

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2982
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Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerns have been raised regarding the process by which early voting rosters are made available for public inspection. It has been reported that these rosters are not being made available in a timely fashion, which may adversely affect those involved in the electoral process. C.S.H.B. 2982 seeks to encourage individuals who are responsible for maintaining early voting rosters to make certain roster information available in a timely manner through the creation of an offense.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill expressly does one or more of the following: creates a criminal offense, increases the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or changes 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

C.S.H.B. 2982 amends the Election Code to require the early voting clerk to provide a current copy of the branch daily register for posting on the website of the authority ordering the election, if the authority maintains a website, each day early voting is conducted. The bill requires the voter registration number for each voter listed in the register to be posted at a minimum.

C.S.H.B. 2982 requires the early voting clerk, on the request of a person, to provide in a paper or electronic format a copy of the early voting roster listing each person who votes an early voting ballot by personal appearance or the early voting roster listing each person to whom an early voting ballot to be voted by mail is sent. The bill creates a Class C misdemeanor offense for a person who is responsible for maintaining such a roster and fails to provide information on or a copy of such a roster.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2982 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a requirement for the early voting clerk to provide a current copy of the branch daily register for posting on the applicable website each day early voting is conducted and a requirement for the voter registration number for each voter listed in the register to be posted.

The substitute does not include an authorization for a person to request a copy of the early voting roster listing each person to whom an early voting ballot to be voted by mail is sent, but the substitute includes requirements for the early voting clerk to provide a copy of that roster or the roster listing each person who votes an early voting ballot by personal appearance in a paper or electronic format on the request of a person. The substitute makes certain clarifying changes to the conduct that constitutes the offense involving early voting rosters.