

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 396
By: Kolkhorst
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current state law, a voter registrar must send to a voter a confirmation notice requesting confirmation of the voter's current residence if the registrar has reason to believe that the voter's residence address is a commercial post office box or that the voter's current residence is different from that indicated on the voter registration records. If a voter does not properly respond to this confirmation notice, then the voter is placed on the suspense list. S.B. 396 seeks to address this issue by requiring voter registrars to send a confirmation notice to a voter requesting confirmation of the voter's current residence address if the voter's name is not on the suspense list and the voter has not voted in any election in the previous 25 months.

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

S.B. 396 amends the Election Code to replace the requirement for a voter registrar to deliver to a voter a written confirmation notice requesting confirmation of the voter's current residence if the registrar has reason to believe that a voter's current residence is different from that indicated on the registration records, or that the voter's residence address is a commercial post office box or similar location that does not correspond to a residence, with a requirement for a voter registrar to deliver such a notice to a voter requesting confirmation of the voter's current residence under the following conditions:

- the voter's residence address is a commercial post office box or similar location that does not correspond to a residence;
- on November 30 following a general election:
 - the voter's name is not on the suspense list; and
 - the voter has not voted in any election during the previous 25 months; or
- the registrar has any other reason to believe that a voter's current residence is different from that indicated on the registration records.

S.B. 396 authorizes the secretary of state, if the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, appropriates money to the secretary of state for the purpose of providing additional funding for counties to administer the requirements of the bill's provisions, to allocate the appropriated amount to county voter registrars to defray the expenses incurred by the registrars to comply with those requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.