

By: Schofield

H.B. No. 209

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the separation of federal elections from state and  
3 local elections, and to related practices and procedures.

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

5 SECTION 1. Section 1.002(a), Election Code, is amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (a) This code applies to all general, special, federal, and  
8 primary elections held in this state.

9 SECTION 2. Section 1.005, Election Code, is amended by  
10 amending Subdivisions (4-b), (7), (14), and (19) and adding  
11 Subdivisions (4-c) and (4-d) to read as follows:

12 (4-b) "Federal election" means a primary or general  
13 election for a federal office or a resulting runoff election and  
14 does not include an election held for electors for president and  
15 vice president of the United States.

16 (4-c) "Federal judge" means:

17 (A) a judge, former judge, or retired judge of a  
18 United States court of appeals;

19 (B) a judge, former judge, or retired judge of a  
20 United States district court;

21 (C) a judge, former judge, or retired judge of a  
22 United States bankruptcy court; or

23 (D) a magistrate judge, former magistrate judge,  
24 or retired magistrate judge of a United States district court.

1           (4-d) "Federal office" means the office of United  
2 States senator or United States representative.

3           (7) "General election for state and county officers"  
4 means the general election at which officers of the [~~federal~~]  
5 state[~~7~~] and county governments are elected.

6           (14) "Primary election" means an election held by a  
7 political party under Chapter 172 to select its nominees for public  
8 office, and, unless the context indicates otherwise, the term  
9 includes:

10                   (A) a presidential primary election; and

11                   (B) a primary election for federal officers.

12           (19) "Statewide office" means an office of the  
13 [~~federal or~~] state government that is voted on statewide.

14           SECTION 3. Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and  
15 20, Election Code, are designated as Subtitle A, Title 2, Election  
16 Code, and a heading is added to Subtitle A to read as follows:

17                   SUBTITLE A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

18           SECTION 4. Section 11.002(a), Election Code, is amended to  
19 read as follows:

20           (a) In this code, "qualified voter" means a person who:

21                   (1) is 18 years of age or older;

22                   (2) is a United States citizen;

23                   (3) has not been determined by a final judgment of a  
24 court exercising probate jurisdiction to be:

25                           (A) totally mentally incapacitated; or

26                           (B) partially mentally incapacitated without the  
27 right to vote;

1 (4) has not been finally convicted of a felony or, if  
2 so convicted, has:

3 (A) fully discharged the person's sentence,  
4 including any term of incarceration, parole, or supervision, or  
5 completed a period of probation ordered by any court; or

6 (B) been pardoned or otherwise released from the  
7 resulting disability to vote;

8 (5) is a resident of this state; and

9 (6) is a registered voter under this subtitle.

10 SECTION 5. Section 15.003(a), Election Code, is amended to  
11 read as follows:

12 (a) On receipt of a voter registration certificate issued  
13 under this subtitle [~~title~~], the person to whom the certificate is  
14 issued must personally sign it in the appropriate space.

15 SECTION 6. Title 2, Election Code, is amended by adding  
16 Subtitle B to read as follows:

17 SUBTITLE B. FEDERAL ELECTIONS

18 CHAPTER 21. GENERAL PROVISIONS

19 Sec. 21.001. DEFINITIONS. In this subtitle:

20 (1) "Federal ballot" means a ballot that only lists  
21 elections and candidates for federal office.

22 (2) "State election" means an election that is not a  
23 federal election.

24 Sec. 21.002. FEDERAL ELECTIONS SEPARATE. (a)  
25 Notwithstanding other law, a federal election is a separate  
26 election from any other election in this state.

27 (b) A federal election under this subtitle may not list on

1 the federal ballot any proposition or election for state or county  
2 office.

3 (c) To the extent feasible, a federal election and a state  
4 election shall be held separately and concurrently using the same  
5 precincts and polling locations.

6 Sec. 21.003. RULES. (a) The secretary of state shall adopt  
7 rules to enact this subtitle.

8 (b) The rules adopted under this section must reduce voter  
9 disruption and confusion to the greatest extent practicable,  
10 including rules requiring, when practicable, use of the same area  
11 in which voters are being accepted for voting and the same voting  
12 stations for state and federal elections.

13 CHAPTER 22. VOTER REGISTRATION FOR FEDERAL ELECTIONS

14 Sec. 22.001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "military  
15 service voter" means:

16 (1) a member of the armed forces of the United States;

17 (2) a member of the merchant marine of the United  
18 States;

19 (3) a member of the Texas National Guard;

20 (4) a member of the National Guard of another state  
21 serving on active duty under an order of the president of the United  
22 States;

23 (5) a member of a reserve component of the armed forces  
24 of the United States serving on active duty under an order of the  
25 president of the United States or activated on state orders; or

26 (6) a spouse or dependent of a member of a military  
27 organization listed in Subdivisions (1) through (5).

