

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3435
By: Swanson
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties suggest that the process by which signatures on an early voting ballot voted by mail are verified could be improved. The purpose of H.B. 3435 is to improve the signature verification process.

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. 3435 amends the Election Code to replace the authorization for a signature verification committee appointed in any election to compare the signature on each carrier envelope certificate, except those signed for a voter by a witness, and the signature on the voter's ballot application with the signature on the voter's registration application to confirm that the signatures are those of the same person with an authorization for the committee to compare such signatures with any two or more signatures that the voter made within the preceding six years and on file with the general custodian of election records or voter registrar to make such confirmation. The bill replaces the prohibition against the committee using the registration application signature to determine that the signatures are not those of the same person with an authorization for the committee to use the signatures on file to make such determination.

H.B. 3435 authorizes the early voting ballot board to compare a voter's signature on a ballot application or carrier envelope certificate with two or more signatures of the voter made within the preceding six years and on file with the general custodian of election records, in addition to the board's existing authority to make such a comparison with signatures on file with the voter registrar, to determine if the signatures are those of the same person. The bill removes the prohibition against the board using such signatures on file to determine that the signatures are not those of the same person.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.