

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1299
By: Noble
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The state should take every step necessary to ensure that elections reflect the will of voters. Clarifying that an ink on paper signature is required for a mail-in ballot's carrier envelope is one more way to do so. Requiring this will also assist the early voting ballot board or signature verification committee in completing their task of comparing signatures of the voter requesting the ballot with the carrier envelope returned by the voter. H.B. 1299 seeks to institute this requirement and prohibit the use of an electronic signature or photocopied signature.

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. 1299 amends the Election Code to require the signature on a carrier envelope for a ballot voted by mail made by the voter and, if applicable, a person who engages in certain actions to assist the voter with the mailing of the envelope, to be made using ink on paper. The bill prohibits the use of an electronic signature or photocopied signature on the envelope. The bill specifies that, for purpose of conduct constituting the offense of unlawful carrier envelope action by a person other than a voter, the person depositing or who obtains the carrier envelope for depositing must sign the envelope using ink on paper and that an electronic signature or photocopied signature is not permitted.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.