

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 160
By: Huffman
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that, currently, county election judges and clerks are required to wear badges at polling places indicating the judge's or clerk's name and position. However, these parties have expressed concern that election poll watchers are not permitted to wear name tags even though they are allowed in polling places to observe election activities performed by election judges and clerks and that, consequently, voters are not able to identify poll watchers as being part of the election process. The parties further contend that a poll watcher is placed in a difficult position when a voter asks the watcher a question because the watcher is only permitted to talk with the election judge, not with a voter. To address this issue, S.B. 160 seeks to require that a poll watcher be provided with a form of identification for the watcher to display while the watcher is observing election activity at a polling place.

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

S.B. 160 amends the Election Code to require an election officer, on accepting a poll watcher for service, to provide the watcher with a form of identification, prescribed by the secretary of state, to be displayed by the watcher during the watcher's hours of service at the polling place.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.