1       Sec. 22.002. ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS. To  
2 be eligible to vote in a federal election in this state, a person  
3 must:

4           (1) be a qualified voter as defined by Section 11.002  
5 on the day the person offers to vote; or

6           (2) meet all requirements for voter eligibility under  
7 federal law, including any requirements for voter registration,  
8 and:

9           (A) meet all of the requirements to be a  
10 qualified voter under Section 11.002 except the requirement under  
11 Section 11.002(a)(6) that the person be a registered voter under  
12 Subtitle A, and be:

13                   (i) a military service voter; or

14                   (ii) domiciled in this state but  
15 temporarily living outside the territorial limits of the United  
16 States and the District of Columbia; or

17           (B) be unable to complete the registration  
18 requirements under Subtitle A.

19       Sec. 22.003. REGISTRATION FOR FEDERAL ELECTIONS. (a) If  
20 federal law allows a voter to be eligible to register to vote under  
21 this subtitle when the same voter would be ineligible to register to  
22 vote under Subtitle A, the secretary of state shall create and  
23 maintain a procedure by which a person eligible under Section  
24 22.002 may submit an application to register to vote under this  
25 subtitle. The procedure under this section must comply with all  
26 federal laws for voter registration.

27       (b) A person who submits an application for registration

1 under Chapter 13 that does not comply with all requirements under  
2 Subtitle A but does comply with all requirements under federal law  
3 shall be registered to vote under this subtitle.

4 (c) A person registered to vote under Subsection (b) who  
5 submits an application for registration under Chapter 13 that is  
6 accepted becomes registered to vote under Subtitle A.

7 CHAPTER 23. CONDUCT OF FEDERAL ELECTIONS

8 Sec. 23.001. CREATION OF FEDERAL BALLOT. The authority  
9 preparing a ballot for concurrent federal and state elections shall  
10 prepare a separate federal ballot for voters registered under this  
11 subtitle.

12 Sec. 23.002. BALLOT RECEIVED BY VOTER IN FEDERAL ELECTION.

13 (a) A voter registered to vote under Subtitle A may vote:

14 (1) a full ballot containing propositions and  
15 candidates for office in state elections; and

16 (2) a ballot containing candidates for office in  
17 federal elections.

18 (b) A voter registered to vote under this subtitle may only  
19 vote a ballot containing candidates for office in federal  
20 elections.

21 Sec. 23.003. OTHER CONDUCT. (a) Voting, tabulation, and  
22 reporting procedures for a state election shall be conducted under  
23 the provisions of this code.

24 (b) To the extent possible, voting, tabulation, and  
25 reporting procedures for a federal election shall be conducted  
26 under the provisions of this code.

27 (c) To the extent that federal law conflicts with a

1 provision of this code regarding voting, tabulation, and reporting  
2 procedures for a federal election, those procedures shall be  
3 conducted under the provisions of the applicable federal law.

4 SECTION 7. Subchapter A, Chapter 41, Election Code, is  
5 amended by adding Section 41.003 to read as follows:

6 Sec. 41.003. GENERAL ELECTION FOR FEDERAL OFFICERS. (a)  
7 The general election for federal officers shall be held on the first  
8 Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years.

9 (b) To the extent feasible, the general election for federal  
10 officers shall be held concurrently with the general election for  
11 state and county officers.

12 SECTION 8. The heading to Section 41.007, Election Code, is  
13 amended to read as follows:

14 Sec. 41.007. PRIMARY ELECTIONS FOR STATE AND COUNTY  
15 OFFICERS.

16 SECTION 9. Sections 41.007(a) and (d), Election Code, are  
17 amended to read as follows:

18 (a) The general primary election date for state and county  
19 officers is the first Tuesday in March in each even-numbered year.

20 (d) No ~~[other]~~ election other than a primary election for  
21 federal officers may be held on the date of a primary election.

22 SECTION 10. Subchapter A, Chapter 41, Election Code, is  
23 amended by adding Section 41.0075 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 41.0075. PRIMARY ELECTIONS FOR FEDERAL OFFICERS. (a)  
25 The primary election date for federal officers is the first Tuesday  
26 in March in each even-numbered year.

27 (b) The runoff primary election date for federal officers is

1 the fourth Tuesday in May following the primary election for  
2 federal officers.

3 (c) To the extent feasible, the primary election for federal  
4 officers shall be held concurrently with the primary election for  
5 state and county officers.

