

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Elections
For HB 2860

Compiled on: Thursday, April 20, 2023 9:04 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 20, 2023 8:00 AM

Debra Wolgemuth
Self - McLennan County GOP Election Integrity Coordinator
Waco, TX

Voting by mail is one of the most weakest parts of our election procedures. Bad actors seek to submit fraudulent mail-in ballots with phantom or ghost voters in our dirty registration rolls. Anything to strengthen the mail-in voting process is appreciated.

Support HB 2860

Patricia Moore
"self" Retired Teacher Alief ISD/ currently Alief ISD substitute teacher
Houston, TX

I urge you to VOTE YES on HB2860 Relating to maintaining certain voter registration information and reviewing ballots voted by mail; creating criminal offenses.

Jason Benedict
Self
Pipe creek, TX

Please pass these important bills and protect integrity of our votes.

David Layland
Self Retired
Cedar Creek, TX

I strongly support HB 2860

Lonnie Lassmann
self
San Antonio, TX

I support this bill.

Chrystina Power
se
Spring Branch, TX
Vote YES!

Karen Y Macias
Self, Grandmother
Cibolo, TX
YES

Anne Meng
self
Houston, TX
support

William Grasham

self

Richmond, TX

HB 2860 is well intended.

I support the spirit of the bill, but in its current form it would be a disaster for the Signature Verification Committee and for the Ballot Board.

For example,

j) If a signature verification committee is not appointed, the early voting ballot board shall follow the same procedure for accepting the early voting ballots voted by mail as in an election without a signature verification committee, [except that the board may not determine whether a voter's signatures on the carrier envelope certificate and ballot application are those of the same person if the committee has determined that the signatures are those of the same person. If the committee has determined that the signatures or provided information are not those of the same person, the board may make a determination that the signatures or provided information are those of the same person by a majority vote of the board's membership.]

The way this section is written it would mean that if the signature verification committee is not appointed, then the ballot board **COULD NOT PERFORM SIGNATURE VERIFICATION** at all. The section inside the brackets needs to be deleted.

There are other issues with the sections that are referenced in this bill that would need to be changed in tandem for this bill to achieve its desired result.

Under section 87.0412 there is a reference to 87.041(b) (4)

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

The Ballot board has no access to the systems or records in order to verify that the voter is registered to vote. This is a task which is performed by the election clerk.

Under section 87.041(b) (7)

(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

Section 84.002 (3), (4), (5), (7) and section 86.003 both have address requirements that the ballot board cannot validate.

The ballot board does not have access to validate the addresses of the facilities, hospitals, prisons, long-term care facilities, etc. listed above.

It is also not possible to validate the address of a relative to which the mail-in ballot is sent that it is the address of a relative.

These sections of TEC would have to be changed in tandem with HB 2860, otherwise a ballot board member could go to jail for not validating what is in the TEC, but is not possible for them to validate.

The end result is that no one would volunteer to work on the ballot board.

Joan Yates

Self, Homemaker

Valley View, TX

Vote YES on this bill for election integrity!

Donna Eyles
Self - retired IT Project Manager
Corpus Christi, TX

TEXAS VOTER EQUALITY: All Texans use the same ID to vote whether voting in person or voting by mail. Simple, more fraud resistant.

Both Democrats and Republicans want to ensure votes for their candidate are properly secured, recorded, and stored. No one wants to lose an election based on inappropriately registered voters, someone voting for someone else, ballot harvesting, or any other election fraud. And this fraud can occur down at the local level all the way up to the Presidential level.

Quite a few bills aimed at mail in ballot election security have been introduced in this session, including this one. Although I agree with its sentiment, it misses the point and several sections need re-writing in order to fully embody the intent, eliminate ambiguity and contradictory instructions, and provide “doable” requirements. Rather than trying to tweek our current election law trying to get signature verifications done in different manners using various prior signature examples, simply require a copy of the same ID they would have used to vote in person. When voting in person, the election clerk compares the photo to the person; when voting by mail, the clerk checks the legal signature against the application for ballot by mail and the carrier envelope signatures. Simple. And if a person needs a copy of an ID for voting purposes, just require any local or State office to provide this for them, when requested.

