

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 545
By: Kolkhorst
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Proper maintenance of the statewide computerized voter registration list is an important part of maintaining election integrity, especially with regard to ensuring deceased individuals are omitted from the list. S.B. 545 seeks to improve such maintenance by requiring the Department of State Health Services to implement an efficient and effective method to provide death information to the secretary of state to assist the secretary in maintaining the statewide computerized voter registration list.

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

S.B. 545 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to implement an efficient and effective method to provide death information to the secretary of state to assist in maintaining the statewide computerized voter registration list. The bill requires the method implemented by DSHS to provide at least the following information on each deceased person for whom a death certificate is filed with a local registrar of births and deaths in Texas:

- the deceased's county of residence;
- the deceased's date of birth; and
- the deceased's full name.

The bill requires DSHS to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the secretary of state for implementing the method to provide the required information. The bill requires the memorandum of understanding to include a mechanism for DSHS to provide the secretary of state with death information that includes unique identifiers necessary to accurately match death records with names included on the voter registration list.

S.B. 545 provides that DSHS must require death certificates to include the county where the decedent died and the decedent's county of last legal residence.

S.B. 545 amends the Election Code to revise the requirement for the vital statistics unit of DSHS to furnish, once each week, to the secretary of state available information specified by the secretary relating to deceased residents of Texas to provide that the available information instead

must be the information as provided under the bill's provisions, in the form and manner specified by the secretary of state.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.