

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R19688 MLH-F

C.S.S.B. 924
By: Springer
State Affairs
4/4/2023
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Many precincts are currently at or near the cap of 5,000 active voters, but have no facility within the precinct that can serve as a polling location. An example of this is that many retirement communities refuse to allow their amenity centers to be used as polling locations, or are so large, residents are unable to vote together at a single location.

As Texas continues to experience tremendous growth, this issue is becoming more apparent, especially in fast-growing counties. Recognizing that the overarching goal is to best serve the voters, the optimum scenario is to have a polling location in each precinct. However, when this is not possible, there is currently no mechanism to provide a suitable location for these voters. This bill seeks to remedy this issue by allowing larger counties to combine these types of precincts, up to 10,000 registered voters in a single polling location, to more adequately serve the voters of Texas.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 924 amends current law relating to the combination of certain election precincts.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 42.006(a), Election Code, to make an exception under Section 42.0051 (Combining Certain Precincts). Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 42.0051, Election Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (c) and adding Subsection (a-1), as follows:

(a) Provides that this section applies only to a county with a population of less than 1.2 million.

(a-1) Authorizes the commissioners court, in a general or special election for which use of county election precincts is required, on the recommendation of the county election board, to combine county election precincts notwithstanding Section 42.005 (Relationships to Districts and Justice and Commissioners Precincts) if:

(1) the commissioners court cannot secure a suitable polling place location under Section 43.031 (Polling Place in Public Building); and

(2) the location of the combined polling place adequately serves the voters of the combined precinct.

Deletes existing text authorizing a commissioners court for a general or special election, or for a primary election the county executive committee of a political party conducting a primary election, to combine county election precincts notwithstanding Section 42.005 to

avoid unreasonable expenditures for election equipment, supplies, and personnel if changes in county election precinct boundaries to give effect to a redistricting plan result in county election precincts with a number of registered voters less than 500.

(c) Prohibits a combined precinct under this section from containing more than 10,000 registered voters. Deletes existing text providing that a combined precinct under this section is subject to a maximum population prescribed for a precinct under Section 42.006 (Population Requirements).

SECTION 3. Repealer: Section 42.0051 (b) (relating to authorizing county election precincts in a county with a population of 250,000 or more to also be combined if the changes result in county election precincts with 500 or more but fewer than 750 registered voters), Election Code.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2023.