

- SUBJECT:** Requiring certain mobile voting stations to remain in place
- COMMITTEE:** Elections — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — L. Taylor, Hernandez Luna, Berman, Burkett, Farias, Isaac, P. King, Veasey
- 1 nay — Branch
- WITNESSES:** For — Robert Antill, King Street Patriots; Ed Johnson, Harris County Clerk Office; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Rosemary Edwards; Cheryl Johnson, Sheryl Swift, Galveston County Tax Office; Skipper Wallace, Texas Republican County Chairman’s Association)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Dana DeBeauvoir, Legislative Committee of County and District Association of Texas)
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Elizabeth Hanshaw Winn, Texas Secretary of State)
- BACKGROUND:** Election Code, sec. 85.062 sets forth the provisions for a movable temporary branch polling place, also known as a mobile voting station.
- DIGEST:** HB 3082 would prohibit a mobile voting station used during early voting in an election that included a bond proposition in a city or school district within a county of more than one million from changing locations during the early voting period. The mobile voting station would have to be placed in the territory covered by the election in a way that allowed all voters the same access to it during the early voting period.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2011.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSHB 3082 would prevent misuse of mobile voting stations while still providing convenient access to the polls. The locations of the stations, their hours, and the frequency of their shifting movements can control the outcome of an election. Some mobile voting stations have been strategically placed and their schedules specifically set to offer greater convenience to people who are more likely to favor a city or school district

bond proposition on the ballot. CSHB 3028 would provide guidelines to solve this problem.

Although mobile voting is valuable and convenient, it has led to some manipulation of bond elections in large cities where citizens have greater access to polling places. For example, if the ballot contains a proposition to approve a bond for a new high school athletic facility, setting up the mobile voting station at a baseball practice or soccer game would ensure the high attendance of people who would be more likely to vote in favor of the measure.

The bill would only pertain to an election that included a bond proposition in a city or school district within a county with a population over one million. These restrictions would increase the integrity of these elections.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Mobile voting increases accessibility and is a good use of election dollars by allowing convenient mobile voting stations upon which the voters depend. Public notice of their locations is required, which ensures full transparency. The bill essentially would prohibit this economical and efficient form of voting for large counties like Harris, Tarrant, Dallas, Travis, and Bexar in any election with a city or school district bond proposition on the ballot.