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| BILL ANALYSIS |

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| C.S.H.B. 1707 |
| By: Swanson |
| Elections |
| Committee Report (Substituted) |

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| **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**  Interested parties contend that some voters in Texas encounter difficulties in identifying the polling place location of their political party of choice during a primary election, which creates inefficiencies in the voting process. C.S.H.B. 1707 seeks to address this issue by revising restrictions placed on the posting of certain signs at a polling place. |
| **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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the secretary of state in SECTION 1 of this bill. |
| **ANALYSIS**  C.S.H.B. 1707 amends the Election Code to revise the requirements for a sign used to identify the location of a polling place by authorizing the presiding judge or alternate presiding judge for a precinct to post such signs at a polling place for a primary election or a primary runoff election and by expressly authorizing the signs to identify the names of or symbols representing any political parties holding an election at the polling place without reference to a candidate or measure on the ballot. The bill requires the secretary of state to adopt rules to provide that signs posted in the same county have a similar size and format.  C.S.H.B. 1707 repeals Section 172.127(a), Election Code, which limits the applicability of sign posting requirements to signs posted at a polling place used to hold an election for more than one political party. |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE**  September 1, 2017. |
| **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**  While C.S.H.B. 1707 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill. |
| | INTRODUCED | HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE | | --- | --- | | SECTION 1. Section 172.127(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:  (b) The presiding judge or alternate presiding judge for the precinct may post a [~~A~~] sign at [~~used to indicate the location of~~] a polling place for a primary election or a primary runoff election that [~~must either~~]:  (1) identifies [~~not contain~~] the name of, or symbol representing, the [~~any~~] political party that is holding an election at the polling place; and [~~or~~]  (2) does not refer to a candidate or measure on the ballot [~~contain each name of, or each symbol representing, a political party that is holding an election at the polling place~~]. | SECTION 1. Section 172.127, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:  (b) The presiding judge or alternate presiding judge for the precinct may post signs at [~~A sign used to indicate the location of~~] a polling place for a primary election or a primary runoff election that [~~must either~~]:  (1) identify [~~not contain~~] the names [~~name~~] of, or symbols [~~symbol~~] representing, any political parties [~~party that is~~] holding an election at the polling place; and [~~or~~]  (2) do not refer to a candidate or measure on the ballot [~~contain each name of, or each symbol representing, a political party that is holding an election at the polling place~~].  (c) The secretary of state shall adopt rules to provide that signs posted as authorized by Subsection (b) in the same county have a similar size and format. | | SECTION 2. Section 172.127(a), Election Code, is repealed. | SECTION 2. Same as introduced version. | | SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017. | SECTION 3. Same as introduced version. | |