

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 1494
By: Johnson
Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In November 2024, Dallas voters approved Proposition D, which amended the Dallas City Charter by deleting the requirement that elections for members of the city council be held in May and instead required that those elections be held according to state law. The bill sponsor has informed the committee that, in order to preserve the nonpartisan nature of these elections, the Dallas Charter Review Commission has suggested holding them in November of odd-numbered years, which would regularly coincide with elections for propositions to amend the state constitution.

The bill sponsor has further informed the committee that Dallas city elections held in May have had exceedingly low turnout in recent years, with voter turnout rates in the single digits on average during the last six election cycles, and that holding such elections in November of odd-numbered years will help increase voter turnout due to the boost for elections with state constitution ballot propositions while maintaining the elections' nonpartisan nature by avoiding the potential influence of highly partisan statewide and federal elections.

However, the statute authorizing a political subdivision to change the date on which it holds its general election for officers to the November uniform election date expired on December 31, 2016. C.S.S.B. 1494 seeks to establish a new temporary authorization for certain political subdivisions to change the date on which they hold their election for officers to the November uniform election date in odd-numbered years.

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.S.B. 1494 amends the Election Code to authorize the governing body of a political subdivision, other than a county or municipal utility district, that holds its general election for officers on a date other than the November uniform election date to change the date on which it holds that election to the November uniform election date in odd-numbered years. The governing body must make that change not later than December 31, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 1494 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

While both the engrossed and the substitute authorize the governing body of a political subdivision, other than a county or municipal utility district, that holds its general election for officers on a date other than the November uniform election date to change the date on which it holds that election to the November uniform election date, the versions differ as follows:

- the substitute establishes that the November uniform election date to which an applicable governing body may change the date on which it holds its general election for officers is the November uniform election date in odd-numbered years, whereas the engrossed did not; and
- the substitute changes the deadline by which an applicable governing body must make such a change from not later than December 31, 2026, as in the engrossed, to not later than December 31, 2025.