

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1478
By: Cain
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

State law requires a voter registrar to cancel a voter's registration on receipt of certain official notice of the individual's ineligibility to vote. In 2021, the 87th Texas Legislature enacted S.B. 1113, which authorizes the secretary of state to withhold certain state-administered funds from voter registrars who fail to timely perform that duty, among others, but requires the secretary to distribute those funds if the registrar performs the duty not later than 30 days after the funds are withheld.

In addition to cancellation by notice, state law also establishes a process through which a registered voter can challenge the eligibility of another voter of the same county. However, S.B. 1113 did not address a voter registrar's duty with respect to these challenges.

H.B. 1478 seeks to support election integrity and provide a financial incentive for voter registrars to maintain accurate and current voter rolls by expanding the grounds on which the secretary of state may withhold certain funds from voter registrars for failure to timely perform their duties.

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

H.B. 1478 amends the Election Code to expand the authority of the secretary of state to withhold certain election funding administered and distributed by the secretary from a voter registrar for failure to timely perform a duty imposed on the registrar under statutory provisions relating to voter registration cancellation that requires the approval, change, or cancellation of a voter's registration to include withholding such funding from a registrar for failure to timely perform a duty imposed on the registrar under the Election Code that requires the following:

- the approval, change, or cancellation of a voter's registration;
- the scheduling of a hearing on the challenge of a voter registration cancellation or on the challenge of the registration of a voter by another registered voter;
- the determination of either such challenge; or
- the delivery of a confirmation notice to a voter whose registration is challenged by another voter.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.