88R4282 MLH-F

By:  Bucy H.B. No. 3748

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to ensuring access to the right to vote by all eligible voters.

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

ARTICLE 1. REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

SECTION 1.01.  Section 11.002(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  In this code, "qualified voter" means a person who:

(1)  is 18 years of age or older;

(2)  is a United States citizen;

(3)  has not been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be:

(A)  totally mentally incapacitated; or

(B)  partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote;

(4)  has not been finally convicted of a felony or, if so convicted, is not currently incarcerated for that offense [~~has:~~

[~~(A)  fully discharged the person's sentence, including any term of incarceration, parole, or supervision, or completed a period of probation ordered by any court; or~~

[~~(B)  been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disability to vote~~];

(5)  is a resident of this state; and

(6)  is a registered voter.

SECTION 1.02.  Subchapter A, Chapter 12, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 12.007 to read as follows:

Sec. 12.007.  CERTAIN ELECTION OFFICERS ARE VOTER REGISTRARS. The registrar shall appoint at least one election officer serving each polling place for early voting by personal appearance or on election day as a regular deputy registrar.

SECTION 1.03.  Subchapter A, Chapter 13, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 13.009 to read as follows:

Sec. 13.009.  ELECTRONIC VOTER REGISTRATION. (a) The secretary of state shall work with the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Information Resources to implement a program to allow a person to complete a voter registration application over the Internet from the official website of this state. The Internet websites of the secretary of state, the Department of Public Safety, and each voter registration agency under Section 20.001(a) must also provide a link to the location of the application on the official website of this state.

(b)  An applicant for electronic voter registration who has an unexpired driver's license or personal identification card issued in this state must:

(1)  attest to the truth of the information provided on the application by affirmatively accepting the information as true; and

(2)  affirmatively consent to the use of the signature on the applicant's driver's license or personal identification card for voter registration purposes.

(c)  An applicant for electronic voter registration who does not have an unexpired driver's license or personal identification card issued in this state must:

(1)  attest to the truth of the information provided on the application by affirmatively accepting the information as true; and

(2)  digitally sign the applicant's application before submitting it electronically.

(d)  For each application submitted under Subsection (b), the program shall require that a digital copy of the applicant's signature be obtained from the Department of Public Safety.

(e)  A digital signature given as provided by secretary of state rule meets the signature requirement under Section 13.002(b). An application submitted under this section is considered for all purposes an application submitted by mail under this title.

(f)  The secretary of state shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this section, including rules to provide for additional security measures necessary to ensure the accuracy and integrity of applications submitted electronically.

(g)  The rules adopted under Subsection (f) must require that:

(1)  the Internet website through which a person may complete a voter registration application include a description of the offense described by Section 13.007 in a conspicuous location on the website near the place where the person begins or submits the application; and

(2)  the state electronic Internet portal project be used to authenticate the identity and address of a person who submits an application electronically under this section.

SECTION 1.04.  Subchapter A, Chapter 13, Election Code, is amended by adding Sections 13.010 and 13.011 to read as follows:

Sec. 13.010.  VOTER REGISTRATION THROUGH DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY. (a) The voter registrar of each county shall automatically register any county resident who is eligible to vote as provided by Section 13.001 and:

(1)  is issued a Texas driver's license or a personal identification card by the Department of Public Safety; or

(2)  makes a change to a Texas driver's license or personal identification card issued by the Department of Public Safety.

(b)  A driver's license or personal identification card transaction with an indication provided by Section 20.062(b) or 20.063(c) that the transaction is not for voter registration purposes is not subject to this section.

Sec. 13.011.  VOTER REGISTRATION THROUGH CERTAIN VOTER REGISTRATION AGENCIES. (a) The voter registrar of each county shall automatically register any county resident who is eligible to vote as provided by Section 13.001 and applies for services from a voter registration agency under Subchapter B, Chapter 20.

(b)  An application for services is not subject to this section if the application is accompanied by:

(1)  an indication under Section 20.002(b) that the transaction is not for voter registration; or

(2)  a declination form under Section 20.036.

(c)  The secretary of state shall prescribe procedures for the implementation of this section.

SECTION 1.05.  Section 13.031, Election Code, is amended by adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

(f)  A volunteer deputy registrar appointed under this section may serve as a volunteer deputy registrar throughout the state regardless of which county appointed the deputy registrar. The secretary of state shall prescribe procedures to implement this subsection.

SECTION 1.06.  Section 13.033(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  If a person is to be appointed, the registrar shall prepare a certificate of appointment in duplicate containing:

(1)  the date of appointment;

(2)  the statement: "I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Voter Registrar for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County, do hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as a volunteer deputy registrar [~~for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County~~].";

(3)  the person's residence address;

(4)  the person's voter registration number, if any;

(5)  a statement that the term of the appointment expires December 31 of an even-numbered year; and

(6)  a statement that the appointment terminates on the person's final conviction for an offense for failure to deliver a registration application and may terminate on the registrar's determination that the person failed to adequately review a registration application, intentionally destroyed or physically altered a registration application, or engaged in any other activity that conflicts with the responsibilities of a volunteer deputy registrar under this chapter.

SECTION 1.07.  Section 13.037(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  A person may not receive compensation from any [~~the~~] county for service as a volunteer deputy registrar unless compensation is authorized by the commissioners court of that county.

SECTION 1.08.  Section 13.038, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 13.038.  POWERS GENERALLY. (a) A volunteer deputy registrar may distribute voter registration application forms throughout the county and receive registration applications submitted to the deputy in person.

(b)  A volunteer deputy registrar may distribute a voter registration application in the form prescribed by the secretary of state under Section 31.002 throughout the state and receive an application in that form submitted to the deputy in person, regardless of the county in which the application was printed.

(c)  The secretary of state shall prescribe procedures to implement this section.

SECTION 1.09.  Section 13.046(h), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(h)  The secretary of state shall:

(1)  consult with the Texas Education Agency regarding the number of registration application forms to provide to each high school;

(2)  provide to each high school registration application forms once each fall and spring semester in the number determined from the consultation under Subdivision (1); and

(3)  prescribe any additional procedures necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 1.10.  Section 20.001(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The following state agencies are designated as voter registration agencies:

(1)  Health and Human Services Commission;

(2)  Department of Aging and Disability Services;

(3)  Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services;

(4)  Department of State Health Services; [~~and~~]

(5)  Texas Workforce Commission; and

(6)  any other agency or program as determined by the secretary of state that primarily provides:

(A)  public assistance; or

(B)  services to persons with disabilities.

SECTION 1.11.  Section 20.002, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 20.002.  AGENCY-PRESCRIBED REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORM. (a) A voter registration agency under this subchapter shall prescribe and use a form and procedure that combines a form for services from that agency with an officially prescribed voter registration application form.

(b)  A voter registration agency under this subchapter shall prescribe and use a form and procedure that requests a person's address and that combines agency and voter registration functions. The form must allow a person to indicate that a change of address is not for voter registration purposes.

(c)  The design, content, and physical characteristics of the agency forms must be [~~Instead of using the official voter registration application form prescribed by the secretary of state, a voter registration agency may use an official form prescribed by the agency, if~~] approved by the secretary of state.

SECTION 1.12.  Section 20.032(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  An appropriate agency employee shall [~~routinely~~] inform each person who applies in person for agency services of the opportunity to complete a voter registration application form and [~~on request~~] shall provide nonpartisan voter registration assistance to the applicant.

SECTION 1.13.  Section 20.061, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 20.061.  APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS. The other provisions of this chapter apply to the Department of Public Safety except provisions that conflict with this subchapter or Section 13.010.

SECTION 1.14.  Section 20.062(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  The department shall prescribe and use a change of address form and procedure that combines department and voter registration functions. The form must allow a licensee or cardholder to indicate that [~~whether~~] the change of address is not [~~also to be used~~] for voter registration purposes.

SECTION 1.15.  Section 20.063, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 20.063.  REGISTRATION PROCEDURES. (a) The Department of Public Safety shall consider an application made in person, by mail, or online at the department's Internet website [~~provide to each person who applies in person at the department's offices~~] for an original or renewal of a driver's license, a personal identification card, or a duplicate or corrected license or card by a person who is eligible to vote as provided by Section 13.001 an application for [~~opportunity to complete a~~] voter registration. The date of application is considered to be the date of submission to the voter registrar for the purpose of determining the effective date of registration [~~application form~~].

(b)  The Department of Public Safety shall consider a change of address that relates to [~~When the department processes~~] a license or card and that is submitted to [~~for renewal by mail,~~] the department [~~shall deliver to the applicant by mail a voter registration application form.~~

[~~(c)  A change of address that relates to a license or card and that is submitted to the department~~] in person, [~~or~~] by mail, or online at the department's Internet website [~~serves~~] as a change in [~~of address for~~] voter registration [~~unless the licensee or cardholder indicates that the change is not for voter registration purposes~~]. The date of submission of a change of address to a department employee is considered to be the date of submission to the voter registrar for the purpose of determining the effective date of registration [~~only~~].

