SUBJECT: Requiring registrars to submit additional voting history information

COMMITTEE: Elections — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Laubenberg, Fallon, Israel, Phelan, Schofield

                0 nays

                2 absent — Goldman, Reynolds

WITNESSES: For — Ed Johnson, Harris County Clerk's Office; Glen Maxey, Texas
                Democratic Party; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Alan Vera, Harris
                County Republican Party; Bill Fairbrother, TRCCA, Legislative Chair;
                Gaudette; Kathy Haigler; Kelly Horsley; Colleen Vera)

                Against — None

                On — Keith Ingram, Secretary of State, Elections Division; (*Registered,
                but did not testify*: Ashley Fischer, Secretary of State)

BACKGROUND: Election Code, sec. 18.069 requires an election registrar to electronically
                submit to the secretary of state the record of each voter participating in the
                primary, runoff primary, or general election or special election called by
                the governor within 30 days after the election date.

DIGEST: HB 2050 would require an election registrar to include, along with the
                information already required to be submitted to the secretary of state, a
                notation of whether the voter voted on election day, voted early by
                personal appearance, voted early by mail, or voted early by mail as a
                federal postcard applicant.

                The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

SUPPORTERS   HB 2050 would ensure that voter records accurately reflected the manner
SAY: in which each voter participated in an election. Some election clerks
                already submit voter records identifying the method a person used to vote,

but the information provided is not always designated correctly. This bill would help address this issue by requiring registrars to specify how voters cast their vote and by providing a list of possible designations.

When voter data is incomplete, election clerks receive dozens of open records requests from political parties and people with private voter databases. These requests can be costly and time consuming, especially if the registrar for a small county must respond to multiple requests. HB 2050 would reduce that administrative burden by requiring registrars to submit that information to the secretary of state's office, which would serve as a statewide repository for information on how each voter cast a ballot.

Election clerks already must submit voting data to the secretary of state. This bill simply would require an additional piece of information to be included. Most counties already submit their data with a notation about how the votes were cast. Because there is not technological barrier to submitting this additional information, it should be required of all counties.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.