

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 493  
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Elections  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

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. C.S.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.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 493 amends the Election Code to make a person ineligible to serve as a poll watcher in an election if the person has been finally convicted of a first or second degree felony offense. The bill specifies that the conviction of an offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election, with which a person is ineligible to serve as a poll watcher in an election, must be a felony offense. The bill requires a certificate of appointment issued to a poll watcher to contain an affidavit executed by the appointee stating that the appointee has not been finally convicted of a first or second degree felony offense or a felony offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2025.

### **COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 493 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

With respect to a person's ineligibility 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, the substitute includes a specification absent from the introduced that such a disqualifying offense must be a felony offense.

Whereas the introduced required a certificate of appointment issued to a poll watcher to contain an affidavit executed by the appointee stating that the appointee has not been finally convicted of a first or second degree felony offense or an offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election, the substitute requires such an affidavit to state that the appointee has not been finally convicted of a first or second degree felony offense or a felony offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election.