(c)  The registration of an eligible [~~(d)  If a completed~~] voter as required by Subsections (a) and (b) is automatic unless the person indicates that the transaction is not for voter registration purposes [~~application submitted to a department employee does not include the applicant's correct driver's license number or personal identification card number, a department employee shall enter the appropriate information on the application. If a completed application does not include the applicant's correct residence address or mailing address, a department employee shall obtain the appropriate information from the applicant and enter the information on the application~~].

SECTION 1.16.  Section 20.065(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  Each weekday the department is regularly open for business, the department shall electronically transfer to the secretary of state the name and information designated by the secretary of state for [~~of each person who completes a~~] voter registration for each individual who is eligible to vote as provided by Section 13.001 and applies in person, by mail, or online at the department's Internet website for an original or renewal of a driver's license, a personal identification card, or a duplicate or corrected license or card [~~application submitted to the department~~]. The secretary shall prescribe procedures necessary to implement this subsection.

SECTION 1.17.  Chapter 63, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 63.010 to read as follows:

Sec. 63.010.  REGISTRATION AT POLLING PLACE; VOTING PROCEDURES. (a) Other applicable provisions of this code apply to the conduct of voting and to the registration of voters under this section to the extent those provisions do not conflict with this section.

(b)  A person who would be eligible to vote in an election under Section 11.001, but for the requirement to be a registered voter, shall be accepted for voting at a polling place at which the person would be allowed to vote if registered if, on the day the person offers to vote, the person:

(1)  submits a voter registration application that complies with Section 13.002 to a voter registrar at the polling place;

(2)  presents as proof of identification:

(A)  a Texas driver's license, including a temporary license or instruction permit, or personal identification card issued to the person by the Department of Public Safety that states the person's current address on the day the person seeks to vote; or

(B)  a utility bill addressed to the person dated not earlier than the 30th day before the date the person seeks to vote, and:

(i)  a Texas driver's license, including a temporary license or instruction permit, or personal identification card issued to the person by the Department of Public Safety, regardless of whether the address stated on the license or card is current on the day the person seeks to vote;

(ii)  a United States passport issued to the person; or

(iii)  a United States military identification card that contains the person's photograph; and

(3)  executes an affidavit stating that the person:

(A)  is eligible to vote in the election; and

(B)  is voting only once in the election.

(c)  Persons voting under this section shall be processed separately at the polling place from persons who are voting under regular procedures.

(d)  The secretary of state shall adopt rules to ensure the accountability of election officers and to fairly implement this section.

SECTION 1.18.  Section 85.031(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  For each person entitled to vote an early voting ballot by personal appearance or who is entitled to register at a polling place, the early voting clerk shall follow the procedure for accepting a regular voter on election day, with the modifications necessary for the conduct of early voting.

ARTICLE 2. VOTING BY MAIL

SECTION 2.01.  Section 4.003, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

(b)  In addition to any other notice given for an election under Subsection (a), not later than the 21st day before election day, a county shall post a copy of a notice of the election given by the county or provided to the county under Section 4.008(a)[~~, which must include the location of each polling place,~~] on the county's Internet website, if the county maintains a website. An authority responsible for giving notice of an election may post a copy of the notice on the bulletin board used for posting notices of the meetings of the governing body of the political subdivision that the authority serves. If a county does not maintain a website, the authority responsible for giving notice of the election shall post a copy of a notice of the election on the bulletin board used for posting notices of the meetings of the governing body of the political subdivision that the authority serves. For each precinct that is combined to form a consolidated precinct under Section 42.008, not later than the 10th day before election day, the authority shall also post, at the polling place used in the preceding general election, notice of the precinct's consolidation and the location of the polling place in the consolidated precinct. A notice posted under this subsection must remain posted continuously through election day.

(b-1)  The notice given under Subsection (b) must include:

(1)  the location of each polling place that will be open on election day;

(2)  the location of each polling place that will be open for early voting; and

(3)  each location that will be available to voters to deliver a marked ballot under Section 86.006(a-5).

SECTION 2.02.  Section 13.002(e), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e)  Notwithstanding Section 82.005, a [~~A~~] person who is certified for participation in the address confidentiality program administered by the attorney general under Subchapter B, Chapter 58, Code of Criminal Procedure, is not eligible for early voting by mail [~~under Section 82.007~~] unless the person submits an application under this section by personal delivery. The secretary of state may adopt rules to implement this subsection.

SECTION 2.03.  Section 82.005, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 82.005.  ELIGIBILITY FOR EARLY VOTING [~~BY PERSONAL APPEARANCE~~]. Any qualified voter is eligible for early voting by mail or personal appearance.

SECTION 2.04.  Section 82.007, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 82.007.  PARTICIPATION IN ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM. Notwithstanding Section 82.005, a [~~A~~] qualified voter who, [~~is eligible for early voting by mail if:~~

[~~(1)  the voter submitted a registration application by personal delivery as required by Section 13.002(e); and~~

[~~(2)~~]  at the time the voter's early voting ballot application is submitted, [~~the voter~~] is certified for participation in the address confidentiality program administered by the attorney general under Subchapter B, Chapter 58, Code of Criminal Procedure, is eligible for early voting by mail only if the voter submitted a registration application by personal delivery as required by Section 13.002(e).

SECTION 2.05.  Section 84.001, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a), (b), (d), and (e) and adding Subsection (e-1) to read as follows:

(a)  To be entitled to vote an early voting ballot by mail, a person [~~who is eligible for early voting~~] must make an application for an early voting ballot to be voted by mail as provided by this title.

(b)  Subject to Section 1.011 and except as provided by Section 84.0091, an application must be submitted in writing and signed by the applicant using ink on paper. An electronic signature or photocopied signature is not permitted except as provided by Section 84.0091.

(d)  An application must be submitted [~~by mail~~] to the early voting clerk for the election who serves the election precinct of the applicant's residence.

(e)  Except as provided by Subsection (e-1), an application [~~An applicant~~] for a ballot to be voted by mail serves as an application both [~~may apply~~] for a ballot [~~ballots~~] for the main election and for any resulting runoff election [~~on the same application~~]. If an application [~~for the main election and any resulting runoff~~] is not timely for the main election, it will be considered timely for any resulting runoff if received not later than the deadline, determined using the date of the runoff election, for submitting a regular application for a ballot to be voted by mail.

(e-1)  An applicant for a ballot to be voted by mail for the main election may request not to receive a ballot for a resulting runoff election.

SECTION 2.06.  Section 84.002(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  An early voting ballot application must include:

(1)  the applicant's name and the address at which the applicant is registered to vote;

[~~(1-a)  the following information:~~

[~~(A)  the number of the applicant's driver's license, election identification certificate, or personal identification card issued by the Department of Public Safety;~~

[~~(B)  if the applicant has not been issued a number described by Paragraph (A), the last four digits of the applicant's social security number; or~~

[~~(C)  a statement by the applicant that the applicant has not been issued a number described by Paragraph (A) or (B);~~]

(2)  for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail by an applicant who will be absent from the applicant's [~~on the ground of absence from the~~] county of residence on election day, the address outside the applicant's county of residence to which the ballot is to be mailed or an e-mail address for the applicant to which the ballot is sent by electronic transmission;

(3)  for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail by an applicant who is 65 years of age or older on election day or has a sickness or physical condition that requires the applicant to reside in a hospital or nursing home or other long-term care facility, or with a relative [~~on the ground of age or disability~~], the address of the hospital, nursing home or other long-term care facility, or retirement center, or of a person related to the applicant within the second degree by affinity or the third degree by consanguinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, if the applicant is living at that address and that address is different from the address at which the applicant is registered to vote;

(4)  for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail by an applicant who is confined [~~on the ground of confinement~~] in jail as described by Section 84.009(a), the address of the jail or of a person related to the applicant within the degree described by Subdivision (3);

(5)  [~~for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail on any ground,~~] an indication of each election for which the applicant is applying for a ballot; and

(6)  [~~an indication of the ground of eligibility for early voting; and~~

[~~(7)~~]  for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail by an applicant who is civilly committed as a sexually violent predator under Chapter 841, Health and Safety Code, and is ordered as a condition of civil commitment to reside in a facility operated by or under contract with the Texas Civil Commitment Office [~~on the ground of involuntary civil commitment~~], the address of the facility operated by or under contract with the Texas Civil Commitment Office or of a person related to the applicant within the degree of consanguinity described by Subdivision (3).

SECTION 2.07.  Section 84.007(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  Except as provided by Sections 84.008, [~~and~~] 84.009, and 84.0091, an application for a ballot to be voted by mail must be submitted as provided by this section.

SECTION 2.08.  Section 84.009, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (b) to read as follows:

(a)  This section applies only to an applicant who, at the time the application for a ballot to be voted by mail is submitted, is confined in jail:

(1)  serving a misdemeanor sentence for a term that ends on or after election day;

(2)  pending trial after denial of bail;

(3)  without bail pending an appeal of a felony conviction; or

(4)  pending trial or appeal on a bailable offense for which release on bail before election day is unlikely.

