each application must contain a statement warning that the penalty for conviction of making a false statement on the application may result in imprisonment for up to the maximum amount of time provided by law, a fine of up to the maximum amount provided by law, or both.

The bill provides that these provisions apply to registration applications that are submitted on or after January 1, 2006.

EFFECTIVE DATE

January 1, 2006.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute removes the requirement in the original that an applicant must provide the last four digits of their social security number, even if they have a driver's license or personal identification card number, and also removes the requirement that a registration application must include the city, state, and country of the applicant's birth. The substitute clarifies that the penalty

for providing false information is the maximum amount provided in law, rather than stating a specific fine and length of jail time. The substitute adds the provision prohibiting information regarding interest in working as an election judge from disclosure. The substitute changes the effective date of the act from September 1, 2005 to January 1, 2006.