

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3964
By: Bohac
Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There have been calls for more clarity as to the procedures to locate and ensure access to polling locations throughout counties participating in the countywide polling place program. C.S.H.B. 3964 seeks to address these concerns by providing methodologies for establishing the number and general location of countywide polling places.

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

C.S.H.B. 3964 amends the Election Code to remove the requirement that a county adopting a methodology for determining the location of each polling place under the countywide polling place program ensure that the total number of permanent branch and temporary branch polling places open for voting in a county commissioners precinct does not exceed more than twice the number of permanent branch and temporary branch polling places in another county commissioners precinct. The bill requires a county with a population of less than one million adopting such a methodology to ensure that the percentage of the total number of countywide polling places located in each commissioners precinct is as equal as mathematically possible to the percentage of registered voters of the county whose registrations are effective on the date of the election residing in each commissioners precinct. The bill requires a county with a population of one million or more adopting such a methodology to ensure that the percentage of the total number of countywide polling places located in each state representative district in the county containing territory in which the election is held is as equal as mathematically possible to the percentage of registered voters of the county whose registrations are effective on the date of the election residing in each state representative district.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 3964 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 raises from 400,000 to one million the county population threshold that determines whether a county is subject to the percentage requirement based on state representative districts or the percentage requirement based on commissioners precincts.