There are other bills tweeking the carrier envelope requirements (the envelope containing the mail in ballot). Get rid of the DL# and/or SSN last 4. It’s difficult for clerks to actually verify them; the voters don’t like putting this info on the envelope (potential identify theft), and the curing/fixing process is exceedingly cumbersome and may allow fraudsters to destroy evidence of voter fraud when the clerk is required to return the ballot. (For those of you who have never seen a carrier envelope, I encourage you to do so.) As an aside, did you know that someone can currently register to vote, request a ballot by mail and actually vote using only a SSN last 4? (Can’t vote in person using only a SSN last 4!) And really, how difficult is it to get someone’s SSN last 4?

I am a part of a group of experienced election workers (including election judges and clerks, ballot board judges and clerks, poll watchers, and an attorney) who has studiously researched and updated Chapters 86 and 87 of the elections code to reduce redundancy and complexity, better explain and streamline the mail in ballot processes, properly cross reference items, use proper terminology across the chapters, and provide more voter confidence by eliminating the threat of identity theft. **IF YOU TRULY WANT TO ADDRESS MAIL IN VOTER FRAUD**, we can provide this update to you – and we also have it in a proposed bill/amendment format that could be used for this bill. Just contact me.

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication!

Sarah Thomas
Self
Spring Branch, TX

I am in favor of this bill. Please vote yes On HB2860.

susan Lucas
self retired
BRYAN, TX

SUPPORT this bill!!!!!!

Wallace Johnson, County Chair
Republicans
Franklin, TX

Vote yes

Linda Eckert
self/retired
Onalaska, TX

Vote yes for this bill, election integrity in 2024 or there will be no further elections

Amanda Logan
self
Austin, TX

Please vote YES to this bill relating to maintaining certain voter registration information, reviewing BBMA and creating criminal offenses. It is critical our elections are secured, loopholes to cheating removed and that penalties for election fraud / election crimes are increased to incentivize criminals NOT to commit election fraud crimes and to restore Texans' confidence in our elections.

Linda Stetz, MS.
Self
Bryan, TX

I Support

V Wilder
Self -Retired
Dripping Springs, TX

I wholly support this bill! Too many county registrars are deliberately slow-walking requests for public information regarding elections, or simply refusing or rejecting requests for this information.

Daniel Cotts
Self and Election Integrity Project of Nueces County
Corpus Christi, TX

I am in favor of this bill, which gives our election laws some teeth when it comes to prosecuting offenses.

Pamela `Woods, Mrs
EIP Nueces Co
Corpus Christi, TX

I am in favor of this bill, which gives our election laws some teeth when it comes to prosecuting offenses.

Kelley Rumps
self/retired
The Woodlands, TX

I support this bill.

Chris Donofrio
Self
The Woodlands, TX

I support HB 2860.
I urge you to pass it out of committee.

Respectfully,
Chris J. Donofrio

Bettye Lemon, Ms
Self & Nueces Co Election Integrity Project
Kilgore, TX

Yes very much in favor. Tampering with elections In any form or fashion should be met with swift justice and heavy penalties.

Nicole Marucci
Self
Richmond, TX

Support HB 2860 which is a step in the right direction for election integrity.

Teresa Campbell
Self Retired
Fort Worth, TX

I'm solidly FOR this bill. We need more transparent and accurate voter rolls!

John Raymond
Self
Lakeside, TX

I am For this bill.

Tore Fossum
self
Huntsville, TX
Support HB2860

David St Martin, Mr
self
Fort Worth, TX

I'm FOR this bill !

Sandra Stokes
Self and Election Integrity project of Nueces County
Corpus Christi, TX

I am in favor of this bill, which creates more of a deterrent for fraudulent activities in elections. Vote tampering is serious - the offense for that needs to be serious.

Willard Hartman
Precinct chair Tarrant Co. 1142
FORT WORTH, TX

FOR

Cynthia Lasher
GOP Precinct Chair 2307
Arlington, TX

Please vote "For" this bill.

