

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2814
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Elections
Committee Report (Amended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Various errors can occur during the voter application process. Reports indicate that thousands of Texans have experienced issues when registering to vote, such as clerical discrepancies, applications being lost in the mail, the cost of postage, and problems with inaccurate information. For years, the secretary of state has used a process to cross-reference names, dates of birth, and driver's license numbers in an attempt to correct the issues that occur during the voter registration application process.

By implementing a completely paperless electronic voter registration system, the state could significantly reduce the likelihood of errors. H.B. 2814 seeks to lower the rate of voter registration errors by providing applicants with a valid driver's license or personal identification card issued in Texas a highly secure website to personally input voter registration information and electronically submit the information to the office of the secretary of state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the secretary of state in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2814 amends the Election Code to require the secretary of state to implement a program to allow a person who has a valid driver's license or personal identification card issued in Texas to complete a voter registration application over the Internet from the official state website and the websites of the secretary of state, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and counties participating in the program. The bill requires an applicant for electronic voter registration to attest to the truth of the information provided on the application by affirmatively accepting the information as true and to affirmatively consent to the use of the signature on the applicant's driver's license or personal identification card for voter registration purposes. The bill requires the program, for each application submitted, to require that a digital copy of the applicant's signature be obtained from DPS.

H.B. 2814 establishes that an application submitted under the bill's provisions is considered for all purposes as an application submitted by mail under statutory provisions governing voter qualifications and registration. The bill requires the secretary of state to adopt rules as necessary to implement the program, including rules to provide for additional security measures necessary to ensure the accuracy and integrity of applications submitted electronically.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

Committee Amendment No. 1

Committee Amendment No. 1, in a provision of the bill requiring the secretary of state to implement a program providing for the completion of a voter registration application over the Internet from the official Texas website and the websites of the secretary of state, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and counties participating in the program, specifies that, with regard to the websites of the secretary of state, DPS, and counties participating in the program, the provision applies to the completion of such an application either directly or via links to the websites of those entities.