BILL ANALYSIS

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There have been some complaints about reduced access to voting due to the closure of some election day voting locations. The 79th Legislature, Regular Session, 2005, established a countywide polling place pilot program in order to address these complaints. However, the pilot program expired on January 2, 2007.

As proposed, S.B. 1246 establishes a countywide polling place program under the oversight of the secretary of state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 43, Election Code, by adding Section 43.007, as follows:

Sec. 43.007. COUNTYWIDE POLLING PLACE PROGRAM. (a) Requires the secretary of state to implement a program to use countywide polling places for each general election for state and county officers in addition to the polling place located in each county election precinct.

(b) Requires the commissioners court of a county that desires to participate in such a program to hold a public hearing on such participation and to submit a transcript or electronic recording of the public comments made at the hearing to the secretary of state.

(c) Requires the secretary of state, in conducting the program, to provide for an audit of the direct recording electronic voting machines before, after, and to the extent it is practicable, during an election.

(d) Requires the secretary of state to select to participate in the program each county that meets the conditions set forth in this subsection.

(e) Authorizes the secretary of state to select a county for participation that has previously participated in a similar program.

(f) Requires a county that participates in a program under this section to establish countywide polling places at certain locations.

(g) Requires a county, in selecting locations under Subsection (f), to ensure that more countywide polling places are located in central business districts than in other areas of similar size

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.