Xiaomei Wang
Self
Fort Worth, TX

I am for this bill: 1) This bill requires to keep voter removal records. This will help for understanding voter registration fluctuation and keep better transparency. 2) clarify signature verification process on Sec. 87.027 (i) and (j): Signature Verification Committee shall (not "may") compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies a confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to signature on the applications for absentee ballots. 3) an additional amendment should be that require Secretary of State not to alter it or not taking off this duty from Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board. 4) creating criminal offense. This amendment will put stronger protection to our election.

Joan Cordell
Self-retired
Ft Worth, TX

I'm FOR this bill!

Cheryl Wright
Self
Sugar Land, TX

I support the passage of this bill.

Ligang Lei
Self
KATY, TX

I support this bill.

1) This bill requires to keep voter removal records. This will help for understanding voter registration fluctuation and keep better transparency. 2) clarify signature verification process on Sec. 87.027 (i) and (j): Signature Verification Committee shall (not "may") compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies a confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to signature on the applications for absentee ballots. 3) an additional amendment should be that require Secretary of State not to alter it or not taking off this duty from Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board. 4) creating criminal offense. This amendment will put stronger protection to our election.

Sheila Clemmons
self
Fort Worth, TX

FOR

Marisa Williams
self, SAHM
McKinney, TX

I support HB 2860 as I want the cleanest and crispest elections from now on. I pray that bills like this will help prevent any question as to if the elections are fair or not.

Thank you for voting favorably for HB 2860.

Hong Guo
None
Richmond, TX

I strongly support bill HB 2860 about to keep voter removal record which will improve Texas election laws. Please support this bill. Thank you very much.

Lai Kwan Pei, Dr
self
KATY, TX

I strongly support HB 2860. 1) This bill requires to keep voter removal records. This will help for understanding voter registration fluctuation and keep better transparency. 2) clarify signature verification process on Sec. 87.027 (i) and (j): Signature Verification Committee shall (not "may") compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies a confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to signature on the applications for absentee ballots. 3) an additional amendment should be that require Secretary of State not to alter it or not taking off this duty from Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board. 4) creating criminal offense. This amendment will put stronger protection to our election.

Lulu Wang
self
SUGAR LAND, TX

I support this bill because 1) it will help for understanding voter registration fluctuation and keep better transparency. 2) clarify signature verification process on Sec. 87.027 (i) and (j): Signature Verification Committee shall compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies a confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to signature on the applications for absentee ballots. 3) an additional amendment should be that require Secretary of State not to alter it or not taking off this duty from Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board. 4) creating criminal offense. This amendment will put stronger protection to our election.

Nikki Henrichsen
Self/Homemaker
Sugar Land, TX

I am in support of HB 2860.

1) This bill requires to keep voter removal records. This will help for understanding voter registration fluctuation and keep better transparency. 2) clarify signature verification process on Sec. 87.027 (i) and (j): Signature Verification Committee shall (not "may") compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies a confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to signature on the applications for absentee ballots. 3) an additional amendment should be that require Secretary of State not to alter it or not taking off this duty from Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board. 4) creating criminal offense. This amendment will put stronger protection to our election.

Benjamin Zhang, Mr
Self
Katy, TX

1) This bill requires to keep voter removal records. This will help for understanding voter registration fluctuation and keep better transparency. 2) clarify signature verification process on Sec. 87.027 (i) and (j): Signature Verification Committee shall (not "may") compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies a confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to signature on the applications for absentee ballots. 3) an additional amendment should be that require Secretary of State not to alter it or not taking off this duty from Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board. 4) creating criminal offense. This amendment will put stronger protection to our election.

Elizabeth Wally
self
Dallas, TX

OPPOSE This looks like another effort to tie up the elections staff with unnecessary work that is already handled has and not been a problem -- changing, adding procedures to confuse without a reason is voter suppression.

Shawn Flanagan
Election Integrity Project of Nueces Co
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Please support this bill will make the election free and fairer.

Dianna Boger
Self
Hurst, TX

I am FOR this bill. We must have stronger election verification process protections, especially around mail-in ballots.

