

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2911
By: Klick
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that current election law provisions regarding voter registration in Texas are in need of updating. H.B. 2911 seeks to remove certain aspects of the registration process that are no longer needed and update provisions relating to the registration process to bring them in line with current standards.

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. 2911 amends the Election Code to remove from the information furnished on a voter registration application that is considered confidential and exempt from disclosure under state public information law the indication that an applicant is interested in working as an election judge. The bill removes the requirement for a voter registrar to deliver to an applicant written notice of the registrar's forwarding of the application on the grounds that the application clearly indicates an applicant resides in another county that is not contiguous to the applicable county. The bill removes the requirement for a voter registrar to prepare a voter registration certificate in duplicate after approval of a registration application. The bill revises the submission requirement for a voter registration application submitted by a fax machine, for the registration to be effective, to require that a copy of the original application containing the voter's original signature be submitted by personal delivery or mail by a certain deadline.

H.B. 2911 removes the requirement for each issued voter registration certificate to include the voter's month and day of birth. The bill includes the discovery of a data entry error among the conditions under which a voter registrar is required to make appropriate corrections in registration records or delete a voter's name from the suspense list, as applicable. The bill revises the requirement for a name to be deleted from the suspense list by requiring such deletion, if the name of a voter on the list of registered voters appears on the suspense list, on the date the voter provides a completed application. The bill replaces the requirement for a voter registrar to maintain a list of the confirmation of residence notices mailed to voters with a requirement for the voter registrar to maintain with the voter's record an indication that a confirmation notice was sent to the voter. The bill removes the deadline by which a voter is required to return the confirmation notice.

H.B. 2911 includes among the conditions under which the voter registrar is required to

immediately cancel a voter's registration the receipt of notice of the secretary of state's determination that a voter on the registration list has more than one registration record on file based on a strong match. The bill, with respect to the requirement that a registrar promptly deliver a confirmation notice to a voter if the voter's registration is challenged based on the residential address, adds an exception to that requirement for a challenge containing a residential address for the voter that is different from the voter's current residential address indicated on the registration records. The bill requires the registrar to enter a voter's name on the suspense list if the voter is delivered such a confirmation notice.

H.B. 2911 requires an additional copy of a supplemental list of registered voters whose registrations will be effective on election day but whose names do not appear on the original list and an additional copy of a registration correction list to be furnished as needed to ensure all voters eligible to vote in an election appear correctly on the original list. The bill limits the election officials to whom the statewide computerized voter registration list must be available through immediate electronic access to any county election official in the state and authorizes the secretary of state to contract with counties to provide them with electronic data services to facilitate the maintenance of the statewide computerized voter registration list.

H.B. 2911 changes from the voter registrar to the general custodian of election records the individual required to electronically submit to the secretary of state the record of each voter participating in a primary, runoff primary, or general election or any special election ordered by the governor. The bill changes the recipient of notice regarding the secretary of state's determination that a voter on the registration list has more than one registration record on file from the voter registrar of each county in which the voter is registered to vote to the voter registrar of the county with the oldest registration record. The bill authorizes the voter registrar of such a county to cancel the registration of the voter, provided that the voter's record in the county with the newest registration record is not on the suspense list.

H.B. 2911 repeals provisions requiring copies of certain lists of registered voters, if the list is recorded on magnetic tape, to be furnished in the form of tape or printout as requested and requiring the use of certain fees to defray expenses incurred in preparing requested copies. The bill repeals provisions relating to the required maintenance of a file containing the duplicate initial registration certificates of voters whose registrations are effective. The bill repeals a provision that sets out the required contents of an original or supplemental list of registered voters.

H.B. 2911 repeals the following provisions of the Election Code:

- Sections 15.082(c) and (d)
- Subchapter F, Chapter 15
- Section 18.0051
- Section 18.008(c)

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.