

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 456
By: Duncan
Jurisprudence
2-17-97
As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, Texas law requires the jury wheel to be reconstituted using the names of registered voters and holders of driver's licenses or personal identification cards. When the law which expanded the pool to include anyone holding a current Texas driver's license was passed, the intent was to make the jury selection process more inclusive. However, it has led to administrative problems. Officials have reported increases in the number of exemptions, disqualifications and those failing to report for jury duty at all. With the adoption of the Motor Voter Act, which requires that a voter registration card be distributed to each individual seeking a driver's license or driver's license renewal, more people are being registered to vote in the state, thus diminishing the necessity to utilize driver's license records for reconstitution purposes. This bill will require the jury wheel to be reconstituted using the names of registered voters and will require certain individuals to meet to reconstitute the jury wheel for a county.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 456 requires the jury wheel to be reconstituted using the names of registered voters and requires certain individuals to meet to reconstitute the jury wheel for a county.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Sections 62.001(a) and (c), Government Code, to delete the requirement that the jury wheel be reconstituted by using as the source a list of citizens of the county who hold a valid driver's license or personal identification card or certificate. Requires the county tax assessor-collector, sheriff, county clerk, and district clerk in each county to meet at the county courthouse and to reconstitute the jury wheel for the county. Authorizes each official to be represented by a deputy. Deletes the provision requiring the voter registrar of each county to furnish the secretary of state a current voter registration list for the county.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Sections 62.001(d)-(i), Government Code (Jury Source; Reconstitution of Jury Wheel).

SECTION 3. Repealer: Section 62.011(d), Government Code (Electronic or Mechanical Method of Selection).

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 1997.
Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.