

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 1229
By: Bettencourt
Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerns have been raised that the results of an election, especially a tax ratification election, associated with an independent school district or local government may not be readily accessible, making it difficult for voters to remain informed about such local elections. C.S.S.B. 1229 seeks to better inform voters by requiring those entities to post certain election information on their public websites.

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.S.B. 1229 amends the Election Code to require a county that holds or provides election services for an election and maintains a website to post, not later than the 21st day before election day, the following information on the county's public website for an election administered by the county:

- the date of the election;
- the location of each polling place;
- each candidate for an elected office on the ballot; and
- each measure on the ballot.

The bill requires a city or independent school district that holds an election and maintains a website to post such information, by the same deadline, on the public website for the city or district, as applicable.

C.S.S.B. 1229 requires such a county, city, or district to post the following information regarding election results on the entity's public website:

- the results of each election;
- the total number of votes cast;
- the total number of votes cast for each candidate or for or against each measure;
- the total number of votes cast by personal appearance on election day;
- the total number of votes cast by personal appearance or mail during the early voting

period; and

- the total number of counted and uncounted provisional ballots cast.

The bill requires such information to be clearly labeled in plain language; provided as soon as practicable after the election; accessible without having to make more than two selections or view more than two network locations after accessing the website home page of the county, city, or district, as applicable, for the most recent election; and accessible without having to make more than four selections or view more than four network locations after accessing the website home page of the applicable entity for a previous election.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 1229 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a requirement for an applicable county, city, or independent school district to post certain election information on the entity's public website not later than the 21st day before election day.

The substitute expands the type of information regarding election results that must be posted and requires such information to be clearly labeled in plain language. The substitute specifies that the requirement for the information to be accessible without having to make more than two selections or view more than two network locations after accessing the entity's website home page applies with regard to the most recent election. The substitute sets the maximum number of selections or network location views for a previous election at four.