

- SUBJECT:** Requiring that candidates for public office be registered to vote
- COMMITTEE:** Elections — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Laubenberg, Fallon, Israel, Phelan, Schofield
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Goldman, Reynolds
- WITNESSES:** For — William Fairbrother, Texas Republican County Chairmen's Association; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Rachael Crider, Cheryl Johnson, and Sheryl Swift, Galveston County Tax Office; Kat Swift, Green Party of Texas; Willie O'Brien, Mountain View College Student Government Association; Glen Maxey, Texas Democratic Party; and five individuals)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Beth Cubriel, Republican Party of Texas; Ashley Fischer, Office of the Secretary of State; Keith Ingram, Office of the Secretary of State, Elections Division)
- DIGEST:** HB 484 would stipulate that a person was not qualified for public elective office unless the person was registered to vote. The bill would create an exception to this requirement for an office for which the U.S. Constitution or the Texas Constitution prescribed exclusive qualification requirements.
- The bill would specify a date by which a candidate for a public elective office in Texas had to be registered to vote in the territory from which the office was elected.
- This bill would take effect September 1, 2015, and would apply only to candidates or officers whose term of office began on or after that date.
- SUPPORTERS** HB 484 would ensure that those seeking office in Texas were active

SAY: participants in the electoral process. By requiring that those seeking office be registered to vote in the territory that elected them, this bill would apply to elected officials the same rules as the people who voted for them.

This bill also would help confirm that those who ran for office were residents of the territory that elected them. Candidates sometimes are challenged on whether they meet residency requirements, and voter registration could provide some information about the candidate's residency.

OPPONENTS SAY: HB 484 would place an unnecessary restriction on ballot access by forcing candidates to register to vote before running for office. The right to register to vote comes with an equal right not to register. Punishing the decision not to register by denying someone the right to run for office could be an infringement on freedom of association and freedom of speech. Voters are fully capable of deciding whether a non-registered candidate is qualified to represent them, and voters should make that decision, rather than the Legislature.