(b)  On request of the applicant, an application for a ballot to be voted by mail [~~on the ground of confinement in jail~~] may be submitted to the early voting clerk, at the discretion of the authority in charge of the jail, by personal delivery by the jail authority or by a designated subordinate of the authority.

SECTION 2.09.  Subchapter A, Chapter 84, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 84.0091 to read as follows:

Sec. 84.0091.  SUBMITTING APPLICATION FOR BALLOT VOTED BY MAIL: ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION. (a) The secretary of state shall implement a program to allow a person to complete an application for an early voting ballot by mail over the Internet from the official website of this state. The program must:

(1)  permit an applicant to electronically sign the application;

(2)  deliver a completed application to the early voting clerk for the election who serves the election precinct of the applicant's residence; and

(3)  permit an applicant to check the status of the applicant's application.

(b)  The program implemented under Subsection (a) must require a person to provide the following information before allowing the person to complete an application for an early voting ballot by mail:

(1)  the person's name and voter registration number or registration address;

(2)  the person's driver's license number or personal identification card number issued by the Department of Public Safety; and

(3)  the last four digits of the person's social security number.

SECTION 2.10.  Section 84.011(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The officially prescribed application form for an early voting ballot must include:

(1)  immediately preceding the signature space the statement: "I certify that the information given in this application is true, and I understand that giving false information in this application is a crime.";

(2)  a statement informing the applicant of the offenses prescribed by Sections 84.003 and 84.004;

(3)  spaces for entering an applicant's voter registration number and county election precinct of registration, with a statement informing the applicant that failure to furnish that information does not invalidate the application;

[~~(3-a)  a space for entering the information required under Section 84.002(a)(1-a);~~] and

(4)  on an application for a ballot to be voted by mail:

(A)  a space for an applicant [~~applying on the ground of absence from the county of residence~~] to indicate:

(i)  whether the applicant will be absent from the applicant's county of residence on election day;

(ii)  if applicable, the date on or after which the applicant can receive mail at the address outside the county; and

(iii)  whether the applicant wishes to receive the balloting materials by electronic transmission and, if so, a space for the applicant to provide an e-mail address;

(B)  a space for indicating the fact that an applicant whose application is signed by a witness cannot make the applicant's mark and a space for indicating the relationship or lack of relationship of the witness to the applicant;

(C)  a space for entering an applicant's telephone number, with a statement informing the applicant that failure to furnish that information does not invalidate the application;

(D)  a space or box for an applicant who is 65 years of age or older on election day or has a sickness or physical condition that requires the applicant to reside in a hospital or nursing home or other long-term care facility, or with a relative, [~~applying on the ground of age or disability~~] to indicate that the address to which the ballot is to be mailed is the address of a facility or relative described by Section 84.002(a)(3), if applicable;

(E)  a space or box for an applicant who is confined [~~applying on the ground of confinement~~] in jail as described by Section 84.009(a) or who is civilly committed as a sexually violent predator under Chapter 841, Health and Safety Code, and ordered as a condition of civil commitment to reside in a facility operated by or under contract with the Texas Civil Commitment Office, [~~involuntary civil commitment~~] to indicate that the address to which the ballot is to be mailed is the address of a relative described by Section 84.002(a)(4) or (6) [~~(7)~~], if applicable;

(F)  a space for an applicant [~~applying on the ground of age or disability~~] to indicate if the application is an application under Section 86.0015;

(G)  spaces for entering the signature, printed name, and residence address of any person assisting the applicant;

(H)  a statement informing the applicant of the condition prescribed by Section 81.005; and

(I)  a statement informing the applicant of the requirement prescribed by Section 86.003(c).

SECTION 2.11.  Sections 86.001(b) and (c), Election Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  If the application complies with the applicable requirements prescribed by this title [~~applicant is entitled to vote an early voting ballot by mail~~], the clerk shall provide an official ballot to the applicant as provided by this chapter.

(c)  Except as provided by Section 86.008, if the applicant is not entitled to vote in the election [~~by mail~~], the clerk shall reject the application, enter on the application "rejected" and the reason for and date of rejection, and deliver written notice of the reason for the rejection to the applicant at both the residence address and mailing address on the application. A ballot may not be provided to an applicant whose application is rejected.

SECTION 2.12.  Section 86.0015(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  This section applies only to an application for a ballot to be voted by mail that[~~:~~

[~~(1) indicates the ground of eligibility is age or disability; and~~

[~~(2)~~] does not specify the election for which a ballot is requested or has been marked by the applicant as an application for more than one election.

SECTION 2.13.  Section 86.003(c), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c)  The address to which the balloting materials must be addressed is the address at which the voter is registered to vote, or the registered mailing address if different, unless the application to vote early by mail indicates that the voter [~~ground for voting by mail is~~]:

(1)  will be absent from the voter's [~~absence from the~~] county of residence on election day, in which case the address must be an address outside the voter's county of residence;

(2)  is confined [~~confinement~~] in jail as described by Section 84.009(a), in which case the address must be the address of the jail or of a relative described by Section 84.002(a)(4);

(3)  is 65 years of age or older on election day or has a sickness or physical condition that requires the applicant to reside in a hospital or nursing home or other long-term care facility, or with a relative, [~~age or disability~~] and [~~the voter~~] is living at a hospital, nursing home or other long-term care facility, or retirement center, or with a relative described by Section 84.002(a)(3), in which case the address must be the address of that facility or relative; or

(4)  is civilly committed as a sexually violent predator under Chapter 841, Health and Safety Code, and ordered as a condition of civil commitment to reside in a facility operated by or under contract with the Texas Civil Commitment Office [~~involuntary civil commitment~~], in which case the address must be the address of the facility or of a relative described by Section 84.002(a)(6) [~~84.002(a)(7)~~].

SECTION 2.14.  Section 86.004(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  For an election to which Section 101.104 applies, the balloting materials for a voter who indicates on the application for a ballot to be voted by mail or the federal postcard application that the voter seeks [~~is eligible~~] to vote early by mail as a consequence of the voter's being outside the United States shall be mailed on or before the later of the 45th day before election day or the seventh calendar day after the date the clerk receives the application. However, if it is not possible to mail the ballots by the deadline of the 45th day before election day, the clerk shall notify the secretary of state within 24 hours of knowing that the deadline will not be met. The secretary of state shall monitor the situation and advise the clerk, who shall mail the ballots as soon as possible in accordance with the secretary of state's guidelines.

SECTION 2.15.  Section 86.006, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a) and (a-1) and adding Subsections (a-3), (a-4), (a-5), and (a-6) to read as follows:

(a)  Except as provided by Subsection (a-3), a [~~A~~] marked ballot voted under this chapter must be returned to the early voting clerk in the official carrier envelope. The carrier envelope may be delivered in another envelope and must be transported and delivered only by:

(1)  mail;

(2)  common or contract carrier; [~~or~~]

(3)  subject to Subsections (a-1) and (a-2), in-person delivery by the voter who voted the ballot; or

(4)  subject to Subsection (a-4), delivery to an authorized depository box.

(a-1)  The voter may deliver a marked ballot in person to the early voting clerk's office or to another designated location [~~only~~] while the polls are open on election day or during the early voting period. A voter who delivers a marked ballot in person may return only the voter's own ballot and must present identification required by Section 63.001(b) in a [~~an acceptable~~] form [~~of identification~~] described by Section 63.0101.

(a-3)  A marked ballot received through electronic transmission as provided by Section 86.0031 shall be returned to the early voting clerk by mail or common or contract carrier through the procedures prescribed by the secretary of state.

(a-4)  The voter may deliver a sealed carrier envelope containing a marked ballot to any depository box authorized by the early voting clerk. The early voting clerk may authorize any number of suitable locations for placement of a depository box.

(a-5)  The county clerk may designate any of the following locations for delivering marked ballots under Subsection (a-1):

(1)  the early voting clerk's office;

(2)  any polling place open during early voting or on election day; or

(3)  any suitable location that meets criteria prescribed by the secretary of state.

(a-6)  To ensure that locations designated for delivering marked ballots are accessible and secure, the secretary of state shall adopt rules establishing criteria for a location that a county clerk may designate under Subsection (a-5).

SECTION 2.16.  Section 87.041(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  A ballot may be accepted only if:

(1)  the carrier envelope certificate is properly executed;

(2)  neither the voter's signature on the ballot application nor the signature on the carrier envelope certificate is determined to have been executed by a person other than the voter, unless signed by a witness;

(3)  [~~the voter's ballot application states a legal ground for early voting by mail;~~

[~~(4)~~]  the voter is registered to vote, if registration is required by law;

(4)  [~~(5)  the address to which the ballot was mailed to the voter, as indicated by the application, was outside the voter's county of residence, if the ground for early voting is absence from the county of residence;~~

[~~(6)~~]  for a voter to whom a statement of residence form was required to be sent under Section 86.002(a), the statement of residence is returned in the carrier envelope and indicates that the voter satisfies the residence requirements prescribed by Section 63.0011; and

(5) [~~(7)~~]  the address to which the ballot was mailed to the voter is an address [~~that is otherwise~~] required by Sections 84.002 and 86.003[~~; and~~

[~~(8)  the information required under Section 86.002(g) provided by the voter identifies the same voter identified on the voter's application for voter registration under Section 13.002(c)(8)~~].

