

SUBJECT: Authorizing electronic voter registration

COMMITTEE: Elections — favorable, with amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — L. Taylor, Hernandez Luna, Berman, Branch, Burkett, Farias, Isaac, P. King, Veasey

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Ed Johnson, Harris County Clerks Office; Skipper Wallace, Texas Republican County Chairman’s Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Helen Carvell, League of Women Voters; Rosemary Edwards; Jessica Gomez, Disability Rights Texas; Cheryl Johnson, Galveston County Voters & Tax Office; Sheryl Swift, Galveston County Tax Office)

Against — None

On — Ann McGeehan, Secretary of State

BACKGROUND: Election Code, ch. 13 sets forth the provisions to apply for voter registration.

DIGEST: HB 2814 would require the secretary of state to implement a program to allow a person who had a valid driver’s license or personal identification card issued by this state to complete a voter registration application over the Internet from the official website of this state and, either directly or via links to the websites of the secretary of state, the Department of Public Safety, and participating counties.

An applicant for electronic voter registration would have to:

- attest to the truth of the information provided on the application by affirmatively accepting the information as true; and
- affirmatively consent to the use of the signature on the applicant’s driver’s license or personal identification card for voter registration purposes.

For each application submitted, the program would require that a digital copy of the applicant’s signature be obtained from the Department of

Public Safety. An application submitted under the provisions of the bill would be considered for all purposes as an application submitted by mail under the provisions of current law.

The secretary of state would be required to adopt necessary rules to implement these provisions, including rules to provide for additional security measures necessary to ensure the accuracy and integrity of electronically submitted applications.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2011.

NOTES: According to the bill's fiscal note, the cost to general revenue funds would be \$140,000 in fiscal 2012.