

SUBJECT: Allowing junior college district trustees to be elected by plurality vote

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Lozano, Raney, Alonzo, Alvarado, Button, Clardy, Howard, Morrison, Turner

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Matt Oliver)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 130.082(g) establishes that if no candidate receives a majority in an election for a junior college district's board of trustees, then the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes must face each other in a runoff election for the position.

Some suggest that these runoff elections can cost junior college districts and taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in some cases and that an election determined by a plurality of the vote might be more appropriate.

DIGEST: CSHB 961 would allow a junior college district's board of trustees to provide by resolution that a candidate in a trustee election would have to gain a plurality of the vote. The resolution would have to be adopted no later than 180 days before the date of an election, and would remain in effect until the board adopted a subsequent resolution rescinding the adoption no later than 180 days before the date of the first election to which the rescission would apply.

The bill would take effect September, 1, 2017.