SECTION 2.17.  Section 102.001(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  A qualified voter is eligible to vote a late ballot as provided by this chapter if the voter has a sickness or physical condition [~~described by Section 82.002~~] that prevents the voter from appearing at the polling place on election day without a likelihood of needing personal assistance or of injuring the voter's health and originates on or after the day before the last day for submitting an application for a ballot to be voted by mail.

ARTICLE 3. CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS

SECTION 3.01.  Section 12.004(d), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(d)  The [~~If early voting by personal appearance is required to be conducted for extended hours under Section 85.005(c) or for weekend hours under Section 85.006(e), the~~] registrar's office shall remain open for providing voter registration information during the [~~extended hours or weekend~~] hours that the main early voting polling place is open for voting.

SECTION 3.02.  Section 13.002(i), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(i)  An applicant who wishes to receive an exemption from the requirements of Section 63.001(b) on the basis of disability must submit:

(1)  written documentation:

(A)  from the United States Social Security Administration evidencing the applicant has been determined to have a disability; or

(B)  from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs evidencing the applicant has a disability rating of at least 50 percent; and

(2)  a statement in a form prescribed by the secretary of state that the applicant does not have [~~a form of~~] identification required by Section 63.001(b) in a form described by [~~acceptable under~~] Section 63.0101.

SECTION 3.03.  Section 33.001, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 33.001.  WATCHER DEFINED. In this code, "watcher" means a person appointed under this subchapter to observe the conduct of an election on behalf of a candidate, a political party, a nonpartisan election observation organization, or the proponents or opponents of a measure.

SECTION 3.04.  Section 33.007(d), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(d)  The number of watchers accepted for service on each side of a measure may not exceed the number authorized by this section. If the number of appointments exceeds the authorized number, the authority accepting the watchers for service shall accept the watchers in the order in which they present their certificates of appointment. A watcher appointed under Section 33.009 is not subject to the limitation of this subsection.

SECTION 3.05.  Subchapter A, Chapter 33, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 33.009 to read as follows:

Sec. 33.009.  APPOINTMENT BY NONPARTISAN ORGANIZATION. (a) A nonpartisan election observation organization that has been certified by the secretary of state in accordance with this section may appoint watchers.

(b)  The secretary of state shall certify qualifying nonpartisan election observation organizations within this state. The secretary of state shall adopt rules establishing criteria to determine whether an organization may be certified. The rules must require the organization and its appointed nonpartisan watchers to:

(1)  be impartial in substance and process;

(2)  cooperate with election officers;

(3)  be diligent in not obstructing the process;

(4)  be independent from the government, in the interest of promoting the right to vote;

(5)  be transparent and accountable with regard to funding, including refusal to accept funding from any source or under any condition that may create a conflict of interest; and

(6)  be vigilant in identifying and addressing potential and actual conflicts of interest.

(c)  A watcher appointed under this section is not entitled to:

(1)  sign the seal of a ballot box under Section 127.066; or

(2)  sign the seal of a test material container under Section 127.099.

SECTION 3.06.  Section 33.031, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 33.031.  GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (c), to [~~To~~] be eligible to serve as a watcher, a person must be a qualified voter:

(1)  of the county in which the person is to serve, in an election ordered by the governor or a county authority or in a primary election;

(2)  of the part of the county in which the election is held, in an election ordered by the governor or a county authority that does not cover the entire county of the person's residence; and

(3)  of the political subdivision, in an election ordered by an authority of a political subdivision other than a county.

(b)  In addition to the requirements of Subsection (a), to be eligible to serve as a watcher, a person must complete training under Section 33.008.

(c)  A person appointed as a watcher under Section 33.009 is not subject to the requirements of Subsection (a) and is eligible to serve as a watcher if the person:

(1)  is a registered voter in this state; and

(2)  understands and agrees to comply with the principles and practices set forth in the Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations and Code of Conduct for Non-partisan Citizen Election Observers and Monitors, as commemorated by the United Nations on April 3, 2012.

SECTION 3.07.  Subchapter A, Chapter 43, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 43.008 to read as follows:

Sec. 43.008.  CAMPUS POLLING PLACES. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

(b)  The commissioners court of a county shall designate as a polling place a number of locations on the main campus of an institution of higher education located in the county as follows:

(1)  if at least 5,000 but fewer than 10,000 students are enrolled at the institution, one location; or

(2)  if at least 10,000 students are enrolled at the institution, two locations and one additional location for every 10,000 students enrolled at the institution over 10,000 students.

SECTION 3.08.  Sections 63.001(b) and (i), Election Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  Except as provided by Subsection (h), on offering to vote, a voter must present to an election officer at the polling place:

(1)  one form of photo identification listed in Section 63.0101(a); [~~or~~]

(2)  one form of identification listed in Section 63.0101(b)(1), (2), or (3) accompanied by the declaration described by Subsection (i);

(3)  two forms of identification listed under Section 63.0101(b), including one form that contains the voter's current address; or

(4)  two forms of identification listed under Section 63.0101(b)(4) accompanied by the declaration described by Subsection (i).

(i)  If the requirement for identification prescribed by Subsection (b)(1) or (3) is not met, an election officer shall notify the voter that the voter may be accepted for voting if the voter meets the requirement for identification prescribed by Subsection (b)(2) or (4) and executes a declaration declaring the voter has a reasonable impediment to meeting the requirement for identification prescribed by Subsection (b)(1) or (3). A person is subject to prosecution for perjury under Chapter 37, Penal Code, or under Section 63.0013 for a false statement or false information on the declaration. The secretary of state shall prescribe the form of the declaration. The form shall include:

(1)  a notice that a person is subject to prosecution for perjury under Chapter 37, Penal Code, or under Section 63.0013 for a false statement or false information on the declaration;

(2)  a statement that the voter swears or affirms that the information contained in the declaration is true, that the person described in the declaration is the same person appearing at the polling place to sign the declaration, and that the voter faces a reasonable impediment to procuring the identification prescribed by Subsection (b)(1) or (3);

(3)  a place for the voter to indicate one of the following impediments:

(A)  lack of transportation;

(B)  lack of birth certificate or other documents needed to obtain the identification prescribed by Subsection (b)(1);

(C)  work schedule;

(D)  lost or stolen identification;

(E)  disability or illness;

(F)  family responsibilities; and

(G)  the identification prescribed by Subsection (b)(1) or (3) has been applied for but not received;

(4)  a place for the voter to sign and date the declaration;

(5)  a place for the election judge to sign and date the declaration;

(6)  a place to note the polling place at which the declaration is signed; and

(7)  a place for the election judge to note which form of identification prescribed by Subsection (b)(2) or (4) the voter presented.

SECTION 3.09.  Sections 63.0101(a) and (b), Election Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  The following documentation is an acceptable form of photo identification under this chapter:

(1)  a driver's license, election identification certificate, or personal identification card issued to the voter [~~person~~] by the Department of Public Safety that has not expired or that expired no earlier than four years before the date of presentation;

(2)  a United States military identification card that contains the voter's [~~person's~~] photograph that has not expired or that expired no earlier than four years before the date of presentation;

(3)  a United States citizenship certificate issued to the voter [~~person~~] that contains the voter's [~~person's~~] photograph;

(4)  a United States passport book or card issued to the voter [~~person~~] that has not expired or that expired no earlier than four years before the date of presentation; [~~or~~]

(5)  a license to carry a handgun issued to the voter [~~person~~] by the Department of Public Safety that has not expired or that expired no earlier than four years before the date of presentation;

(6)  an official Native American tribal document that:

(A)  contains the voter's photograph and address; and

(B)  is issued by a tribe that is federally recognized and located in this state; or

(7)  any other official government document issued to the voter and containing the voter's name, address, and photograph.