Tomalea Bench
Self, homemaker
Huntsville, TX

Yes, I support this

Kimberly Bridges Young
Self and EIP of Nueces County
Corpus Christi, TX

I am in favor of this bill, which gives our election laws some teeth when it comes to prosecuting offenses.

Mary Gagnon
Self and Election Integrity Project of Nueces County
Corpus Christi, TX

HB 2860: I am strongly in favor of this bill. This bill helps ensure that voter rolls are up-to-date and that election records are duly preserved. It also will help ensure that signature verification is performed for all mail-in ballots. If an election official fails to comply, then a state jail felony is imposed which gives this bill the strength it needs.

Cheryl Simpson
Self/ Fannin County Republican Women/ stay at home mom / grandmother
Bonham, TX

Vote YES! If people know they will be prosecuted for these crimes then they will stop!

Tammie Grantham
Myself and My spouse Peter
Grapevine, TX

As a current ballot board member of Tarrant county I am for this bill.1) This bill requires to keep voter removal records. This will help for understanding voter registration fluctuation and keep better transparency. 2) clarify signature verification process on Sec. 87.027 (i) and (j): Signature Verification Committee shall (not "may") compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies a confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to signature on the applications for absentee ballots. This issue with comparing the envelope to the application is the someone else might be requesting and voting the ballot -MUST compare VOTERS previous signature history 3) an additional amendment should be that require Secretary of State not to alter it or not taking off this duty from Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board. 4) creating criminal offense. This amendment will put stronger protection to our election.

Roland Paquette
retired
Benbrook, TX
I'm for this bill.

Lori High
Self/Retired Nurse Practitioner
Spicewood, TX

I am in favor of maintaining certain voter registration information, reviewing BBMA and offenses.

Denise Lunski
Citizens for Election Integrity TX
Arlington, TX

Please support this bill as I do. This bill will help keep our elections free and fair and create criminal penalties. Thank you.

Betty Ligon
SELF
Fort Worth, TX

I SUPPORT THIS BILL!

Angela Crane, Dr
TCDP
Manchaca, TX

A person's signature may change over time due to medical issues. To throw out a ballot based on signature alone is to discriminate against people with disabilities.

Criminalizing the voting process is not only un-American, but it also does not consider honest human error, possibly due to medical illness. In addition, our goal should be education and penalizing.

Darcie Wilbanks
Self/Conservative Values Project
Houston, TX

I support this bill. We've seen the way our election laws are abused without serious penalties and I was very disappointed when the Texas legislature mitigated the original penalties during the previous legislative session. As a result, the 2022 elections were no better in Harris County where we the citizens have absolutely no election integrity whatsoever.

Larry Ringle
Self and Election Integrity Project of Nueces County
PORTLAND, TX

I am in favor of this bill, which gives our election laws some teeth when it comes to prosecuting offenses

Matthew Brown
self
Sugar Land, TX

I am For this bill. Please provide better transparency in the voter rolls cleanup process to discover patterns and prevent future fraud and maintain clean records. Please strengthen the protection of our election processes, especially mail-in ballot protections. Require comparison of every signature against the known databases. Please create mail-in fraud as a criminal offense and add prosecution and penalties when fraud is discovered.

Selina Brown, Ms.
self/business owner
(Sugar Land) 2319 Squire Dobbins Dr Sugar Land TX 77478, TX

I am for this Bill. This is a great Bill. Please bring back the election integrity.

Noelle McSherry
Pure Justice Action Fund
HOUSTON, TX

This is a bad bill. Election officials should not be at risk of felony charges for making mistakes. The current penalties are more than sufficient.

Vote no on this bill.

Linda Holubec
self
Bryan, TX
Vote Yes

William Baker
Self / Retired Engineer
Sugar Land, TX

- 1) This bill requires keeping of voter removal records. This will increase the understanding of voter registration fluctuation and increase transparency,
 - 2) clarify the signature verification process in Sec.87.027(i) and (j); Signature Verification Committee shall (NOT "may") compare every signature from voter records for a mail-in ballot. This amendment clarifies any confusion of only comparing signatures on the carrier envelopes to the signature on the applications for absentee ballots.
 - 3) An additional amendment should require that the Secretary of State not alter or remove the above duty from the Signature Verification Committee or Early Voting Ballot Board,
 - 4) creating a criminal offense.
- This amendment will put stronger protection on our elective process.

