86R28415 GCB-D

By:  Sanford, Swanson H.B. No. 3204

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 3204:

By:  Meyer C.S.H.B. No. 3204

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the form of ballot propositions and certain voter information document requirements for an election seeking authorization for the issuance of school district bonds supported by property taxes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Subchapter A, Chapter 45, Education Code, is amended by adding Sections 45.0032, 45.0033, 45.0034, and 45.0035 to read as follows:

Sec. 45.0032.  BALLOT LANGUAGE FOR TAX-SUPPORTED BONDS. (a) In this section:

(1)  "New infrastructure project" means a project to construct, acquire, purchase, or finance new facilities, sites for school buildings, other property, or school buses.

(2)  "Replacements and upgrades project" means a project other than a new infrastructure project related to replacing or upgrading existing facilities, sites for school buildings, other property, or school buses.

(b)  A ballot prepared for an election to authorize the issuance of bonds described by Section 45.001 may contain not more than two propositions as follows:

(1)  a proposition to issue bonds for new infrastructure projects that provides for voting for or against authorizing the issuance of bonds to support all new infrastructure projects listed in the proposition; and

(2)  a proposition to issue bonds for replacements and upgrades projects that provides for voting for or against authorizing the issuance of bonds to support all replacements and upgrades projects listed in the proposition.

Sec. 45.0033.  VOTER INFORMATION DOCUMENT FOR TAX-SUPPORTED BONDS. (a) A governing board or commissioners court that calls an election under Section 45.003 must prepare a voter information document for each proposition to be voted on at the election. The governing board or commissioners court shall post the voter information document in the same manner that a debt obligation election order is required to be posted under Section 4.003(f), Election Code, and may include the voter information document in the election order. The voter information document must distinctly state:

(1)  the language that will appear on the ballot;

(2)  the following information formatted as a table:

(A)  the principal of the bonds to be authorized;

(B)  the estimated interest for the bonds to be authorized;

(C)  the estimated combined principal and interest required to pay on time and in full the bonds to be authorized; and

(D)  as of the date the governing board or commissioners court adopts the election order:

(i)  the principal of all outstanding debt obligations of the district;

(ii)  the estimated remaining interest on all outstanding debt obligations of the district, which may be based on the district's expectations relative to the interest due on any variable rate debt obligations; and

(iii)  the estimated combined principal and interest required to pay on time and in full all outstanding debt obligations of the district, which may be based on the district's expectations relative to the interest due on any variable rate debt obligations;

(3)  the estimated maximum annual increase in the amount of taxes that would be imposed on a residence homestead in the district with an appraised value of $100,000 to repay the debt obligations to be authorized, if approved, based upon assumptions made by the governing board or commissioners court;

(4)  for each proposed project included in a proposition to issue bonds:

(A)  a visual depiction of the design or concept of each proposed project;

(B)  a statement of the needs to be addressed by each proposed project and how the project will address those needs;

(C)  a detailed description of any equipment to be purchased for the proposed project, the number of individual pieces of equipment to be purchased, and the cost of each individual piece of equipment; and

(D)  a statement of the projected effect of each proposed project regarding existing facilities of the district, including, as applicable, the projected effect on class size ratios in the district or the number of school events that may be supported by the project;

(5)  for a new infrastructure project listed in a proposition described under Section 45.0032(b)(1), other than a project for the acquisition, purchase, or financing of school buses, the geographic location proposed for the project; and

(6)  any other information that the governing board or commissioners court considers relevant or necessary to explain the information required by this subsection.

(b)  The governing board or commissioners court may not include in the voter information document required under this section information regarding the geographic location for a replacements and upgrades project listed in a proposition described by Section 45.0032(b)(2).

(c)  The governing board or commissioners court shall identify in the election order the major assumptions made in connection with the statement required by Subsection (a)(3), including:

(1)  the amortization of the district's debt obligations, including outstanding debt obligations and the debt obligations for the proposed bonds;

(2)  changes in estimated future appraised values within the district; and

(3)  the assumed interest rate on the proposed bonds.

(d)  A district that maintains an Internet website shall provide the information described by Subsection (a) on its website in an easily accessible manner beginning not later than the 21st day before election day and ending on the day after the date of the election.

Sec. 45.0034.  NOTICE REQUIREMENTS: ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF OBLIGATION ON TAX-SUPPORTED BONDS. (a) In addition to the requirements provided under Section 271.049, Local Government Code, a district that issues a certificate of obligation on bonds described by Section 45.001 must comply with the additional notice requirements provided by this section.

(b)  A district that maintains an Internet website shall publish notice of the district's intention to issue the certificates on the district's website for at least 45 days before the date tentatively set for the passage of the resolution or order authorizing the issuance of the certificate.

(c)  The notice of a district's issuance of certificates of obligation on bonds described by Section 45.001 must state the following:

(1)  the then-current principal of all outstanding debt obligations of the district;

(2)  the then-current combined principal and interest required to pay all outstanding debt obligations of the district on time and in full, which may be based on the district's expectations relative to the interest due on any variable rate debt obligations;

(3)  the maximum principal amount of the certificates to be authorized;

(4)  the estimated combined principal and interest required to pay the certificates to be authorized on time and in full;

(5)  the estimated interest rate for the certificates to be authorized or that the maximum interest rate for the certificates may not exceed the maximum legal interest rate; and

(6)  the maximum maturity date of the certificates to be authorized.

Sec. 45.0035.  CONFLICT OF LAW. (a) Sections 45.0032 and 45.0033 provide the ballot proposition language and voter information document requirements for an election to authorize the issuance of bonds described by Section 45.001. To the extent of a conflict between a provision of this subchapter and another law applicable to the ballot proposition language or voter information document requirements for an election to authorize the issuance of bonds, this subchapter controls.

(b)  An officer or employee of a governing board who, in compliance with Section 45.0033, provides the information required in a voter information document under that section does not violate Section 255.003(b-1), Election Code, regardless of whether the information provided is sufficiently substantial and important as to be reasonably likely to influence a voter to vote for or against the measure.

SECTION 2.  (a) The changes in law made by this Act to Chapter 45, Education Code, apply only to a ballot for an election ordered on or after the effective date of this Act. An election ordered before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect when the election was ordered, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

(b)  Section 45.0034, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies only to a certificate of obligation for which the first notice of intention to issue the certificate is made on or after the effective date of this Act. A certificate of obligation for which the first notice of intention to issue the certificate is made before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect when the notice of intention is made, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.