(b)  The following documentation is acceptable as proof of identification under this chapter:

(1)  a government document that shows the name and address of the voter, including the voter's voter registration certificate;

(2)  one of the following documents that shows the name and address of the voter:

(A)  a copy of a current utility bill;

(B)  a bank or credit union statement;

(C)  a government check; or

(D)  a paycheck or pension plan statement; [~~or~~]

(3)  a certified copy of a domestic birth certificate or other document confirming birth that is admissible in a court of law and establishes the voter's [~~person's~~] identity; or

(4)  two of the following documents issued or delivered to the voter, one of which must contain the name and address of the voter:

(A)  a Medicare, Medicaid, or Department of Veterans Affairs identification card or other health insurance identification card;

(B)  a Department of Defense identification card;

(C)  a social security identification card;

(D)  a label on a prescription drug container;

(E)  an identity bracelet issued by a hospital or long-term care facility;

(F)  a credit or debit card;

(G)  an identification card issued by an employer;

(H)  a student identification card issued by a public or private high school or institution of higher education;

(I)  a library card;

(J)  a Texas Department of Criminal Justice document indicating release or parole;

(K)  a fishing or hunting license;

(L)  a lease or mortgage for real property;

(M)  a motor vehicle title;

(N)  an insurance certificate, policy declaration, or other document demonstrating proof of insurance;

(O)  a letter from a public or private school or institution of higher education;

(P)  a personal check;

(Q)  an official Native American tribal document that is issued by a tribe that is federally recognized and located in this state;

(R)  a blood donor card;

(S)  a public transportation card;

(T)  a property tax assessment;

(U)  a form prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service;

(V)  a letter from a public conservator, court-appointed guardian, or trustee;

(W)  a letter of confirmation of residence, letter of stay, admission form, or statement of benefits from:

(i)  a student residence;

(ii)  a nursing home or other long-term care facility or a retirement center;

(iii)  a shelter; or

(iv)  a soup kitchen;

(X)  a document listed in Subdivision (1), (2), or (3); or

(Y)  another government document containing the voter's name.

SECTION 3.10.  Section 63.011(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  A form for an affidavit required by this section must be printed on an envelope in which the provisional ballot voted by the person may be placed and must include:

(1)  a space for entering the identification number of the provisional ballot voted by the person; and

(2)  a space for an election officer to indicate whether the person presented [~~a form of~~] identification required by Section 63.001(b) in a form described by Section 63.0101.

SECTION 3.11.  Section 64.012, Election Code, is amended by adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

(e)  It is an exception to the application of Subsection (a)(1) that the person:

(1)  voted or attempted to vote a provisional ballot in accordance with Section 63.011; and

(2)  did not know:

(A)  of the particular circumstances that made the person not eligible to vote in the election; or

(B)  that those circumstances made the person not eligible to vote in the election.

SECTION 3.12.  Section 65.0541(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  A voter who is accepted for provisional voting under Section 63.011 because the voter does not meet the identification requirements of Section 63.001(b) may, not later than the sixth day after the date of the election:

(1)  present [~~a form of~~] identification required by Section 63.001(b) in a form described by Section 63.0101 to the voter registrar for examination; or

(2)  execute an affidavit described by Section 65.054(b)(2)(B) or (C) in the presence of the voter registrar.

SECTION 3.13.  Sections 85.001(a) and (e), Election Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  The period for early voting by personal appearance begins on the 17th day before election day and continues through the fourth day before election day, except as otherwise provided by this subchapter [~~section~~].

(e)  For an election held on the uniform election date in May and any resulting runoff election, the period for early voting by personal appearance begins on the 12th day before election day and continues through the fourth day before election day, except as otherwise provided by this subchapter.

SECTION 3.14.  Section 85.006, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 85.006.  EXTENDED VOTING [~~ON SATURDAY OR SUNDAY~~]. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the authority ordering an election may order early voting by personal appearance at the main early voting polling place to be conducted:

(1)  on one or more Saturdays or Sundays during the early voting period; or

(2)  during an early voting period extended from the fourth day before election day for any number of consecutive days up to and including the day before election day.

(b)  In an election in which a county clerk is the early voting clerk under Section 83.002, only the early voting clerk may order extended voting [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~]. The clerk must do so by written order.

(c)  Except as otherwise provided by this section, the [~~The~~] authority ordering extended voting [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~] shall determine the hours during which voting is to be conducted.

(d)  The authority authorized to order extended early voting [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~] under Subsection (a) or (b) shall order [~~the~~] voting on a Saturday or Sunday under the applicable subsection on receipt of a written request submitted by at least 15 registered voters of the territory covered by the election. The request must be submitted in time to enable compliance with Section 85.007. The authority is not required to order the voting on a particular date specified by the request but shall order the voting on at least one Saturday if a Saturday is requested and on at least one Sunday if a Sunday is requested.

(e)  In a primary election or the general election for state and county officers in a county with a population of 55,000 or more, the early voting clerk shall order voting by personal appearance at the main early voting polling place to be conducted on the last Saturday of the early voting period for at least 12 hours, except that voting may not be conducted earlier than 6 a.m. or later than 10 p.m., and on the last Sunday of the early voting period for at least six hours, except that voting may not be conducted earlier than 9 a.m. or later than 10 p.m. The early voting clerk shall order voting to be conducted at those times in those elections in a county with a population under 55,000 on receipt of a written request for those hours submitted by at least 15 registered voters of the county. The request must be submitted in time to enable compliance with Section 85.007. This subsection supersedes any provision of this subchapter to the extent of any conflict.

(f)  An authority authorized to order extended early voting under Subsection (a) or (b) that orders the voting during an extended early voting period shall order personal appearance voting at the main early voting polling place to be conducted for at least 12 hours on any weekday or Saturday and for at least five hours on any Sunday of the extended early voting period.

SECTION 3.15.  Sections 85.007(a) and (b), Election Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  The election order and the election notice must state:

(1)  the date that early voting will begin if under Section 85.001(d) the early voting period is to begin later than the prescribed date;

(2)  the regular dates and hours that voting will be conducted under Section 85.005(b); and

(3)  the dates and hours that extended voting [~~on Saturday or Sunday~~] is ordered to be conducted under Section 85.006(a).

(b)  The early voting clerk shall post notice for each election stating the dates and hours that extended voting [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~] is ordered to be conducted under Section 85.006(b).

SECTION 3.16.  Section 85.064, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b) and (d) and adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

(b)  Early voting by personal appearance at each temporary branch polling place shall be conducted on the days that voting is required to be conducted at the main early voting polling place under Section 85.005. The authority establishing the temporary branch polling place shall determine the hours during which the voting is to be conducted on those days. The authority shall order voting to be conducted for the same number of hours that voting is required to be conducted on those days at the main early voting polling place under Section 85.005 on receipt of a written request for those hours submitted by at least 15 registered voters of the county. The request must be submitted in time to enable compliance with Section 85.067 [~~and remain open for at least:~~

[~~(1)  eight hours each day; or~~

[~~(2)  three hours each day if the city or county clerk does not serve as the early voting clerk for the territory holding the election and the territory has fewer than 1,000 registered voters~~].

(c)  Early voting by personal appearance at a temporary branch polling place other than a temporary branch polling place established under Section 85.062(d) may be conducted on any one or more days and during any hours of the period for early voting by personal appearance, as determined by the authority establishing the branch.

(d)  The authority authorized under Section 85.006 to order extended early voting [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~] may also order, in the manner prescribed by that section, extended early voting to be conducted [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~] at any one or more of the temporary branch polling places. In addition, the early voting clerk of a county covered by Section 85.006(e) shall order such voting in accordance with that subsection at each temporary branch polling place established under Section 85.062(d).

SECTION 3.17.  Section 85.065(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  Except as provided by Subsection (c), voting at a temporary branch polling place may be conducted on any days and during any hours of the period for early voting by personal appearance, as determined by the authority establishing the branch. The authority authorized under Section 85.006 to order extended early voting [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~] may also order, in the manner prescribed by that section, extended early voting to be conducted [~~on a Saturday or Sunday~~] at any one or more of the temporary branch polling places.

SECTION 3.18.  Section 85.068(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The early voting clerk shall post notice for each election stating any dates and the hours that extended voting [~~on Saturday or Sunday~~] will be conducted under Section 85.064(d) or 85.065(b), if the early voting clerk is a county clerk or city secretary under Section 83.002 or 83.005.

SECTION 3.19.  Section 87.0241, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

(b)  The board may not count early voting ballots until:

(1)  the polls open on election day; or

(2)  in an election conducted by an authority of a county with a population of 100,000 or more, or conducted jointly with such a county or conducted with such a county through a contract for election services, the time the polls close on the fourth day before election day [~~end of the period for early voting by personal appearance~~].

(b-1)  The board may not count early voting ballots voted by personal appearance after the fourth day before election day until the end of the extended early voting period.

SECTION 3.20.  Section 213.013, Election Code, is amended by adding Subsection (d-1) to read as follows:

(d-1)  In any recount, a watcher appointed under Section 33.009 may be present.

SECTION 3.21.  Section 662.003(b), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  A state holiday includes only the following days:

(1)  the 19th day of January, "Confederate Heroes Day," in honor of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and other Confederate heroes;

(2)  the second day of March, "Texas Independence Day";

(3)  the 21st day of April, "San Jacinto Day";

(4)  the 19th day of June, "Emancipation Day in Texas," in honor of the emancipation of the slaves in Texas in 1865;

(5)  the 27th day of August, "Lyndon Baines Johnson Day," in observance of the birthday of Lyndon Baines Johnson;

(6)  the Friday after Thanksgiving Day;

(7)  the 24th day of December; [~~and~~]

(8)  the 26th day of December; and

(9)  the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of an even-numbered year.

