

- SUBJECT:** Reimbursement of primary election costs directly to an election officer
- COMMITTEE:** Elections — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Morrison, Miles, Johnson, R. Miller, Simmons, Wu
1 nay — Klick
- WITNESSES:** For — Jacquelyn Callanen, Bexar County, Texas Association of Election Administrators Legislative Chair; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ken Clark, Galveston County Commissioners Chair; Dana DeBeauvoir, County and District Clerks Legislative Committee; Cathy Sisk, Harris County; Michael Vasquez, Texas Conference of Urban Counties)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Rosemary Edwards, Texas Republican County Chairman’s Association; Chris Howe; Eric Opiela, Karnes County Republican Party, Texas Republican County Chairman’s Association)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Keith Ingram, Texas Secretary of State, Elections Division)
- BACKGROUND:** Election Code, sec. 173.0832 allows the secretary of state, on request of a county election officer who conducts a primary election under an election services contract, to provide payment of expenses directly to the officer who incurs the expense. This is available only for a county election officer of a county with a population of 100,000 or more.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3065 would remove the county size requirements in Election Code, sec. 173.0832.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2013.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSHB 3065 would give counties more options and ensure that the same law applied statewide. Currently, the law allows for county election officers to request reimbursement directly only if their county has a population of 100,000 or more. This is a particularly useful option when an election administrator finds that a party is not being diligent with the

money allocated for primaries and has trouble recovering the costs. The bill would allow election officers from all counties to take advantage of this option. This would remove the current middleman and streamline the reimbursement process. The bill would be permissive, and county parties not wishing to take advantage of this option would not be required to do so. Many counties would remain unaffected by this bill unless a problem arose.

The bill would not cause partisan conflicts or materially affect the process of reimbursement. The money recovered still would be going to the same officers as it currently does. The bill would merely remove the middleman in the process.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 3065 would require the secretary of state to reimburse party officers directly for costs incurred in a primary election. Political primaries should be the financial responsibility of the parties holding them, and requiring direct reimbursement to election officers could cause partisan conflicts.