

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2803
By: Hayes
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law requires an election judge who refuses to accept a poll watcher for service to provide a signed statement with the reason for the rejection, but there is no equivalent requirement for when an election judge removes a poll watcher from service after they have been accepted. The bill author has informed the committee that the ability of an election judge to remove a poll watcher for cause is an important tool, but it should be used with accountability and transparency. H.B. 2803 seeks to address this issue and increase transparency in the election process by requiring an election judge who removes a poll watcher after they have been accepted for service to provide a signed statement to the poll watcher containing the reason for removal.

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. 2803 amends the Election Code to require a presiding election judge who has a poll watcher removed from a polling place after the poll watcher has been duly accepted for service to provide to the poll watcher a signed statement containing the reason for the removal.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.