

SUBJECT: Requiring a unique letter on the ballot for propositions in certain elections

COMMITTEE: Elections — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Cain, J. González, Beckley, Bucy, Clardy, Fierro, Jetton,
Schofield, Swanson

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Robert Golding, Rodeo Austin; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Michelle Davis, Convention of States; Heather Hawthorne, County and District Clerks Association of Texas; Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Susan Schultz, League of Women Voters of Texas; Joey Bennett, Secure Democracy; Dee Chambless, Smith County Republican Women; Glen Maxey, Texas Democratic Party; Tray Bates, Texas Realtors; Shelia Franklin, True Texas Project; and 16 individuals)

Against — Laura Pressley, True Texas Elections; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joanna Cattanach, Dallas County Democratic Party; Maggie Luna, Statewide Leadership Council)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Keith Ingram, Texas Secretary of State; Lori Gallagher)

DIGEST: HB 2318 would require the authority ordering an election in which more than one measure was to be voted on to assign a unique letter of the alphabet to each proposition on a ballot, if more than one political subdivision's proposition appeared on the ballot.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 2318 would provide clarity to voters by ensuring that each proposition on a ballot was identified by a unique letter. Currently, multiple

propositions assigned the same letter that are from different political subdivisions can appear the same ballot, which can confuse voters in making a selection. For example, a county proposition and a separate city proposition could appear on the same ballot with the same identifying letter. The bill would remedy this problem by requiring propositions to be clearly differentiated on the ballot.

**CRITICS
SAY:**

HB 2318 should require the propositions on a ballot to be even more specific by requiring each measure to be identified by the name of the relevant political jurisdiction and a unique number. Only requiring a unique letter for each proposition could still lead to voter confusion when propositions from multiple political subdivisions appeared on a ballot.