

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 258
By: Miles
Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that compliance with the standards for voter registration continues to be an obstacle for many people who want to participate in the voting process. There are concerns, according to the parties, that the written and oral reasons that are given for a rejection of an applicant's registration are often vague and not helpful in resolving the specific problem that prompted the rejection. The parties emphasize that this lack of specificity in the reasons for rejection will likely further complicate a voter's subsequent attempts to register because the initial problem may not have been resolved. C.S.H.B. 258 seeks to provide voters with more detailed information regarding the rejection of a voter registration application.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 258 amends the Election Code to require a voter registrar, in providing a written or oral reason for rejecting a voter registration application, to identify which section or sections of the application resulted in the rejection and, for each section identified, to specify if the section was incomplete, was improperly filled out, or contained information identifying the applicant as ineligible to vote. The bill requires the voter registrar to use the official form prescribed by the secretary of state if written notice of the rejection is provided and requires the secretary of state to prescribe the procedures and forms necessary to implement provisions relating to notice of the rejection of a voter registration application.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 258 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Section 13.073, Election Code, is amended by adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

(d) In providing a written or oral reason for rejection under Subsection (a) or (b), the registrar shall identify which section or sections of the application resulted in the rejection. For each section identified, the registrar shall specify if the section was incomplete, was improperly filled out, or contained information identifying the applicant as ineligible to vote.

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Section 13.073, Election Code, is amended by adding Subsections (d) and (e) to read as follows:

(d) In providing a written or oral reason for rejection under Subsection (a) or (b), the registrar shall identify which section or sections of the application resulted in the rejection. For each section identified, the registrar shall specify if the section was incomplete, was improperly filled out, or contained information identifying the applicant as ineligible to vote.

(e) The registrar shall use the official form prescribed by the secretary of state if a written notice is provided under Subsection (a). The secretary of state shall prescribe the procedures and forms necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.