SECTION 3.22.  Section 662.021, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 662.021.  DATES OF HOLIDAYS. A legal holiday includes only the following days:

(1)  a national holiday under Section 662.003(a); and

(2)  a state holiday under Sections 662.003(b)(1) through (6) and Section 662.003(b)(9).

ARTICLE 4. ACCOMMODATING VOTERS

SECTION 4.01.  Section 63.0015, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b), (c), and (d) and adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

(b)  An election officer shall [~~may~~] accept a person with a mobility problem that substantially impairs a person's ability to ambulate who is offering to vote before accepting others offering to vote at the polling place who arrived before the person.

(c)  Notice of the priority given to persons with a mobility problem that substantially impairs a person's ability to ambulate shall be posted:

(1)  at [~~one or more locations in~~] each entrance to a polling place where it can be read by persons waiting to vote;

(2)  on the Internet website of the secretary of state; and

(3)  on each Internet website relating to elections maintained by a county.

(d)  The notice required by Subsection (c) must read: "Pursuant to Section 63.0015, Election Code, an election officer shall [~~may~~] give voting order priority to individuals with a mobility problem that substantially impairs the person's ability to move around. A person assisting an individual with a mobility problem may also, at the individual's request, be given voting order priority. Disabilities and conditions that may qualify you for voting order priority include paralysis, lung disease, the use of portable oxygen, cardiac deficiency, severe limitation in the ability to walk due to arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition, wheelchair confinement, arthritis, foot disorder, the inability to walk 200 feet without stopping to rest, or use of a brace, cane, crutch, or other assistive device."

(f)  All procedures and accommodations available for voters with disabilities, including voting under Section 64.009, shall be posted in an accessible manner on the county clerk's Internet website.

SECTION 4.02.  Section 64.009, Election Code, is amended by adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

(a-1)  At each polling place two parking spaces shall be reserved for voting under this section. The spaces may not be parking spaces designated specifically for persons with disabilities. The parking spaces must be clearly marked with a sign as being for use by a voter who is unable to enter the polling place. The sign must have a telephone number that a voter may call or text to request assistance from election officials at the polling place.

SECTION 4.03.  Subchapter A, Chapter 84, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 84.0121 to read as follows:

Sec. 84.0121.  CLERK TO POST APPLICATION FORM ONLINE. (a) The early voting clerk shall post the official application form for an early voting ballot on the clerk's Internet website in a format that allows a person to easily complete the application directly on the website before printing.

(b)  The early voting clerk may use the application form provided by the secretary of state under Section 84.013 or the early voting clerk's own application form.

SECTION 4.04.  Section 84.013, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 84.013.  APPLICATION FORMS FURNISHED BY SECRETARY OF STATE. (a) The secretary of state shall maintain a supply of the official application forms for ballots to be voted by mail and shall furnish the forms in reasonable quantities without charge to individuals or organizations requesting them for distribution to voters.

(b)  The secretary of state shall provide a printable application for a ballot by mail in a format that complies with Section 84.0121(a) to the early voting clerk for use under that section.

SECTION 4.05.  Section 84.032(c), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c)  An applicant may submit a request after the close of early voting by personal appearance by appearing in person and:

(1)  returning the ballot to be voted by mail to the early voting clerk; or

(2)  executing an affidavit that the applicant:

(A)  has not received the ballot to be voted by mail;

(B)  never requested a ballot to be voted by mail; or

(C)  was contacted regarding [~~received notice of~~] a defect under Section 87.0271(b) [~~or (c)~~] or 87.0411(b) [~~or (c)~~].

SECTION 4.06.  Section 86.003, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

(a)  Except as provided by Subsection (e) and Section 86.0031, the [~~The~~] balloting materials for voting by mail shall be provided to the voter by mail. A ballot provided by any other method may not be counted.

(e)  If a voter who applies for early voting by mail has a sickness or physical condition that prevents the voter from appearing at the polling place on election day without a likelihood of needing personal assistance or of injuring the voter's health, or if the voter is expecting to give birth within three weeks before or after election day, the balloting materials may be provided by e-mail in PDF format, through a scanned format, or by any other method of electronic transmission authorized by the secretary of state. The secretary of state shall adopt procedures to implement this subsection.

SECTION 4.07.  Chapter 86, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 86.0031 to read as follows:

Sec. 86.0031.  ELECTRONIC METHOD OF PROVIDING BALLOT.  (a)  A voter voting by mail on the ground of absence from the voter's county of residence may elect to receive the balloting materials by electronic transmission on the voter's application for an early voting ballot to be voted by mail.

(b)  Balloting materials to be sent by electronic transmission under this section include:

(1)  the appropriate ballot;

(2)  ballot instructions, including instructions that inform a voter that the ballot must be returned by mail to be counted;

(3)  instructions prescribed by the secretary of state on how to create a ballot envelope and carrier envelope or signature sheet for the ballot; and

(4)  a list of certified write-in candidates, if applicable.

(c)  The balloting materials may be provided by e-mail to the voter in PDF format, through a scanned format, or by any other method of electronic transmission authorized by the secretary of state.

(d)  An e-mail address used under this section to request balloting materials is confidential and does not constitute public information for purposes of Chapter 552, Government Code. An early voting clerk shall ensure that a voter's e-mail address provided under this section is excluded from public disclosure.

(e)  The secretary of state shall prescribe procedures to implement this section.

SECTION 4.08.  Section 86.015(c), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c)  An online tool used under this section must:

(1)  for each election, record:

(A)  each application for a ballot to be voted by mail received by the clerk; and

(B)  each carrier envelope sent to a voter by the clerk;

(2)  for each carrier envelope, record or assign a serially numbered and sequentially issued barcode or tracking number that is unique to each envelope;

(3)  update the applicable Internet website as soon as practicable after each of the following events occurs:

(A)  receipt by the early voting clerk of the person's application for a ballot to be voted by mail;

(B)  acceptance or rejection by the early voting clerk of the person's application for a ballot to be voted by mail;

(C)  placement in the mail by the early voting clerk of the person's official ballot;

(D)  receipt by the early voting clerk of the person's marked ballot; and

(E)  acceptance or rejection by the early voting ballot board of a person's marked ballot; and

(4)  allow a voter to:

(A)  submit a statement of residency;

(B)  provide any information with respect to a witness;

(C)  attest to a contested signature or provide a signature for a carrier envelope certificate; and

(D)  correct any other issue with an application or ballot the secretary of state determines is appropriate to cure using the online tool described by Subsection (a) [~~add or correct information required under Section 84.002(a)(1-a) or Section 86.002(g)~~].

SECTION 4.09.  Section 87.0223(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  If the early voting clerk has provided a voter a ballot to be voted by mail by both regular mail and electronic transmission or e-mail under Chapter 101A or Subchapter C, Chapter 101, the clerk may not deliver a jacket envelope containing the early voting ballot voted by mail by the voter to the board until:

(1)  both ballots are returned; or

(2)  the deadline for returning marked ballots under Section 86.007 has passed.

SECTION 4.10.  Section 87.0271, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 87.0271.  OPPORTUNITY TO CORRECT DEFECT:  SIGNATURE VERIFICATION COMMITTEE.  (a)  This section applies to an early voting ballot voted by mail:

(1)  for which the voter did not sign the carrier envelope certificate;

(2)  for which it cannot immediately be determined whether the signature on the carrier envelope certificate is that of the voter; or

(3)  [~~missing any required statement of residence;~~

[~~(4)  missing information or containing incorrect information required under Section 84.002(a)(1-a) or Section 86.002; or~~

[~~(5)~~]  containing incomplete information with respect to a witness.

(b)  Before deciding [~~Not later than the second business day after a signature verification committee discovers a defect described by Subsection (a) and before the committee decides~~] whether to accept or reject a [~~timely delivered~~] ballot under Section 87.027, a signature verification [~~the~~] committee shall immediately contact [~~:~~

[~~(1)  determine if it would be possible for~~] the voter or witness, as appropriate, to advise the voter or witness of the defect. The committee shall include detailed instructions regarding how to correct the defect in person at the early voting clerk's office [~~and return the carrier envelope before the time the polls are required to close on election day; and~~

[~~(2)  return the carrier envelope to the voter by mail, if the committee determines that it would be possible for the voter to correct the defect and return the carrier envelope before the time the polls are required to close on election day~~].

(c)  Subsection (b) does not apply if [~~If~~] the signature verification committee determines [~~under Subsection (b)(1)~~] that it would [~~not~~] be impossible [~~possible for the voter~~] to correct the defect [~~and return the carrier envelope~~] before the fourth [~~time the polls are required to close on election day, the committee may notify the voter of the defect by telephone or e-mail and inform the voter that the voter may request to have the voter's application to vote by mail canceled in the manner described by Section 84.032 or come to the early voting clerk's office in person not later than the sixth~~] day after election day [~~to correct the defect~~].