6 SECTION 11. Section 42.002(a), Election Code, is amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (a) The county election precincts are the election  
9 precincts for the following elections:

10 (1) the general election for state and county  
11 officers;

12 (2) a special election ordered by the governor;

13 (3) a primary election;

14 (4) a countywide election ordered by the commissioners  
15 court, county judge, or other county authority, except an election  
16 subject to Section 42.062(2); ~~and~~

17 (5) a federal election; and

18 (6) as provided by Section 42.0621, any other election  
19 held by a political subdivision on a uniform election date.

20 SECTION 12. Section 67.010(a), Election Code, is amended to  
21 read as follows:

22 (a) The county election returns for an election for a  
23 statewide office other than governor or lieutenant governor, a  
24 statewide measure, a district office, a federal office, or  
25 president and vice-president of the United States shall be  
26 canvassed by the governor.

27 SECTION 13. Section 84.014, Election Code, is amended to



1 read as follows:

2           Sec. 84.014. ACTION BY EARLY VOTING CLERK ON CERTAIN  
3 APPLICATIONS. If an applicant provides a date of birth, driver's  
4 license number, or social security number on the applicant's  
5 application for an early voting ballot to be voted by mail that is  
6 different from or in addition to the information maintained by the  
7 voter registrar in accordance with Subtitle A, Title 2, the early  
8 voting clerk shall notify the voter registrar. The voter registrar  
9 shall update the voter's record with the information provided by  
10 the applicant.

11           SECTION 14. Section [101.052](#), Election Code, is amended by  
12 amending Subsections (e), (f), and (j) and adding Subsection (n) to  
13 read as follows:

14           (e) An applicant who otherwise complies with applicable  
15 requirements is entitled to receive a full ballot to be voted by  
16 mail under this chapter if:

17                   (1) the applicant submits a federal postcard  
18 application to the early voting clerk on or before the 20th day  
19 before election day; and

20                   (2) the application contains the information that is  
21 required for registration under Subtitle A, Title 2.

22           (f) The applicant is entitled to receive only a federal  
23 ballot to be voted by mail under Chapter [114](#) if:

24                   (1) the applicant submits the federal postcard  
25 application to the early voting clerk after the date provided by  
26 Subsection (e)(1) and before the deadline for submitting a regular  
27 application for a ballot to be voted by mail; and

1           (2) the application contains the information that is  
2 required for registration under Subtitle A, Title 2.

3           (j) If the early voting clerk determines that an application  
4 that is submitted before the time prescribed by Subsection (e)(1)  
5 does not contain the information that is required for registration  
6 under Subtitle A, Title 2, the clerk shall notify the applicant of  
7 that fact. If the applicant has provided a telephone number or an  
8 address for receiving mail over the Internet, the clerk shall  
9 notify the applicant by that medium.

10           (n) A federal postcard application that does not meet the  
11 requirements of Subtitle A, Title 2, may still constitute  
12 registration for federal elections if the federal postcard  
13 application meets the requirements of Subtitle B, Title 2.

14           SECTION 15. Section 101.053(b), Election Code, is amended  
15 to read as follows:

16           (b) If an applicant provides a date of birth, driver's  
17 license number, or social security number on the applicant's  
18 federal postcard application that is different from or in addition  
19 to the information maintained by the voter registrar in accordance  
20 with Subtitle A, Title 2, the early voting clerk shall notify the  
21 voter registrar. The voter registrar shall update the voter's  
22 record with the information provided by the applicant.

23           SECTION 16. Section 101.055, Election Code, is amended by  
24 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-1) to read as  
25 follows:

26           (a) The submission of a federal postcard application that  
27 complies with the [~~applicable~~] requirements of Subtitle A, Title 2,

1 by an unregistered applicant constitutes registration by the  
2 applicant:

3 (1) for the purpose of voting in the election for state  
4 and county officers for which a ballot is requested; and

5 (2) under Subtitle A, Title 2, if the federal postcard  
6 application complies with the requirements under that subtitle,  
7 unless the person indicates on the application that the person is  
8 residing outside the United States indefinitely.

9 (a-1) The submission of a federal postcard application that  
10 complies with the requirements of Subtitle B, Title 2, by an  
11 unregistered applicant constitutes registration by the applicant:

12 (1) for the purpose of voting in the election for  
13 federal officers for which a ballot is requested; and

14 (2) under Subtitle B, Title 2, if the federal postcard  
15 application complies with the requirements under that subtitle,  
16 unless the person indicates on the application that the person is  
17 residing outside the United States indefinitely.

