

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2209  
By: Pena  
Elections  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

As an ongoing effort to increase public awareness of elections and the voting process, the secretary of state's elections division provides resources for students to help them become knowledgeable and responsible voters and to foster a lifetime commitment to voting in public elections. Current law requires high school principals or their designees to act as volunteer deputy registrars and to distribute at least twice each school year a voter registration application form to each student who is, or will be, at least 18 years of age during that year.

Although resources relating to elections and voting are available to schools and school districts throughout Texas, no uniform standards exist for implementing a voter education program that targets high school seniors who are or will be of voting age during the year.

C.S.H.B. 2209 would require the Secretary of State (SOS) in consultation with the Commissioner of Education to develop a nonpartisan voter education program to be presented to high school seniors by county clerks, county elections administrators, or their designees. This program would be named the Educating Voters of Tomorrow (E-VOT) Act, a voter education program for high school seniors.

### **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**

C.S.H.B. 2209 amends the Election Code to require the secretary of state, in consultation with the commissioner of education, to develop a nonpartisan voter education program designed to be presented to high school seniors that provides information concerning the importance of voting, the manner in which a person may register to vote in Texas, the manner in which a person may vote using the voting systems most commonly used in Texas, election dates, the hours polls are open, voting before the date of the election, and how to learn the correct voting location. The bill also requires the program to provide an opportunity for students to complete voter registration application forms during the period in which the program is being presented. At the request of an administrator of a public or private high school, the county clerk or county elections administrator, as applicable, for the county in which the school is located, or the clerk's or administrator's designee may present the program to high school seniors at the school once each year. The bill requires the program to be presented at school during regular school hours.

C.S.H.B. 2209 cites that this Act is to be named the Educating Voters of Tomorrow (E-VOT) Act.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE**

The substitute titles the act by adding "This Act may be cited as the Educating Voters of Tomorrow (E-VOT) Act."

The substitute adds the word "nonpartisan" when describing the type of education program the Secretary of State, in consultation with the commissioner of education shall develop.

The substitute adds the phrase "or the clerk's or administrator's designee" to the list of who may present the program to high school seniors, also adds language to make the program optional.