

SUBJECT: Abolishing the county elections administrator position in certain counties

COMMITTEE: Elections — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Smith, Burrows, Capriglione, DeAyala, Swanson

4 nays — Bucy, Manuel, E. Morales, Vo

SENATE VOTE: On final passage (April 18) — 20 - 11

WITNESSES: For —Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Cindy Siegel, Harris County Republican Party; Dr. Laura Pressley, True Texas Elections; and seven individuals (*Registered, but did not testify*: Elizabeth Baron, Texas First; Chuck DeVore, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Robert L. Green, Travis County Republican Party Election Integrity Committee for Legislation; Devvie Duke; Andrew Eller; Russell Hayter; Lucy Trainor)

Against —Andrew Hendrickson, ACLU of Texas; Katya Ehresman, Common Cause Texas; Emily Eby French, Texas Civil Rights Project; Susana Carranza; Charles Crews; Susan Hays (*Registered, but did not testify*: Maggie Stern, Children's Defense Fund - Texas; Jamila English, Emgage, Texas Chapter; Luis Figueroa, Every Texan; Paul Sugg, Harris County Commissioners Court; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Valerie Street, Our Vote Texas; Cary Roberts, Texas Association of Elections Administrators; Birk Wilkison, Texas Democratic Party; Carisa Lopez, Texas Freedom Network; Cicely Kay, Travis County Commissioners Court; Cynthia Van Maanen, Travis County Democratic Party; and eight individuals)

On — Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that abolishing the county elections administrator position in certain larger counties and transferring these duties to elected positions could help to address challenges that these counties face regarding election oversight.

DIGEST: SB 1750 would abolish the position of county elections administrator in counties with a population over 3.5 million. All assigned powers and duties would be transferred to the county tax assessor-collector and county clerk. The county tax assessor-collector would serve as the voter registrar, and the duties and functions of the county clerk that were performed by the administrator would revert to the county clerk unless certain other transfers of duties and functions had occurred. Counties with a population of 3.5 million or less could still create the position of county elections administrator for the county.

Upon the bill's effective date, qualifying counties would be required to transfer employees, property, and records as necessary to abolish the position.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.