

By: Howard

H.B. No. 1910

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to requiring the secretary of state to conduct a study of the reasons for the rejection of early voting by mail ballots.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 31, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 31.013 to read as follows:

Sec. 31.013. EARLY VOTING BY MAIL STUDY. (a) Not later than December 31, 2015, the secretary of state shall, in consultation with each county election officer, as defined by Section 31.091, determine the method for gathering the following information by county for each primary and general election for state and county officers held in 2016:

(1) the number of early voting by mail ballots submitted, and the number of those voted as provided by Chapter 101 by a member of the armed forces of the United States or the spouse or a dependent of a member;

(2) the number of early voting by mail ballots counted, and the number of those voted as provided by Chapter 101 by a member of the armed forces of the United States or the spouse or a dependent of a member; and

(3) the number of early voting by mail ballots rejected and the reason for the rejection, and the number of those voted as provided by Chapter 101 by a member of the armed forces of the United States or the spouse or a dependent of a member.

1 (b) Not later than June 30, 2017, the secretary of state
2 shall issue a report to the appropriate standing committees of each
3 house of the legislature that:

4 (1) includes the information gathered under
5 Subsection (a);

6 (2) identifies any patterns regarding rejected early
7 voting by mail ballots, including any patterns regarding rejected
8 ballots voted as provided by Chapter 101 by a member of the armed
9 forces of the United States or the spouse or a dependent of a
10 member; and

11 (3) provides recommendations to the legislature
12 concerning changes necessary to lower early voting by mail ballot
13 rejection rates for all early voting by mail voters and for military
14 voters, including recommended ballot format modifications.

15 (c) This section expires January 1, 2018.

16 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
20 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.