

SUBJECT: Revising certain manual count procedures for post-election audits

COMMITTEE: Elections — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Smith, Bucy, Burrows, Capriglione, DeAyala, E. Morales, Swanson, Vo

0 nays

1 absent — Manuel

WITNESSES: For — Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Chris Davis, Texas Association of Elections Administrators; Mike Brewster; Ed Johnson (*Registered, but did not testify*: Cary Roberts, County and District Clerks Association of Texas; Rebekah Chenelle, Dallas County Commissioners Court; Sam Derheimer, Fred Shannon, Hart InterCivic; Ed Zenner, RPT; Ken Moore; Marcia Strickler; Lucy Trainor)

Against — Laura Pressley, Ph.D, True Texas Elections; Xiaomei Wang (*Registered, but did not testify*: Katya Ehresman, Common Cause Texas; Valerie DeBill; John Raymond; Roxy D Hall Williamson)

On — Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State; Laura Nunn

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that standardizing and updating certain procedures of the post-election audit process could reduce opportunities for errors and improve integrity and transparency of the process.

DIGEST: CSHB 4697 would allow the general custodian of election records the option to use an alternative process for manually counting votes for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of electronic voting system tabulation results. The alternative process would involve conducting a manual count of all races in at least one percent of polling places participating in the countywide polling place program or in three countywide polling places, whichever was greater, in which electronic voting systems were used on

election day and during early voting by personal appearance.

The bill would add conforming language to include countywide polling places as an alternative to precincts for relevant manual counts. CSHB 4697 would require the general custodian to post information about the date, time, and place of the count on the county's website home page, rather than in the custodian's office.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.