(d)  [~~If the signature verification committee takes an action described by Subsection (b) or (c), the committee must take either action described by that subsection with respect to each ballot in the election to which this section applies.~~

[~~(e)  A poll watcher is entitled to observe an action taken under Subsection (b) or (c).~~

[~~(f)~~]  The secretary of state may adopt rules [~~prescribe any procedures necessary~~] to implement this section.

[~~(g)  Notwithstanding any other law, a ballot may not be finally rejected for a reason listed in Section 87.041(b)(1), (2), or (6) before the seventh day after election day.~~]

SECTION 4.11.  Section 87.0411, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 87.0411.  OPPORTUNITY TO CORRECT DEFECT:  EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD. (a) This section applies to an early voting ballot voted by mail:

(1)  for which the voter did not sign the carrier envelope certificate;

(2)  for which it cannot immediately be determined whether the signature on the carrier envelope certificate is that of the voter; or

(3)  [~~missing any required statement of residence;~~

[~~(4)  missing information or containing incorrect information required under Section 84.002(a)(1-a) or Section 86.002; or~~

[~~(5)~~]  containing incomplete information with respect to a witness.

(b)  Before deciding [~~Not later than the second business day after an early voting ballot board discovers a defect described by Subsection (a) and before the board decides~~] whether to accept or reject a [~~timely delivered~~] ballot under Section 87.041, the board shall immediately contact[~~:~~

[~~(1)  determine if it would be possible for~~] the voter or witness, as appropriate, to advise the voter or witness of the defect. The board shall include detailed instructions regarding how to correct the defect in person at the early voting clerk's office [~~and return the carrier envelope before the time the polls are required to close on election day; and~~

[~~(2)  return the carrier envelope to the voter by mail, if the board determines that it would be possible for the voter to correct the defect and return the carrier envelope before the time the polls are required to close on election day~~].

(c)  Subsection (b) does not apply if [~~If~~] the early voting ballot board determines [~~under Subsection (b)(1)~~] that it would [~~not~~] be impossible [~~possible for the voter~~] to correct the defect [~~and return the carrier envelope~~] before the fourth [~~time the polls are required to close on election day, the board may notify the voter of the defect by telephone or e-mail and inform the voter that the voter may request to have the voter's application to vote by mail canceled in the manner described by Section 84.032 or come to the early voting clerk's office in person not later than the sixth~~] day after election day [~~to correct the defect~~].

(d)  [~~If the early voting ballot board takes an action described by Subsection (b) or (c), the board must take either action described by that subsection with respect to each ballot in the election to which this section applies.~~

[~~(e)  A poll watcher is entitled to observe an action taken under Subsection (b) or (c).~~

[~~(f)~~]  The secretary of state may adopt rules [~~prescribe any procedures necessary~~] to implement this section.

[~~(g)  Notwithstanding any other law, a ballot may not be finally rejected for a reason listed in Section 87.041(b)(1), (2), or (6) before the seventh day after election day.~~]

SECTION 4.12.  Section 87.0431(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  Not later than the 10th day after election day, the presiding judge of the early voting ballot board shall deliver written notice of the reason for the rejection of a ballot to the voter at the residence address on the ballot application. If the ballot was transmitted to the voter by electronic transmission or e-mail under Chapter 101A or Subchapter C, Chapter 101, the presiding judge shall also provide the notice to the e-mail address to which the ballot was sent.

SECTION 4.13.  Subtitle B, Title 7, Election Code, is amended by adding Chapter 101A to read as follows:

CHAPTER 101A. ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF EARLY VOTING BALLOTING MATERIALS TO VOTERS WITH A DISABILITY

Sec. 101A.001.  ELIGIBILITY; REQUEST FOR BALLOTING MATERIALS. (a) A person may request from the appropriate early voting clerk electronic transmission of balloting materials under this chapter if the person:

(1)  submits an application for an early voting ballot to be voted by mail; and

(2)  either:

(A)  has a sickness or physical condition that prevents the voter from appearing at the polling place on election day without a likelihood of needing personal assistance or of injuring the voter's health; or

(B)  is expecting to give birth within three weeks before or after election day.

(b)  The early voting clerk shall grant a request made under this section for the electronic transmission of balloting materials if:

(1)  the requestor has submitted a valid application for a ballot to be voted by mail;

(2)  the requestor indicates on the application that the requestor meets the requirements under Subsection (a)(2);

(3)  the requestor provides an e-mail address with the request;

(4)  the request is submitted on or before the seventh day before the date of the election; and

(5)  a marked ballot for the election from the requestor has not been received by the early voting clerk.

Sec. 101A.002.  CONFIDENTIALITY OF E-MAIL ADDRESS. An e-mail address used under this chapter to request balloting materials is confidential and does not constitute public information for purposes of Chapter 552, Government Code. An early voting clerk shall ensure that a voter's e-mail address provided under this chapter is excluded from public disclosure.

Sec. 101A.003.  ELECTIONS COVERED. Balloting materials may be sent electronically under this chapter for any election in which the voter who registers under this chapter is eligible to vote.

Sec. 101A.004.  BALLOTING MATERIALS TO BE SENT ELECTRONICALLY. Balloting materials to be sent electronically under this chapter include:

(1)  the appropriate ballot;

(2)  ballot instructions, including instructions that inform a voter that the ballot must be returned by mail to be counted;

(3)  instructions prescribed by the secretary of state on how to create a carrier envelope or signature sheet for the ballot; and

(4)  a list of certified write-in candidates, if applicable.

Sec. 101A.005.  METHODS OF TRANSMISSION TO VOTER. (a) The balloting materials may be provided to the voter using a method of electronic transmission authorized by the secretary of state.

(b)  The secretary of state shall prescribe procedures for the retransmission of balloting materials following an unsuccessful transmission of the materials to a voter.

Sec. 101A.006.  FORM OF BALLOT. (a) The balloting materials provided electronically to a voter must allow a voter with a visual impairment or print disability to electronically receive and mark the voter's ballot using screen reader assistive technology.

(b)  The secretary of state shall develop instructions regarding the use and availability of the technology described by Subsection (a), including instructions on making the technology available to voters and instructions for counting ballots completed using the technology.

Sec. 101A.007.  RETURN OF BALLOT. (a) A voter who receives a ballot under this chapter must return the ballot in the same manner as required under Section 101.057 except that a voter who completes a signature sheet is not required to complete a carrier envelope. Except as provided by Chapter 105, the voter may not return the ballot by electronic transmission.

(b)  A ballot that is not returned as required by Subsection (a) is considered a ballot not timely returned and is not sent to the early voting ballot board for processing.

(c)  The deadline for the return of a ballot under this section is the same deadline as provided in Section 86.007.

Sec. 101A.008.  RULES. The secretary of state may adopt rules as necessary to implement this chapter.

SECTION 4.14.  Section 104.004(e), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e)  If the voter is physically unable to enter the early voting polling place without personal assistance or a likelihood of injuring the voter's health, the clerk shall deliver the balloting materials to the voter at the polling place entrance or curb following the procedures prescribed by Section 64.009.

ARTICLE 5. INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

SECTION 5.01.  Subtitle A, Title 3, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 307 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 307. INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Sec. 307.001.  DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1)  "Commission" means the independent redistricting commission established under Article XVIII, Texas Constitution.

(2)  "Redistricting plan" has the meaning assigned by Section 1, Article XVIII, Texas Constitution.

Sec. 307.002.  OATH. Before serving on the commission, each person appointed shall take and subscribe to the constitutional oath of office.

Sec. 307.003.  ELIGIBILITY. The eligibility of a person to serve on the commission is as prescribed by Article XVIII, Texas Constitution.

Sec. 307.004.  OPERATION OF COMMISSION. (a) The legislature shall appropriate sufficient money for the compensation and payment of the expenses of the commission members and any staff employed by the commission.

(b)  The commission shall be provided access to statistical or other information compiled by the state or its political subdivisions as necessary for the commission's duties.

(c)  The Texas Legislative Council shall provide technical staff and clerical services at the commission's request.

Sec. 307.005.  DUTIES. The commission shall:

(1)  adopt rules to carry out the constitutional duties of the commission and to administer this chapter; and

(2)  act as the legislature's recipient of the official census and geographic data from the United States Census Bureau pursuant to the federal decennial census.

Sec. 307.006.  REDISTRICTING PLAN; FORM. The commission shall include with each report under Section 49(2), Article XVIII, Texas Constitution:

(1)  for each district in the redistricting plan, the total population and the percentage deviation from the average district population;

(2)  an explanation of the criteria used in developing the redistricting plan with a justification of any population deviation in a district from the average district population;

(3)  a map or maps of all the districts; and

(4)  the estimated cost to be incurred by the counties for changes in county election precinct boundaries required to conform to the districts adopted by the commission.

Sec. 307.007.  REDISTRICTING PLAN STANDARDS. (a) A redistricting plan adopted by the commission must conform to the standards provided by Article XVIII, Texas Constitution.

