

- SUBJECT:** Requiring volunteer deputy voter registrars to be registered voters
- COMMITTEE:** Elections — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — L. Taylor, Berman, Branch, Burkett, Farias, Isaac, P. King, Veasey
1 nay — Hernandez Luna
- WITNESSES:** For — Dorothy Person, Lampasas County; B.R. “Skipper” Wallace, Texas Republican County Chairs Association; David Carter
Against — Luis Figueroa, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF); Sonia Santana, ACLU-TX; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andy Wilson, Public Citizen)
On — Jessica Gomez, Disability Rights Texas and Disability Policy Consortium; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Elizabeth Hanshaw Winn, Secretary of State)
- BACKGROUND:** Elections Code, ch. 13 allows anyone over 18 years of age who has not been convicted of a felony – or if convicted, served their full sentence or have been pardoned – to serve as a volunteer deputy registrar.
The registrar must make a copy of a volunteer deputy registrar’s certificate that includes the appointment date and statement, the volunteer’s address, the volunteer’s voter registration number, if any, and certain conditions for the appointment’s termination, including failure to deliver a voter registration application.
- DIGEST:** HB 1306 would require a volunteer deputy registrar to be a registered voter. Also, a volunteer deputy register could not have an identification fraud conviction. The bill would require the volunteer deputy registrar’s certificate to additionally reflect that the volunteer would be terminated for an identification fraud conviction.
The changes made in the bill would apply only to appointments on or after the bill’s September 1, 2011, effective date.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

Being a registered voter allows a volunteer to better understand the registration process and help answer questions regarding the application. In order to work as a volunteer deputy registrar who helps Texans register to vote, registrars should be registered themselves.

Additionally, since a volunteer deputy registrar has access to large volumes of personal and private identification records, he or she should not be allowed to work if convicted of identification fraud.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Many Texans, including legal immigrants with Green Cards and certain disabled persons under guardianship, cannot register to vote, but want to participate in the electoral process. Acting as a volunteer deputy registrar satisfies this desire, but HB 1306 would take away this privilege. With one of the lowest voter registration rates in the country, Texas can ill afford to spurn those willing to volunteer their time to help.