

By: Hall

S.B. No. 1473

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to early voting by mail on the ground of absence from the voter's county of residence.

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

SECTION 1. Section 84.002(a), Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) An early voting ballot application must include:

(1) the applicant's name and the address at which the applicant is registered to vote;

(1-a) the following information:

(A) the number of the applicant's driver's license, election identification certificate, or personal identification card issued by the Department of Public Safety;

(B) if the applicant has not been issued a number described by Paragraph (A), the last four digits of the applicant's social security number; or

(C) a statement by the applicant that the applicant has not been issued a number described by Paragraph (A) or (B);

(2) for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail on the ground of absence from the county of residence, the address ~~[outside the applicant's county of residence]~~ to which the ballot is to be mailed under Section 86.003(c);

(3) for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail

1 on the ground of age or disability, the address of the hospital,
2 nursing home or other long-term care facility, or retirement
3 center, or of a person related to the applicant within the second
4 degree by affinity or the third degree by consanguinity, as
5 determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, if the applicant is
6 living at that address and that address is different from the
7 address at which the applicant is registered to vote;

8 (4) for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail
9 on the ground of confinement in jail, the address of the jail or of a
10 person related to the applicant within the degree described by
11 Subdivision (3);

12 (5) for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail
13 on any ground, an indication of each election for which the
14 applicant is applying for a ballot;

15 (6) an indication of the ground of eligibility for
16 early voting; and

17 (7) for an application for a ballot to be voted by mail
18 on the ground of involuntary civil commitment, the address of the
19 facility operated by or under contract with the Texas Civil
20 Commitment Office or of a person related to the applicant within the
21 degree of consanguinity described by Subdivision (3).

22 SECTION 2. Section 84.011(a), Election Code, is amended to
23 read as follows:

24 (a) The officially prescribed application form for an early
25 voting ballot must include:

26 (1) immediately preceding the signature space the
27 statement: "I certify that the information given in this

1 application is true, and I understand that giving false information
2 in this application is a crime.";

3 (2) a statement informing the applicant of the
4 offenses prescribed by Sections 84.003 and 84.004;

5 (3) spaces for entering an applicant's voter
6 registration number and county election precinct of registration,
7 with a statement informing the applicant that failure to furnish
8 that information does not invalidate the application;

9 (3-a) a space for entering the information required
10 under Section 84.002(a)(1-a); and

11 (4) on an application for a ballot to be voted by mail:

12 (A) a space for an applicant applying on the
13 ground of absence from the county of residence to indicate the date
14 on or after which the applicant can receive mail at the address
15 listed on the applicant's application for a ballot to be voted by
16 mail [~~outside the county~~];

17 (B) a space for indicating the fact that an
18 applicant whose application is signed by a witness cannot make the
19 applicant's mark and a space for indicating the relationship or
20 lack of relationship of the witness to the applicant;

21 (C) a space for entering an applicant's telephone
22 number, with:

23 (i) a statement informing the applicant
24 that failure to furnish that information does not invalidate the
25 application; and

26 (ii) a statement prescribed by the
27 secretary of state explaining the benefits of furnishing that

1 information, including how that information assists the early
2 voting clerk;

3 (D) a space or box for an applicant applying on
4 the ground of age or disability to indicate that the address to
5 which the ballot is to be mailed is the address of a facility or
6 relative described by Section 84.002(a)(3), if applicable;

7 (E) a space or box for an applicant applying on
8 the ground of confinement in jail or involuntary civil commitment
9 to indicate that the address to which the ballot is to be mailed is
10 the address of a relative described by Section 84.002(a)(4) or (7),
11 if applicable;

12 (F) a space for an applicant applying on the
13 ground of age or disability to indicate if the application is an
14 application under Section 86.0015;

15 (G) spaces for entering the signature, printed
16 name, and residence address of any person assisting the applicant;

17 (H) a statement informing the applicant of the
18 condition prescribed by Section 81.005; and

19 (I) a statement informing the applicant of the
20 requirement prescribed by Section 86.003(c).

21 SECTION 3. Section 86.003(c), Election Code, is amended to
22 read as follows:

23 (c) The address to which the balloting materials must be
24 addressed is the address at which the voter is registered to vote,
25 or the registered mailing address if different, unless the ground
26 for voting by mail is:

27 (1) absence from the county of residence, in which

1 case the address may [~~must~~] be an address outside the voter's county
2 of residence;

3 (2) confinement in jail, in which case the address
4 must be the address of the jail or of a relative described by
5 Section 84.002(a)(4);

6 (3) age or disability and the voter is living at a
7 hospital, nursing home or other long-term care facility, or
8 retirement center, or with a relative described by Section
9 84.002(a)(3), in which case the address must be the address of that
10 facility or relative; or

11 (4) involuntary civil commitment, in which case the
12 address must be the address of the facility or of a relative
13 described by Section 84.002(a)(7).

14 SECTION 4. Section 87.041(b), Election Code, is amended to
15 read as follows:

16 (b) A ballot may be accepted only if:

17 (1) the carrier envelope certificate is properly
18 executed;

19 (2) neither the voter's signature on the ballot
20 application nor the signature on the carrier envelope certificate
21 is determined to have been executed by a person other than the
22 voter, unless signed by a witness;

23 (3) the voter's ballot application states a legal
24 ground for early voting by mail;

25 (4) the voter is registered to vote, if registration
26 is required by law;

27 (5) for a ballot [~~the address to which the ballot was~~]

1 mailed to the voter for [~~as indicated by the application, was~~
2 ~~outside the voter's county of residence, if the ground for~~] early
3 voting on the ground of [~~is~~] absence from the county of residence,
4 the address to which the ballot was mailed to the voter was:

5 (A) the address at which the voter is registered
6 to vote;

7 (B) the voter's registered mailing address, if
8 different from the address in Paragraph (A); or

9 (C) an address outside the voter's county of
10 residence;

11 (6) for a voter to whom a statement of residence form
12 was required to be sent under Section 86.002(a), the statement of
13 residence is returned in the carrier envelope and indicates that
14 the voter satisfies the residence requirements prescribed by
15 Section 63.0011;

16 (7) the address to which the ballot was mailed to the
17 voter is an address that is otherwise required by Sections 84.002
18 and 86.003; and

19 (8) the information required under Section 86.002(g)
20 provided by the voter identifies the same voter identified on the
21 voter's application for voter registration under Section
22 13.002(c)(8).

23 SECTION 5. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to
24 an election ordered on or after the effective date of this Act.

25 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
26 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
27 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this

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1 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this

2 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.