By:  Shaheen, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Hughes) H.B. No. 493

(In the Senate - Received from the House May 14, 2025; May 15, 2025, read first time and referred to Committee on State Affairs; May 23, 2025, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 7, Nays 1; May 23, 2025, sent to printer.)

COMMITTEE VOTE

                    Yea Nay Absent  PNV

Hughes               X

Paxton               X

Bettencourt          X

Birdwell             X

Hall                 X

Hinojosa of Nueces             X

Middleton            X

Parker               X

Perry                          X

Schwertner                     X

Zaffirini                X

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to ineligibility to serve as a poll watcher.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Section 33.006(b), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  A certificate of appointment must:

(1)  be in writing and signed by the appointing authority or, for an appointment for a write-in candidate under Section 33.004, by each of the voters making the appointment;

(2)  indicate the capacity in which the appointing authority is acting;

(3)  state the name, residence address, and voter registration number of the appointee and be signed by the appointee;

(4)  identify the election and the precinct polling place or other location at which the appointee is to serve;

(5)  in an election on a measure, identify the measure if more than one is to be voted on and state which side of the measure the appointee represents; and

(6)  contain an affidavit executed by the appointee stating that the appointee:

(A)  will not have possession of a device capable of recording images or sound or that the appointee will disable or deactivate the device while serving as a watcher; and

(B)  has not been finally convicted of a felony of the first or second degree or a felony offense in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election.

SECTION 2.  Section 33.035, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 33.035.  INELIGIBILITY OF PERSON CONVICTED OF CERTAIN OFFENSES [~~ELECTION OFFENSE~~]. A person is ineligible to serve as a watcher in an election if the person has been finally convicted of a felony:

(1)  of the first or second degree; or

(2)  [~~an offense~~] in connection with conduct directly attributable to an election.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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