18 SECTION 17. Section 142.005, Election Code, is amended to  
19 read as follows:

20 Sec. 142.005. AUTHORITY WITH WHOM APPLICATION FILED. An  
21 application for a place on the ballot must be filed with:

22 (1) the secretary of state, for a federal, statewide,  
23 or district office; or

24 (2) the county judge, for a county or precinct office.

25 SECTION 18. Section 145.033, Election Code, is amended to  
26 read as follows:

27 Sec. 145.033. AUTHORITY WITH WHOM WITHDRAWAL REQUEST FILED.

1 A candidate must file a withdrawal request with:

2 (1) the secretary of state, for a federal, statewide,  
3 or district office; or

4 (2) the authority responsible for having the official  
5 ballot prepared, for a county or precinct office.

6 SECTION 19. Section 145.037(d), Election Code, is amended  
7 to read as follows:

8 (d) The chair must deliver the certification to:

9 (1) the secretary of state, for a federal, statewide,  
10 or district office; or

11 (2) the authority responsible for having the official  
12 ballot prepared, for a county or precinct office.

13 SECTION 20. Section 146.024, Election Code, is amended to  
14 read as follows:

15 Sec. 146.024. AUTHORITY WITH WHOM DECLARATION FILED. A  
16 declaration of write-in candidacy must be filed with:

17 (1) the secretary of state, for a federal, statewide,  
18 or district office; or

19 (2) the county judge, for a county or precinct office.

20 SECTION 21. The heading to Section 161.008, Election Code,  
21 is amended to read as follows:

22 Sec. 161.008. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINEES FOR FEDERAL,  
23 STATEWIDE, AND DISTRICT OFFICES FOR PLACEMENT ON GENERAL ELECTION  
24 BALLOT.

25 SECTION 22. Section 161.008(a), Election Code, is amended  
26 to read as follows:

27 (a) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the secretary of

1 state shall certify in writing for placement on the general  
2 election ballot the name of each candidate nominated at a primary  
3 election or convention of a political party for a federal,  
4 statewide, or district office.

5 SECTION 23. Section 163.006(d), Election Code, is amended  
6 to read as follows:

7 (d) Before January 15 of each year in which political  
8 parties hold precinct conventions under this title, the secretary  
9 of state shall deliver written notice of the requirements of this  
10 section to the state chair of each party that had a nominee for a  
11 federal, statewide, or district office on the most recent general  
12 election ballot.

13 SECTION 24. Section 172.059(b), Election Code, is amended  
14 to read as follows:

15 (b) A withdrawal request for the runoff primary must be  
16 filed with the state chair, for a federal, statewide, or district  
17 office, or with the county chair, for a county or precinct office.

18 SECTION 25. The heading to Section 172.121, Election Code,  
19 is amended to read as follows:

20 Sec. 172.121. CERTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES FOR FEDERAL,  
21 STATEWIDE, AND DISTRICT OFFICES FOR PLACEMENT ON RUNOFF BALLOT.

22 SECTION 26. Section 172.121(a), Election Code, is amended  
23 to read as follows:

24 (a) The state chair shall certify on the secretary of  
25 state's website for placement on the runoff primary election ballot  
26 the name of each general primary candidate for a federal,  
27 statewide, or district office who is to be a candidate in the

1 runoff.

2 SECTION 27. The heading to Section 172.122, Election Code,  
3 is amended to read as follows:

4 Sec. 172.122. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINEES WHO FILED AN  
5 APPLICATION FOR A PLACE ON THE BALLOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL  
6 REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL, STATEWIDE, AND DISTRICT OFFICES TO  
7 SECRETARY OF STATE.

8 SECTION 28. Section 172.122(a), Election Code, is amended  
9 to read as follows:

10 (a) The state chair shall certify by posting on the  
11 secretary of state's website the name and address of each primary  
12 candidate who is nominated for a federal, statewide, or district  
13 office. The state chair shall execute and file digitally with the  
14 secretary of state an affidavit certifying that the returns posted  
15 on the secretary of state's website are the correct and complete  
16 returns. The secretary of state shall adopt by rule a process to  
17 allow the chair to submit the affidavit digitally.

18 SECTION 29. Section 173.063, Election Code, is amended to  
19 read as follows:

20 Sec. 173.063. FEE RETAINED BY STATE CHAIR. The state chair  
21 shall deposit in the state primary fund each filing fee  
22 accompanying an application for a place on the ballot filed with the  
23 state chair:

- 24 (1) for a federal office;  
25 (1-a) for a statewide office; or  
26 (2) for a district office if the application is filed  
27 after the regular filing deadline.

