

SUBJECT: Requiring mail-in ballot signatures be signed using ink on paper

COMMITTEE: Elections — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Smith, Burrows, Capriglione, DeAyala, E. Morales, Swanson
3 nays — Bucy, Manuel, Vo

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Devvie Duke, Jill Glover, Republican Party of Texas; Ed Zenner, RPT; Andrew Eller, State Republican Executive Committee SD24, Republican Party of Texas; Tisha Crow, Texas GOP; Tom Nobis, The Republican Party of Texas; Robert L. Green, Travis County Republican Party Election Integrity Committee for Legislation; and 13 individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andrew Hendrickson, ACLU of Texas; Maggie Stern, Children's Defense Fund - Texas; Katya Ehresman, Common Cause Texas; Valerie Street, Our Vote Texas; Joey Bennett, Secure Democracy USA; Brenda Cruz, Texas Democratic Party; Rocio Fierro-Perez, Texas Freedom Network; and 11 individuals)

On — Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that requiring a signature on a mail-in ballot envelope to be ink on paper would better ensure that elections reflect the will of the people and assist the early voting ballot board and signature verification committee in completing their task of comparing signatures for verification.

DIGEST: HB 1299 would specify that the required signature on a mail-in ballot envelope would have to be signed using ink on paper, and an electronic or photocopied signature would not be permitted.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.