Scott Wescoat
Self, Corporate Real Estate
Whitewright, TX

As a Texas Resident concerned about election integrity in the great State of Texas, I'm "In Favor" of HB 2860. Please vote to approve this bill.

K. Tina Lewis
Self
Montgomery, TX

I support this bill, but am wondering about the verbage "knowingly fails to comply". Who is responsible to determine the "knowingly fails" that creates the criminal offense and who will prosecute?

David Lemke, Mr.
Self, Educator, Business Owner
San Marcos, TX

In Favor! There simply MUST be strong deterrents to ANY and ALL voter fraud! These are particularly easy targets for harmful manipulation - or simply common errors being exploited.

Rosemary Teel
Self-Retired Teacher
College Station, TX

Vote yes. It should be a criminal offense to tamper with ANY part of the election process

Joy Davis, Field Organizer
Pure Justice Action Fund
Houston, TX

My name is Joy Davis and we oppose this bill. This bill fuels mass incarceration by increasing penalties for nonviolent and possibly accidental offenses to state jail felonies for Presiding Judges of early voting ballot boards, registrars, and election clerks. This bill would also defund our elections by withholding necessary funding allocated to counties to help run elections.

Sherry Eller
Self
Temple, TX

I SUPPORT HB 2860. Please pass this important election integrity bill quickly out of committee to the full House. Thank you.

Bonnie Seelig
Self Retired
Spicewood, TX

SUPPORT HB 2860

Very important is the inclusion of the Signature Verification Committee (SVC) SEEING THE APPLICATION THAT STATES THE REASON FOR EARLY VOTING so the SVC can compare to records of age of person etc. Also, if the reason was OUT OF COUNTY, the (SVC) MUST SEE THE RETURN ADDRESS TO CONFIRM LOCATION WHEN MAILED.

It would be great if people would have to register to vote annually, like a car registration. We'd be more confident people were alive, in state and could be contacted.

Julie Martin, Ms.
Self
Austin, TX

I support HB 2860 because we need integrity in our voters but most especially in our voter registrars. Trust is a key issue. Voter registration information must be handled properly and if not, the registrars must be questioned and brought to justice with criminal charges.

Kevin Formolo

self

Spring Branch, TX

FOR. The measure creates the requirement for voter registrar to maintain voter registration application of persons REMOVED from a list of registered voters making it a state jail felony to knowingly fail to comply. The measure also creates the requirement that all voter registration lists be posted to the county public website in a searchable, sortable, downloadable format making it a state jail felony to knowingly fail to comply. The measure then modifies signature verification and Early Voting Mail-In Ballot Board (EVBB) procedures to include comparison of information provided on voter ballot application and any known copies of information on file used to qualify voter's mail in ballot. If either the signatures OR provided information is not determined by majority vote of body to be the same person, the ballot is rejected. Failure by the signature committee chair/EVBB presiding judge [or designee] to a state jail felony to knowingly fail to comply with these requirements and the secretary of state may withhold all or part of funding provided for voter registration. This measure increases transparency in the voter registration list and its maintenance as well as providing more robust mail-in ballot voter qualification process with penalties for non-compliance. This will strengthen the least secure method for voting making it harder to cheat.

Linda Curtis

League of Independent Voters of Texas

Bastrop, TX

We oppose this legislation. We object to the increased criminal penalties to election officials. Pretty soon no one will want to work elections.

Melissa Rowell, Honorable

self

Houston, TX

I support this bill! And I hope that it passes favorably to the House. I have been working elections for 12 years. I see year after year that there are many voters that are on the voter rolls that have passed away or moved out of the county or state. There are others on the voter rolls that have an address that is a P.O. Box at a post office or store. The voter rolls need to be cleaned up and the Secretary of State needs to apparently be incentivized to clean up the rolls. This is not a bill intended to intimidate anyone. If we run an honest election, then there is no need to worry about a penalty/ criminal offense. We just need accurate voter rolls and honest elections.