

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2149
By: Clardy
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

House Bill 1888, which was enacted during the 86th Session, required temporary early voting locations to remain open for the same amount of time as the main early voting location. However, rural county officials have suggested that this requirement is overly burdensome, as the cost is too great to justify running permanent locations for two weeks. Unfortunately, this leads to fewer available early voting locations, which makes it more difficult for some individuals, such as elderly individuals or individuals who have disabilities, to exercise their right to vote. H.B. 2149 seeks to address this issue by allowing counties with populations under 100,000 to continue to establish temporary early voting locations for less than the amount of time currently required by statute.

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

H.B. 2149 amends the Election Code to authorize early voting by personal appearance to be conducted at a temporary branch polling place on any one or more days and during any hours of the early voting period for an election in which the territory served by the early voting clerk is situated in a county or counties with a population or sum of populations under 100,000, as applicable. The bill provides for early voting on a Saturday or Sunday at any one or more of the temporary branch polling places and expressly does not require the schedules for conducting voting to be uniform among the temporary branch polling places. The bill requires an early voting clerk who is a county clerk or city secretary to post notice stating any dates and the hours that early voting on Saturday or Sunday will be conducted at a temporary branch polling place.

H.B. 2149 limits applicability of the requirement for early voting at a temporary branch polling place to be conducted during the regular days and hours for early voting to an election in which the territory served by the early voting clerk is situated in a county or counties with a population or sum of populations of 100,000 or more, as applicable.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.