

SUBJECT: Allowing certain information be moved to a mail-in ballot signature sheet

COMMITTEE: Elections — committee substitute recommended

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

0 nays

1 absent — Manuel

WITNESSES: For — Kathryn Williams, Texas Grassroots Alliance; Valerie DeBill; Ed Johnson (*Registered, but did not testify*: Cathy Cranston, ADAPT of Texas/Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas; Chris Harris, Austin Justice Coalition; Adrienne Lloyd, Children's Defense Fund-Texas; Chase Bearden, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Cary Roberts, County and District Clerks' Association of Texas; Roxy Williamson, Galveston Island Voter Education Resource and Services; Juan Cardoza-Oquendo, Houston in Action; Carol Olewin, League of Women Voters of Texas; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Amber Mills, MOVE Texas Action Fund; Darcy Caballero, Planned Parenthood Texas Votes; Adrian Shelley, Public Citizen; Joanne Richards, RCV for Texas; Bob Kafka, REV UP Texas; Robert L. Green, Travis County Republican Party Election Integrity Committee for Legislation; and 57 individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Palwasha Sharwani, Emgage TX; and seven individuals)

On — Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Trudy Hancock, Texas Association of Elections Administrators; Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State (*Registered, but did not testify*: Katya Ehresman, Common Cause Texas; Lori Gallagher, Texas First)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that the information located on the back of official mail-in ballot carrier envelopes may be confusing and difficult for some

voters to read.

DIGEST: CSHB 4780 would allow the required form for a person assisting a voter with a ballot to be incorporated into the signature sheet contained in the official carrier envelope for mail-in ballots. A person who assisted a voter to prepare a mail-in ballot would be required to provide certain information and a signature on the signature sheet, rather than on the envelope itself.

The bill would specify that a signature sheet contained in the envelope would be required to include the identity and date of an election required to be entered on a voter's carrier envelope by the secretary of state, a space for the voter to enter the voter's information, and certain textual material and notices, rather than on the outside of the envelope or any separate sheet.

The secretary of state would be required to prescribe the form and content of the signature sheet that satisfied requirements of the bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.