1 SECTION 30. Section 181.0311(a), Election Code, is amended  
2 to read as follows:

3 (a) In addition to any other requirements, to be considered  
4 for nomination by convention, a candidate must:

5 (1) pay a filing fee to the secretary of state for a  
6 federal, statewide, or district office or the county judge for a  
7 county or precinct office; or

8 (2) submit to the secretary of state for a federal,  
9 statewide, or district office or the county judge for a county or  
10 precinct office a petition in lieu of a filing fee that satisfies  
11 the requirements prescribed by Subsection (e) and Section 141.062.

12 SECTION 31. Section 181.032(a), Election Code, is amended  
13 to read as follows:

14 (a) An application for nomination by a convention must be  
15 filed with:

16 (1) the state chair, for a federal, statewide, or  
17 district office; or

18 (2) the county chair, for a county or precinct office.

19 SECTION 32. Section 181.068(b), Election Code, is amended  
20 to read as follows:

21 (b) Not later than the 20th day after the date of the  
22 convention making the nomination, the presiding officer shall  
23 deliver the certification to:

24 (1) the authority responsible for having the official  
25 general election ballot prepared in the county, for certification  
26 of a county or precinct office; or

27 (2) the secretary of state, for certification of a

1 federal, statewide, or district office.

2 SECTION 33. Sections 231.008(b) and (c), Election Code, are  
3 amended to read as follows:

4 (b) If the judgment in a contest for an office affects the  
5 preparation of the ballot for a succeeding election, the clerk  
6 shall deliver a copy to the authority responsible for having the  
7 official ballot prepared or, in the case of a federal, statewide, or  
8 district office, to the authority responsible for certifying the  
9 names of the candidates for placement on the ballot.

10 (c) If the judgment orders that a new general or special  
11 election be held, the clerk shall deliver a copy to the authority  
12 responsible for ordering the election. If the judgment orders a new  
13 primary election, the clerk shall deliver a copy to the state chair  
14 of the appropriate political party, in the case of a federal,  
15 statewide, or district office, or to the county chair, in the case  
16 of a county or precinct office.

17 SECTION 34. Section 232.013(d), Election Code, is amended  
18 to read as follows:

19 (d) If the contested election is a primary, the district  
20 clerk shall deliver a certified copy of the order setting the date  
21 of the runoff to the state chair of the political party in the case  
22 of a federal, statewide, or district office or to the county chair  
23 in the case of a county or precinct office.

24 SECTION 35. Section 232.048(c), Election Code, is amended  
25 to read as follows:

26 (c) The candidate receiving the most votes in a new election  
27 ordered by a court in a primary election contest is the political



1 party's nominee, regardless of whether the candidate receives a  
2 majority vote, if the date of the final canvass of the court-ordered  
3 primary is on or after:

4 (1) the 85th day before the date of the succeeding  
5 general election in the case of a federal, statewide, or district  
6 office; or

7 (2) the 75th day before the date of the succeeding  
8 general election in the case of a county or precinct office.

9 SECTION 36. Section 252.005, Election Code, is amended to  
10 read as follows:

11 Sec. 252.005. AUTHORITY WITH WHOM APPOINTMENT FILED:  
12 CANDIDATE. An individual must file a campaign treasurer appointment  
13 for the individual's own candidacy with:

14 (1) the commission, if the appointment is made for  
15 candidacy for:

16 (A) a federal office;

17 (A-1) a statewide office;

18 (B) a district office filled by voters of more  
19 than one county;

20 (C) a judicial district office filled by voters  
21 of only one county;

22 (D) state senator;

23 (E) state representative; or

24 (F) the State Board of Education;

25 (2) the county clerk, if the appointment is made for  
26 candidacy for a county office, a precinct office, or a district  
27 office other than one included in Subdivision (1);

1           (3) the clerk or secretary of the governing body of the  
2 political subdivision or, if the political subdivision has no clerk  
3 or secretary, with the governing body's presiding officer, if the  
4 appointment is made for candidacy for an office of a political  
5 subdivision other than a county;

6           (4) the county clerk if:

7                 (A) the appointment is made for candidacy for an  
8 office of a political subdivision other than a county;

9                 (B) the governing body for the political  
10 subdivision has not been formed; and

11                (C) no boundary of the political subdivision  
12 crosses a boundary of the county; or

13           (5) the commission if:

14                 (A) the appointment is made for candidacy for an  
15 office of a political subdivision other than a county;

16                 (B) the governing body for the political  
17 subdivision has not been formed; and

18                 (C) the political subdivision is situated in more  
19 than one county.

20           SECTION 37. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.