

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2321
By: Jetton
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under state election law, a signature verification committee compares the signature on each early voting ballot voted by mail with the signature on the voter's ballot application to determine signature authenticity. It has been suggested that because a voter's signature can change over time for a variety of reasons, greater flexibility is needed for the signature verification committees. There have been calls to require these committees to compare such signatures against any signatures of the voter obtained from the Department of Public Safety (DPS). H.B. 2321 seeks to maintain the integrity of elections in Texas by providing for the comparison of certain voter signatures against those on file with DPS.

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. 2321 amends the Election Code to require a signature verification committee to compare the signatures on each carrier envelope certificate with each signature of the applicable voter obtained from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and on file with the county clerk or voter registrar. The bill requires an early voting ballot board, in determining whether a voter's signature on a ballot application and the signature on the carrier envelope certificate have been executed by a person other than the voter, to also compare the signatures with each signature of the voter obtained from DPS and on file with the county clerk or voter registrar.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.