

SUBJECT: Specifying requirements for curbside voting

COMMITTEE: Elections — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Smith, Bucy, Burrows, Capriglione, DeAyala, Manuel, E.
Morales, Swanson, Vo

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Marc Hoskins, Disability Rights Texas; Veronikah Warme, Texas Civil Rights Project; Molly Broadway; Susana Carranza; Rosemarie Clouston; Phaleria Hollins; Kimberley Wilsom-Vibbert (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andrew Hendrickson, ACLU of Texas; Chase Bearden, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Katya Ehresman, Common Cause Texas; Kevin Hale, Libertarian Party of Texas; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Amber Mills, MOVE Texas Action Fund; Taylor Sambrano, NASW Texas Chapter; Valerie Street, Our Vote Texas; Joey Bennett, Secure Democracy USA; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Linda Litzinger, Texas Parent to Parent; Cynthia Van Maanen, Travis County Democratic Party; Tiffany Patterson, United Ways of Texas; and 12 individuals)

Against — Ed Johnson (*Registered, but did not testify*: Russell Hayter)

On — Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State; Kathy Haigler

DIGEST: HB 386 would require an election officer to designate a parking space at each polling place for voting. The chosen parking space could not be one designated specifically for persons with disabilities. The bill would require the space to be clearly marked with a sign indicating that the space was reserved for use by a voter who was unable to enter the polling place and to display, in large font that was clearly readable from a vehicle, a telephone number that a voter could call or text to request assistance from an election officer.

As an alternative to displaying a telephone number, a parking space could comply with the requirements by providing the voter with a button or intercom that the voter could use to request assistance.

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, 2023.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

Curbside voting is a long-established voting method, but many voters express difficulty utilizing the resource due to confusion about parking spaces. Some organizations try to provide constituents with helpful information, but, with different standards in different counties, this can be difficult. While preserving some flexibility for counties, HB 386 would standardize the curbside voting process to make it more clear and understandable, ensuring all citizens have access to the ballot. The bill also would specify that handicap parking spaces would not be affected by curbside voting, ensuring that individuals with disabilities who wanted to enter the facility would not have difficulty.

Currently, many voters with disabilities often rely on good Samaritans to notice their need and help them get the attention of election officials for assistance, which can take a toll on someone's dignity and autonomy. Counties already observing the procedures specified by HB 386 are seeing the benefits.

**CRITICS
SAY:**

HB 386 could burden some election officials with implementation. Counties would be expected to fund items required by the bill, including signage, notification buttons, and phones. These funds could be better spent on registering constituents for vote-by-mail.

**OTHER
CRITICS
SAY:**

HB 386 should require both telephone numbers and buttons to be made available for curbside voters. If a voter did not have a phone, it would be important to have another means by which to contact the election officials.