

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2602
By: Paul
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In Texas, election watchers may be appointed to observe the conduct of an election on behalf of a candidate, a political party, or the proponents or opponents of a measure. However, concerns have been raised regarding strict requirements for watchers appointed to observe a precinct polling place. Watchers who have served for more than five continuous hours have the ability to come and go from the polling place, but the same is not true for watchers who serve for less time. This places an undue burden on watchers needing to use the restroom, eat a snack, or take a break. H.B. 2602 seeks to give all election watchers the ability to come and go from a precinct polling place by removing the five-hour continuous service requirement.

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. 2602 amends the Election Code to remove language that makes the authorization for an election watcher to serve during the hours the watcher chooses to serve applicable only to watchers who serve for more than five continuous hours.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.