

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1041
By: Bettencourt
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that additional information should be included in ballot language for a bond proposition or for a proposition to impose, increase, or reduce property taxes. These parties believe that additional information is necessary to further educate voters about the cost to the taxpayers of the fiscal implications of the proposition. The parties believe these changes would allow voters to make more informed decisions when they vote on such ballot propositions. S.B. 1041 seeks to address this issue.

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

S.B. 1041 amends the Election Code, with respect to a proposition seeking voter approval of the issuance of bonds or the imposition, increase, or reduction of a tax for any political subdivision, including municipalities, counties, school districts, and special taxing districts, and in addition to any other requirements imposed by law for a proposition, to require such a proposition to specifically state, with respect to a proposition seeking voter approval of the issuance of bonds, the total amount of the political subdivision's debt secured by property taxes currently outstanding; the total amount of the political subdivision's current payments on debt secured by property taxes; the amount of taxes required to be imposed on a homestead with a value equal to the median homestead value in the political subdivision, as computed by the appraisal district, to repay the political subdivision's current debt obligations secured by property taxes; and the estimated tax burden that would be imposed on a homestead with a value equal to the median homestead value in the political subdivision, as computed by the appraisal district, to repay the bonds to be authorized, if approved. The bill, with respect to a proposition that only seeks voter approval of the imposition or increase of a tax, requires the proposition to specifically state the estimated additional tax burden that would be imposed on a homestead with a value equal to the median homestead value in the political subdivision, as computed by the appraisal district, after the imposition or increase of the tax, if approved; and a detailed description of the purposes for which the tax is to be imposed or increased, if approved. The bill, with respect to a proposition that only seeks voter approval of the reduction of a tax, requires the proposition to specifically state the estimated tax reduction for a homestead with a value equal to the median homestead value in the political subdivision, as computed by the appraisal district, if the reduction of the tax is approved.

S.B. 1041 limits the length of each proposition submitted to the voters for approval of the issuance of bonds or the imposition, increase, or reduction of a tax by a political subdivision to 5,000 characters, or to a different limit prescribed by the secretary of state that ensures that the length of the proposition does not exceed one page of the ballot or one screen on an electronic voting machine.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.