(b)  In developing a redistricting plan, the commission may not consider:

(1)  the potential effects of the districts on incumbents or potential candidates for office;

(2)  the residence of any elected official or potential candidate for office;

(3)  any information involving the past political performance of a specific geographic area, except as necessary to comply with federal law or Article XVIII, Texas Constitution; and

(4)  data concerning party affiliation or voting history, except as necessary to comply with federal law or Article XVIII, Texas Constitution.

Sec. 307.008.  DISCLOSURE OF DATA REQUIRED. The commission shall make all redistricting plans submitted to the commission, including the commission's preliminary redistricting plans, hearing transcripts, minutes of meetings, maps, narrative descriptions of proposed districts, and other data used by the commission available to the public through the commission's Internet website and other appropriate means.

Sec. 307.009.  SUBMISSION OF PLAN. On adoption of a preliminary or final redistricting plan by the commission, the commission shall submit the redistricting plan to the governor, the secretary of state, and the presiding officer of each house of the legislature.

Sec. 307.010.  OPERATIONS AFTER ADOPTION OF REDISTRICTING PLANS. (a) Following the adoption of all redistricting plans that the commission is required to adopt, the commission shall reduce or suspend its staff, contractors, and operations to the extent practicable.

(b)  The commission shall prepare a financial statement disclosing all expenditures made by the commission. The official record of the commission must contain all relevant information developed by the commission in carrying out its duties, including maps, data, minutes of meetings, written communications, and other information.

(c)  The secretary of state shall preserve the commission's records as provided by Section 16, Article XVIII, Texas Constitution.

(d)  Any unexpended money from an appropriation to the commission reverts to the general revenue fund.

Sec. 307.011.  CHALLENGES TO REDISTRICTING PLAN. After a final redistricting plan is adopted by the commission, any person aggrieved by the plan may file a petition with the supreme court challenging the plan.

Sec. 307.012.  CONVENING OF COMMISSION FOR REAPPORTIONMENT OF JUDICIAL DISTRICTS. (a) If the Judicial Districts Board fails to make a statewide reapportionment of judicial districts under Subchapter F, Chapter 24, the commission shall convene on September 1 of the year provided by Section 7a(e), Article V, Texas Constitution, to make the statewide reapportionment as required by Section 24.946(a).

(b)  The commission shall complete the reapportionment of judicial districts as soon as possible within the time provided by Section 7a(e), Article V, Texas Constitution.

(c)  The commission's reapportionment of judicial districts becomes effective as provided by Sections 24.948 and 24.949.

(d)  Following the effective date of a reapportionment of judicial districts, the commission shall reduce or suspend its operations to the extent practicable.

SECTION 5.02.  Section 42.032, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 42.032.  REDISTRICTING: BOUNDARY CHANGES. If changes in county election precinct boundaries are necessary to give effect to a redistricting plan under Article XVIII, [~~III, Section 28, of the~~] Texas Constitution, each commissioners court shall order the changes before October 1 of the year in which the redistricting is done.

SECTION 5.03.  Section 24.945(e), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e)  The legislature, the Judicial Districts Board, or the independent redistricting commission [~~Legislative Redistricting Board~~] may not redistrict the judicial districts to provide for any judicial district smaller in size than an entire county except as provided by this subsection. Judicial districts smaller in size than the entire county may be created subsequent to a general election in which a majority of the persons voting on the proposition adopt the proposition "to allow the division of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County into judicial districts composed of parts of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County." A redistricting plan may not be proposed or adopted by the legislature, the Judicial Districts Board, or the independent redistricting commission [~~Legislative Redistricting Board~~] in anticipation of a future action by the voters of any county.

SECTION 5.04.  Section 24.946(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The board shall meet in accordance with its own rules. The board shall meet at least once in each interim between regular sessions of the legislature and shall exercise its reapportionment powers only in the interims between regular legislative sessions. Meetings of the board shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 551, except as otherwise provided by this subchapter. A reapportionment may not be ordered in the interim immediately following a regular session of the legislature in which a valid and subsisting statewide reapportionment of judicial districts is enacted by the legislature. Unless the legislature enacts a statewide reapportionment of the judicial districts following each federal decennial census, the board shall convene not later than the first Monday of June of the third year following the year in which the federal decennial census is taken to make a statewide reapportionment of the districts. The board shall complete its work on the reapportionment and file its order with the secretary of state not later than August 31 of the same year. If the Judicial Districts Board fails to make a statewide apportionment by that date, the independent redistricting commission [~~Legislative Redistricting Board~~] established under [~~by~~] Article XVIII, [~~III, Section 28, of the~~] Texas Constitution, shall make a statewide reapportionment of the judicial districts not later than the 90th [~~150th~~] day after the final day for the Judicial Districts Board to make the reapportionment, and that apportionment takes effect as provided by Sections 24.948 and 24.949.

SECTION 5.05.  Section 2058.002(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The legislature or the independent redistricting commission established [~~Legislative Redistricting Board~~] under Article XVIII, [~~III, Section 28, of the~~] Texas Constitution, may officially recognize or act on a federal decennial census before September 1 of the year after the calendar year during which the census was taken.

ARTICLE 6. AGE OF VOTER

SECTION 6.01.  Section 13.001, Election Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsections (d) and (e) to read as follows:

(a)  To be eligible for registration as a voter in this state, a person must:

(1)  except as provided by Subsection (d), be 18 years of age or older;

(2)  be a United States citizen;

(3)  not have been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be:

(A)  totally mentally incapacitated; or

(B)  partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote;

(4)  not have been finally convicted of a felony or, if so convicted, must not currently be incarcerated for that offense [~~have:~~

[~~(A)  fully discharged the person's sentence, including any term of incarceration, parole, or supervision, or completed a period of probation ordered by any court; or~~

[~~(B)  been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disability to vote~~]; and

(5)  be a resident of the county in which application for registration is made.

(b)  Except as provided by Subsection (d), to [~~To~~] be eligible to apply for registration, a person must, on the date the registration application is submitted to the registrar, be at least 17 years [~~and 10 months~~] of age and satisfy the requirements of Subsection (a) except for age.

(d)  A person who will be 18 years of age or older on the date of the next general election for state and county officers is eligible to register as a voter in this state for the purposes of voting in the primary election to determine a political party's nominees for the general election if the person satisfies the requirements of Subsection (a) except for age. The secretary of state shall prescribe procedures necessary to implement this subsection.

(e)  The voter registrar may send a written notice to each person who registers to vote under Subsection (d) stating that the person is only eligible to vote in a primary election or runoff primary election and that the person is not eligible to vote in any other election until the person is 18 years of age. The notice may list the elections in which the person is not eligible to vote.

SECTION 6.02.   Subchapter A, Chapter 172, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 172.005 to read as follows:

Sec. 172.005.  VOTING BY PERSON UNDER AGE 18. (a) Notwithstanding Section 11.001, a person may vote in a primary election if the person:

(1)  will be 18 years of age or older on the date of the subsequent general election for state and county officers; and

(2)  satisfies the requirements for being a qualified voter except for age.

(b)  The secretary of state, after consulting with the state chair of each political party required to make nominations by primary election, shall prescribe the procedures necessary to implement this section.

ARTICLE 7. REPEALER; TRANSITION; EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 7.01.  The following provisions of the Election Code are repealed:

(1)  Section 43.007(i);

(2)  Section 82.001;

(3)  Section 82.002;

(4)  Section 82.003;

(5)  Section 82.004;

(6)  Section 82.008;

(7)  Sections 84.002(b), (b-1), and (c);

(8)  Section 84.0111;

(9)  Sections 86.001(f), (f-1), and (f-2);

(10)  Sections 86.002(g) and (h);

(11)  Section 87.041(d-1);

(12)  Section 112.002(b);

(13)  Section 276.016; and

(14)  Section 276.017.

SECTION 7.02.  The secretary of state shall adopt rules as required by Section 63.010, Election Code, as added by this Act, not later than February 1, 2024.

SECTION 7.03.  The changes in law made by this Act by adding Sections 12.007 and 63.010, Election Code, and amending Section 85.031(a), Election Code, apply only to an election for which early voting by personal appearance begins on or after February 1, 2024.

SECTION 7.04.  The change in law made to Section 13.046(h), Election Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

SECTION 7.05.  Except as provided by this article, the changes in law made by this Act apply only to an election ordered on or after September 1, 2023.

SECTION 7.06.  (a)  Except as provided by Subsections (b) and (c) of this section, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

(b)  Article 5 of this Act takes effect January 1, 2029, but only if the constitutional amendment proposed by the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, establishing an independent redistricting commission to establish districts for the election of the members of the United States House of Representatives elected from this state, the Texas Senate, and the Texas House of Representatives is approved by the voters. If that proposed constitutional amendment is not approved by the voters, this Act has no effect.

(c)  Article 6 of this Act takes effect on the date on which the constitutional amendment proposed by the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, authorizing a person who will be 18 years of age or older on the date of the general election for state and county officers to vote in the preceding primary election takes effect. If that amendment is not approved by the voters, this Act has no effect.