

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 493
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State Affairs
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under current state law, a person is ineligible to serve as a poll watcher in an election if the person has been finally convicted of an offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election. However, despite convicted felons in Texas being disqualified from holding many jobs, a person can currently serve as a poll watcher even if the person has been finally convicted of a first or second degree felony offense. H.B. 493 seeks to reinforce standards of accountability and ethical conduct that are critical in safeguarding the state's elections by making individuals who have been convicted of a first or second degree felony offense ineligible to serve as poll watchers.

H.B. 493 amends current law relating to ineligibility to serve as a poll watcher.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 33.006(b), Election Code, to require that a certificate of appointment for a poll watcher meet certain criteria, including containing an affidavit executed by the appointee stating that the appointee has not been finally convicted of a felony of the first or second degree or a felony offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 33.035, Election Code, as follows:

Sec. 33.035. New heading: INELIGIBILITY OF PERSON CONVICTED OF CERTAIN OFFENSES. Provides that a person is ineligible to serve as a poll watcher in an election if the person has been finally convicted of a felony of the first or second degree or in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election, rather than convicted of an offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.