

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1243
By: Hefner
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Faith in the electoral process has decreased in recent years. While every level of Texas government has been active in further securing our elections, according to a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, 29 percent of all Americans have little to no confidence in our elections, up from 19 percent in 2018. In light of this, the punishment for illegal voting should send a message that the crime of illegal voting is a serious offense. H.B. 1243 seeks to address this issue by increasing the penalty for illegal voting.

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

H.B. 1243 amends the Election Code to increase the penalty for the offense of illegal voting from a Class A misdemeanor to a second degree felony, but establishes that an attempt is a state jail felony. The bill applies only to an offense committed on or after the bill's effective date and provides for the continuation of the law in effect before the bill's effective date for purposes of an offense, or any element thereof, that occurred before that date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.