

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2644
By: Blanco
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties point out that election precinct boundary changes are published in a newspaper, and that the precinct maps are retained and filed by the secretary of state for 10 years, after which point they are archived for another 10 years. The parties assert that the way these maps are handled and stored should be modernized. H.B. 2644 seeks to provide for this modernization.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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

H.B. 2644 amends the Election Code to require a voter registrar to make an electronic version of a county precinct boundary map available on the county's website and to require the registrar to provide copies of the map on written request if no such website is maintained. The bill changes the requirements for publishing notice of election precinct boundary changes from required publication in a newspaper in the county once a week for three consecutive weeks beginning with the first week following the week in which an order making such changes is adopted to required publication on the county website not later than the first week following that week of adoption and requires the notice, if no county website is maintained, to be posted continuously for three consecutive weeks at the county courthouse on the bulletin board used for notice of commissioners court meetings.

H.B. 2644 repeals a provision limiting additional notice of election precinct boundary changes to a county with a population of one million or more to make those additional notice provisions applicable to all counties and removes from the additional notice provisions a requirement that the commissioners court deliver written notice of each proposed change and of each order making a change in a county election precinct boundary to the political party's precinct chair of each affected election precinct and to the presiding judge appointed by the commissioners court for each affected election precinct.

H.B. 2644 authorizes a county clerk to deliver in an electronic format the map required to be delivered to the secretary of state depicting an affected precinct's boundary changes and authorizes the state librarian to retain this map for more than 20 years to follow standard retention practices.

H.B. 2644 repeals Section 42.036(a), Election Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.