

By: Bettencourt, Paxton

S.B. No. 985

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the combination of certain election precincts.

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

SECTION 1. Section 42.0051, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 42.0051. COMBINING CERTAIN PRECINCTS. (a) If changes in county election precinct boundaries to give effect to a redistricting plan result in county election precincts with fewer than 500 registered voters, a commissioners court for a general or special election, or for a primary election the county executive committee of a political party conducting a primary election, may combine county election precincts notwithstanding Section 42.005 to avoid unreasonable expenditures for election equipment, supplies, and personnel [~~This section applies only to a county with a population of less than 1.2 million that does not participate in the countywide polling place program described by Section 43.007~~].

(b) County election precincts in a county with a population of not less than 250,000 may also be combined under Subsection (a) if the changes result in county election precincts with not fewer than 500 and not more than 750 registered voters.

(c) A combined precinct under Subsection (a) or (b) is subject to the maximum population prescribed for a precinct under Section 42.006.

(d) [(a-1)] In a general or special election for which use

1 of county election precincts is required, the commissioner's court  
2 of a county with a population of less than 1.2 million that does not  
3 participate in the countywide polling place program described by  
4 Section 43.007 may, on the recommendation of the county election  
5 board, combine county election precincts notwithstanding Section  
6 42.005 if:

7 (1) the commissioners court cannot secure a suitable  
8 polling place location under Section 43.031; and

9 (2) the location of the combined polling place  
10 adequately serves the voters of the combined precinct.

11 (e) [~~(c)~~] A combined precinct under Subsection (d) [~~this~~  
12 ~~section~~] may not contain more than 10,000 registered voters.

13 (f) [~~(d)~~] A combined precinct may not be established if it:

14 (1) results in a dilution of voting strength of a group  
15 covered by the federal Voting Rights Act (42 U.S.C. Section 1973c et  
16 seq.);

17 (2) results in a dilution of representation of a group  
18 covered by the Voting Rights Act in any political or electoral  
19 process or procedure; or

20 (3) results in discouraging participation by a group  
21 covered by the Voting Rights Act in any political or electoral  
22 process or procedure because of the location of a polling place or  
23 other factors.

24 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.