

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R8720 LRM-D

S.B. 1494
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State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In November 2024, Dallas voters approved Proposition D, which amended the city charter to hold elections "according to state law" rather than in May. In order to preserve their nonpartisan nature, the Dallas Charter Review Commission took the additional step of suggesting odd-numbered Novembers, which regularly coincide with state constitutional ballot propositions.

However, Section 41.0052 of the Texas Election Code sets a deadline of December 31, 2016, for the ability of cities that hold their general elections in months other than November to change their general election date to be uniform with state law. May city elections in Dallas have had disparagingly low turnout, averaging single digits during the last six cycles. Holding city elections in November will increase turnout due to the heightened attention on up-ballot elections while maintaining their nonpartisan nature—the elections will be held in odd-numbered Novembers, avoiding the potential influence of highly partisan statewide and federal elections while still receiving the turnout boost by coinciding with state constitutional ballot propositions.

S.B. 1494 amends Section 41.0052 of the Election Code to change the date on which cities with off-cycle elections can alter their election dates to coincide with the state's to December 31, 2026. This will ensure that the city of Dallas is able to change their date in compliance with Proposition D, as well as provide this ability to other cities in the future.

As proposed, S.B. 1494 amends current law relating to the authority of certain political subdivisions to change the date of their general elections.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 41.0052(a), 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, not later than December 31, 2026, rather than December 31, 2016, change the date on which it holds its general election for officers to the November uniform election date.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.