

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 5444
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Ways & Means
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that if a school district proposes a tax rate above the voter-approval threshold and voters reject it in an election, there is currently nothing preventing the district from attempting the same increase again the following year and that this could lead to a cycle of repeated proposals that ignore the will of the voters, creating frustration and eroding public confidence in the tax system. H.B. 5444 seeks to address this issue by prohibiting a school district from adopting a tax rate above the voter-approval threshold for any tax year if, in a prior year, the district had attempted to implement a similar rate increase and voters rejected it in a tax ratification election.

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. 5444 amends the Tax Code to prohibit the governing body of a public school district from adopting, without an election, a tax rate in response to a disaster, including a tornado, hurricane, flood, wildfire, or other calamity, but not including a drought, epidemic, or pandemic, that has impacted the district, for a tax year in which:

- the governing body previously adopted a tax rate that exceeded the district's voter-approval tax rate;
- an election was held for the purpose of determining whether to approve the district's adopted tax rate; and
- the proposition to approve the district's adopted tax rate was not approved by the voters of the district at the election.

H.B. 5444 applies to a property tax year that begins on or after the bill's effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

January 1, 2026.